



56th SADC PF PLENARY ASSEMBLY SESSION

1.0 Introduction

Country report of the Kingdom of Eswatini to be presented during the 56th Plenary Assembly Session to be held in the Parliament of the Republic of Zambia in Livingstone.

2.0 Transformation of SADC PF into A Regional Parliament

As per the Council Decision of August 2024 the Protocol which was shared with Member States for National Consultations, Eswatini as a member state declares that we are in support of the transformation of SADC PF into a SADC Parliament and has signed the agreement.

The Parliament of the Kingdom of Eswatini is to further engage in the consultation process on the draft protocol, and procedural reporting on the Phase two of this matter is in the pipeline. Eswatini will then make submissions in due course.

3.0 Addressing the Impact of Inflation on the Budget of the Forum: Increase in Mandatory Member Contributions

May the 56th Plenary Assembly be informed if the Member Parliament is agreeable to a (twenty) 20% increase in Mandatory Member Contributions to ensure that the Forum continues to operate without impediment?

The Parliament of the Kingdom of Eswatini, strongly appreciate the intervention of SADC PF, in its Regional Coordination and all statutory standing committee programmatic activities.

With respect to increase in mandatory contributions Parliament is still to engage with the relevant sessional committee, and the Line Minister to this effect.

4.0 Secondment of senior parliamentary staff to the Programmes and Parliamentary Business and Languages department

The Parliament of the Kingdom of Eswatini, is very thin on the ground with respect to Human Capital, but is positive and willing to leverage on seconding staff to SADC PF , as soon as the restructuring exercise has been finalised.

5.0 Election observation

The Parliament of the Kingdom of Eswatini, is noting the plea to contribute towards Election Observation Missions under the aegis of a SADC PF delegation as resolved. The item of USD 6000 per election.

6.0 Designation of focal person to monitor the domestication of Model Laws

Ms. Thoko Gumede-Legal Clerk, has been designated by the Parliament of the Kingdom of Eswatini to assist the Committee in the monitoring of the domestication of Model Laws adopted by the Forum.

7.0 Implementation of the 2023-2026 SRHR and Governance Project

7.1 Parliament of the Kingdom of Eswatini has Signed the Agreement to Implement the SRHR and Governance Project in collaboration with the SADC PF, this was effected on the 2024

7.2 On the recruitment of the SRHR Researchers, Parliament of the Kingdom of Eswatini has successfully recruited Ms. Zanele Qwabe who holds a Honours Degree in Politics and International Relations, and Honours in Public Management and Governance.

7.3 Parliament absorption rate on resources allocated to implement activities has been low, due to extensive strategic partners Parly has collaborated with in the execution of its activities. Also, the procurement process has to be followed timeously, hence we affirm our Donor that for the ongoing second year funds will be requisitioned on time as more activities are to be implemented.

7.4 Parliament has engaged and sensitised one hundred Parliamentary service staff on the outcomes of the project with respect to its thematic areas.

7.5 One hundred and three, (103) Parliamentarians including both the House of Assembly and Senate has been trained on the project , with respect to integrating Climate change as a thematic areas, and the importance of mainstreaming Human Rights and governance to all focus areas with the support of UNFPA, UNDP.

7.6 Parliament has such an excellent standing with the CSO's, NWG, and relevant Line Ministries, and 200 of them all, have been trained under the Project on how best to collaborate, as well as appreciating the project thematic areas.

8.0 Other Activities include the following;

- 8.1 Commemoration of WAD November 2024, themed with the support of NERCHA,
- 8.2 Launch of the WPC Strategic Plan with the support of UNDP

- 8.3 Taking Parliament to the People by engaging with the Shiselweni Region, targeting Primary Schools on a call to Tree Planting to curb on carbon emissions, as well preserve indigenous tree species.
- 8.4 Climate Change and SRHR Integration, a sensitisation meeting was held in collaboration with UNDP and the SADC PF Committee, focusing on integrating SRHR and HIV/AIDS governance. This included the development of an integrative workplan to be executed in 2025 with UNDP's support.
- 8.5 In the area of Inclusivity and Disability Rights, the House of Assembly hosted a sensitisation meeting for people living with disabilities to promote equitable access to SRHR services.
- 8.6 Addressing Gender and Human Rights, a strategic plan for women was developed, focusing on governance and human rights issues.
- 8.7 Human Rights and governance - the Parliament In partnership with UNESCO, Life Skills Education was prioritized through a sensitisation session addressing post-COVID challenges, including gangsterism in schools.
- 8.8 Lastly, a Cancer Awareness Campaign highlighted the critical need for prevention, early detection, and access to SRHR-related health services.

