



PRESIDENT’S RULINGS ON POINTS OF ORDER RAISED DURING THE SITTING OF THE 58TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY

1. Background

- 1.1** Honourable Members, during the course of the 58th Plenary Assembly, several points of order were raised concerning the practices and procedures governing the sittings of the SADC Parliamentary Forum.
- 1.2** I have duly considered these matters and now issue my rulings in accordance with Rule 33(7) of the Rules of Procedure.

2. Guiding Principles

- 2.1** In reaching my determinations, I was guided by:
- The Constitution of the SADC Parliamentary Forum;
 - The Rules of Procedure; and
 - The policy direction of the Plenary Assembly as the highest policy organ of the Forum.
- 2.2** In particular, I relied upon the resolution of the 35th Plenary Assembly Session held in Grand Bay, Mauritius, from 20 to 28 June 2014, which resolved that the Forum should henceforth “operate like a Parliament.”
- 2.3** That resolution marked the Forum’s formal transition from conducting its business in conference style to embracing established parliamentary procedures, in preparation for its transformation into a fully-fledged SADC Parliament.

3. Determination

- 3.1** The Assembly, recognising the diversity of parliamentary traditions across the SADC region, resolved to adopt an integrative approach to parliamentary practice.
- 3.2** This approach incorporates diverse traditions, entrenches inclusive and modern practices, and establishes a hybrid parliamentary system reflective of our Member Parliaments.
- 3.3** Accordingly, all rulings issued herein are anchored in this resolution and in the principle that the practices of the Forum must remain inclusive, adaptive, and consistent with its transformation agenda.

4. Points of Order Raised by the Head of Delegation of Angola, Hon. Pedro Sebastião

4.1 Preliminary Clarification

- 4.1.1 I wish to apologise for the interpretation difficulty that arose when Hon. Sebastião initially raised his point of order.
- 4.1.2 To ensure clarity and common understanding, I sought further explanation from the Honourable Member, for which I am grateful.

4.2 Inclusivity and Freedom of Conscience

- 4.2.1 I sincerely thank Hon. Sebastião for commending the Forum's inclusive practice of allowing Members to observe silent prayer or meditation at the commencement of sittings.
- 4.2.2 This practice recognises the religious and spiritual diversity of the SADC region and demonstrates the Forum's strong commitment to tolerance, inclusivity, and mutual respect.
- 4.2.3 It is fully aligned with the values espoused in the Constitution and the Strategic Plan of the SADC Parliamentary Forum.
- 4.2.4 I reaffirm that the Forum remains committed to fostering a unifying parliamentary culture that safeguards freedom of conscience and ensures that all Members feel respected and adequately represented in its proceedings.

4.3 Institutionalisation of Seating Arrangement at the High Table

- 4.3.1 I further thank Hon. Sebastião for commending the revised seating arrangement at the High Table.
- 4.3.2 Under the current arrangement, the Secretary General sits in close proximity to the President, enabling timely, discreet, and seamless consultation during sittings.
- 4.3.3 This replaces the previous arrangement where the Secretary General sat with the Clerks-at-the-Table and was required to shuttle between positions.
- 4.3.4 This refined arrangement enhances procedural efficiency, preserves decorum, and strengthens institutional coordination.
- 4.3.5 I hereby rule that this practice has been formally institutionalised with immediate effect.

5. Sitting Arrangement of the Vice-President

5.1 Concern Raised

- 5.1.1 I acknowledge the concern raised by Hon. Sebastião regarding the seating arrangement of the Vice-President of the Forum.
- 5.1.2 This concern is valid and is appreciated as a constructive contribution toward strengthening institutional protocol.

5.2 Guiding Considerations

- 5.2.1 The matter has been swiftly addressed, and the Vice President has been duly seated to reflect both her status and her role within the Forum.

5.3 Determination

- 5.3.1 The sitting arrangement of the Vice-President shall be reviewed.
- 5.3.2 Any adjustment shall uphold decorum, hierarchy, and institutional efficiency.
- 5.3.3 The Assembly is assured that this matter will be addressed with due regard to parliamentary integrity and evolving best practice.

6. Point of Order Raised by the Honourable Member from South Africa on Dress Code

6.1 Matter Raised

- 6.1.1 The Honourable Member from South Africa raised a point of order concerning the wearing of a cap in the House.
- 6.1.2 The matter was duly considered in light of the Rules of Procedure.

6.2 Applicable Rules

- 6.2.1 The current Rules of Procedure are silent on matters relating to dress code.
- 6.2.2 In the absence of an explicit provision, no procedural breach can be established.
- 6.2.3 Nonetheless, Members are reminded that parliamentary decorum requires conduct befitting the dignity of the House.

6.3 Determination

- 6.3.1 While no breach occurred under the existing Rules, the concern raised is both valid and constructive.
- 6.3.2 The Forum will proactively consider strengthening its guidance on parliamentary decorum and dress standards.
- 6.3.3 In doing so, the Forum shall draw upon applicable traditions from across the Region.
- 6.3.4 A formal proposal will be submitted to the Plenary Assembly in accordance with established procedures.
- 6.3.5 The objective of this reform will be to promote uniformity, dignity, and respect in the conduct of proceedings.

End.