9.0 Recommendation

Parliament prays for extension of the SRHR Project Implementation to extend up to 2028, reasons being, the impetus of the Project during the post the Covid- era is sustainable. As, the thematic areas speaks to all the recurring social ills, and there is such strong political will from Members to execute.

10.0 Domestication of SADC PF Model Laws and related Policies/Instruments

The Plenary, continued with presentation of country reports on progress on implementation of the resolutions of the 54thPlenary, this was based on domestication of Model Laws in respective countries, Eswatini as a country unpacked prospects on how the country has fared in the domestication of Eswatini legislative framework with respect to HIV/AIDS Model law, Gender Based model law, SADC PF Model Law, Model Law on Elections, and Public Finance Management Model Law.

11.0 Eswatini as a country has executed the following;

11.1 Gender Based Model Law-

- 11.1 Sensitization of Parliamentarians on SADC PF GBV Model law and sexual assault cases
- 11.2 Mainstreaming of Gender based activities through all Parliamentary/Sessional committees (Children's, Gender, Climate, DPMs, and more)

12.0 Increase in the tabling of SRHR motions characterized by evidence-based debates with respect to GBV

12.1 Redressing of gaps on delayed trials of GBV cases, there is now high reporting and speedy trial of cases with hefty fines or at times life sentencing.

12.2 Workshops have been conducted for both houses of Parliament on GBV,

Staging of virtual meetings with SRHR champions, and Parliamentary staff with respective portfolio committees,

12.3 Compiling of shared watsapp packaged alertness on GBV messages.

12.4 Foster care regulations are in place to leverage abuse of orphanages and establishment of shelter homes for survivors

13.0 Reviewed legislative frame work with reference to

13.1 SODV Act Of 2018, the process of amending contentious clauses is ongoing in the **SODV Act of 2018,**

13.2 **The Amendment of the Marriage Act and Matrimonial /Property entitlement Act** to curb on Human rights issue on women is ongoing,

13.3 **Launch of the National Gender Policy,** National Strategy to end Violence in Eswatini, as well as Positive Parenting Strategy Policy.

13.4 Gender responsive reporting has been advocated for, through capacity building initiatives, and this has prompted such strong political will in the fight against GBV whilst demystifying certain SRHR myths, especially in the execution of the SRHR project

13.5 Population policy Framework reviewed which was dating back 2002, to rightfully redress complexities of the demographic dividend in terms of marriage age consent, thus we have as a country a reviewed population framework

14.0 Reviewed legislative framework on Human Rights, this includes the establishment of the **law reform unit,** to review femicide and SRHR obsolete bills

15.0 The people trafficking and smuggling (Prohibition Act, 2009) which spearhead the fight against people trafficking and smuggling while ensuring compliance with Regional and International five pillars which are; National coordination, international coordination, Prosecution, Protection, and Prevention

16.0 The Education Retention Policy have been pivotal in mitigating all ills of Early and Unintended Pregnancies

17.0 In Eswatini, the SADC PF Model law on elections has prompted the following;

With respect to oversight and legislation Parliament has prioritized the enactment of comprehensive electoral laws that incorporate international best practices and address emerging challenges such as digital manipulation and disinformation.

18.0 Under Capacity Building and Training

18.1 Eswatini has affected capacity and training on electoral processes and related legal frameworks, and capacity-building programs tailored to parliamentarians to enhance understanding of electoral laws, voter education strategies, and the role of technology in elections.

18.2 Furthermore, the country has achieved best practices and innovations in electoral management.

19.0 With respect to Promotion of Inclusive Participation

There has been Inclusive dialogue and representation of diverse voices within society that has been conducted to mitigate electoral risks, where civil society organizations, political parties, and marginalized groups have been involved.

20.0 With heightening and Strengthening of Electoral Institutions

The country has done this through sufficient funding, transparent appointment processes for electoral commissioners, and legal frameworks that guarantee autonomy.

Additionally, parliament has conducted regular assessments of electoral institution performance and accountability to identify areas for improvement and address gaps in their mandate. (EBC is affiliated to Ministry of Justice Constitutional Affairs -through annual performance audits.

21.0 Under Public Awareness and Civic Education

The country has conducted robust public awareness and civic education to build resilience against electoral risks and promoting informed participation in the electoral process has been conducted by partnering with educational institutions, media outlets, and civil society organizations, in supporting initiatives that promote civic education, voter registration, and awareness campaigns on electoral rights and responsibilities.

22.0 On women elections, the country has considered **electoral reform measures** that reduce barriers for women and minority candidates, by eliminating discriminatory, voter registration requirements and enhancing access to voting even for the marginalised groups and the physically disabled.

Worth highlighting is that their Majesties made a call for more women support during election to endorse the **SADC** Gender and Development Protocol, Eswatini has indeed more women representatives as high twenty-nine Parliamentarians.

- **Senate members -14 members**
- **House of Assembly –15 Hon. members**

This is a milestone in the history of the country (Compared to previous term which had a representation as low as 14 female members.

23.0 The women and Elections Act has prompted such strong political will to vote for women, also, civic education on women elections has also been a positive indicator as it has been conducted in all constituencies by elections and boundary commission, where civil society were equally engaged.

24.0 Women Elections Funding

The country support women needs in business through financial inclusion measures by engaging various financial institutions and cooperatives on the business side, and this will equip them with all forms of empowerment.

25.0 On youth parliamentarians, the country has initiated a Youth Fund, dedicated for empowerment of the youth, where they can start businesses, and there is also the Regional Development Fund, where they start businesses in groups and they are awarded with grants.

25.1 Also, climatic Change unit, has collaborated with Parliament in the execution of high advocacy for youth Parliament

26.0 On Public Finance Management Model Law, the country has done the following initiatives and enactments;

26.1 Parliament has engaged with Central Bank Eswatini, with the Ministry of Finance technocrats to help capacitate Parliamentarians on the Public Finance Management Model Law and one imperative model law on illicit financial flows within neighbouring countries.

26.2 Capacitating of members on Public and Procurement Act of 2012 which speaks to compliance to procurement measures and more,

26.3 Establishment of the Eswatini Procurement Regulation Authority (ESPRA)

26.4 Eswatini Revenue Authority - enhanced tax base system of the country

26.5 Acknowledgement of FSRA -Financial Services Regulatory Authority as an investment regulatory body in the country to redress money laundering, illicit financial flows etc.

26.6 Implementation of an Integrated Financial Management Information System;

26.7 Wage bill monitoring and management;

26.8 There has been a roll out of a government-wide Performance Management System;

26.9 There is more allocation of resources within the Anti-Corruption Commission and strengthening of the justice system.

26.10 The efficiency of the Public Accounts Committee in the execution of public funds from respective Ministries

26.11 The execution of budgetary oversight mandate by Ministry of Finance Portfolio Committee.

26.12 There are robust debates of annual performance reports from respective Ministerial Portfolio Committees.

27.0 HIV/AIDS model law

27.1 Eswatini has robustly reviewed and enacted all relevant legislative framework which speaks to treatment and preventative measures against HIV/AIDS. The annual commemoration of the International World AIDS day has attributed to **Eswatini globally attaining the '95-95-95'** global HIV target. This means that 95% of people living with HIV in this know their status; the other 95% of people who know their HIV-positive status are accessing treatment and the final 95% of people on treatment have suppressed viral load. The '95-95-95' deadline is 2030, but Eswatini reached the target 2020. Which is a milestone.

27.2 The HIV/AIDS Sessional committee and other portfolio committees which includes (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Training, Deputy Prime Ministers, Prime Ministers) also execute this mandate with due diligence.

The above highlighted interventions by Eswatini in the domestication of specified Model laws are with respect to the countries constitutional mandate.

28.0 SADC PF SRHR /HIV/AIDS GOVERNANCE PROJECT

28.1 Eswatini has made significant efforts in aligning the legislative framework with the SADC Model law on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and other policies. These efforts are aimed at addressing persistent challenges such as early unintended pregnancies (EUP), gender-based violence (GBV) and limited access to SRHR services for marginalised populations. The government in collaboration with civil

society organizations and development partners, has initiated legislative reviews to incorporate provisions from the SADC Model Law, emphasizing the rights of adolescents, young women and people living with disabilities.

28.2 Key interventions include tabling motions in Parliament to address the escalation of teenage pregnancies and improve access to contraceptives. Focusing on enacting gender responsive laws to tackle SRHR issues effectively, this includes ensuring legal instruments to uphold human rights, provide equitable access to SRHR services and integrate life skills education into the national curriculum.

28.3 Eswatini has prioritized the integration of climate change into SRHR governance and recognizing the intersection between environmental challenges and health care. The involvement of Parliament in planting trees at schools to educate students on the importance of preserving trees and natural resources.