



# **REPORT ON THE JOINT SESSION OF THE SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM STANDING COMMITTEES ON FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES (FANR) HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (HSDSP), AND GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN ADVANCEMENT AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (GEWAYD) HELD ON 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2021**

## **1. PREAMBLE**

Mr President, I beg to move that this Plenary Assembly do adopt the Report of the Joint Session of SADC PF Standing Committees on Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR); Human and Social Development and Special Programmes (HSDSP); and Gender Equality, Women Advancement and Youth Development (GEWAYD) to the 49<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, laid on the table of the House on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

## **2. CREDENTIALS OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Attendance of the Joint Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum's Standing Committees was as follows:

NO.	NAME	COUNTRY
1.	Hon. Helena Bonguela	Angola
2.	Hon. Maria Nascimento	Angola
3.	Hon. Luisa Damião	Angola
4.	Hon. Talita Monnakgotla	Botswana
5.	Hon. Anne Marie Mbilambangu	DRC
6.	Hon. Lekhetso Mosito	Lesotho
7.	Hon. Lovanirina Célestin Fiarovana	Madagascar
8.	Hon. Marie Jeanne D'arc Masy Goulamaly	Madagascar
9.	Hon. Lova Herizo Rajaobelina	Madagascar
10.	Hon. Lovanirina Célestin Fiarovana	Madagascar
11.	Hon. Bertha Mackenzie Ndebele	Malawi
12.	Hon. Lonnie Phiri	Malawi
13.	Hon. Paula Kooper	Namibia
14.	Hon. Rosie Bistoquet	Seychelles
15.	Hon. Rocky Uranie	Seychelles
16.	Hon. Nkhensani Kate Bilankulu	South Africa

17.	Hon. Desmond Lawrence Moela	South Africa
18.	Hon. Paurina Mpariwa	Zimbabwe
19.	Hon. Goodlucky Kwaramba	Zimbabwe
20.	Hon. Tambudzani B Mohadi	Zimbabwe

### **3. THE JOINT SESSION**

**The Joint Session was held under the theme, “Social Accountability and Oversight of the Implementation of SADC Regional Commitments in Health and Agriculture.”**

### **4. WELCOMING AND OPENING REMARKS**

The Joint Session was chaired by Hon. Bertha Ndebele, who is the Chairperson of the HSDSP Standing Committee. Hon. Ndebele thanked all the Members of Parliament, Ms. Boemo Sekgoma, the Secretary General, Ms. Julie Middleton, Manager of the PSA Consortium and her team as well as all the resource persons for affording time to participate in the Joint session of SADC PF Committees.

Hon. Ndebele noted that SADC had adopted many robust Protocols that contained the Region’s developmental goals in different thematic areas. However, the implementation was lagging behind. The Chairperson said that the meeting was therefore, timely as an opportunity for Members of Parliaments to deliberate on how they can support the implementation of SADC regional commitments in the areas of health and agriculture. She further commented the SADC Region for ably managing the COVID-19 pandemic and expressed hope that the region could build on this to advance the regional agenda.

In her welcome remarks, Ms. Boemo Sekgoma, the Secretary General stated that the meeting was timely, given the social and economic importance of both the health and agriculture sectors in the SADC region which had since 2020 been profoundly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Secretary General noted that according to the African Development Bank Africa’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had contracted by 2.1 percent in 2020, risking an estimated 39 million Africans falling into extreme poverty in 2021 while women would disproportionately feel the effects of poverty. There was therefore, need for Member States to harness social protection measures to cushion the population from the effects of loss of revenue.

The SG further said that the SADC PF believed that planning and adoption of appropriate policies could turn challenges into opportunities and lead to the recovery of the health and agricultural sectors. Ms. Sekgoma also called for a

rethink the strategy for the health sector to prioritise the provision of essential medicines for existing ailments such as HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria. Of equal importance is the need to ensure that COVID-19 vaccines are accessible to SADC citizens, the SG said.

The Secretary General called on the SADC region to make concrete and lasting solutions regarding access to vaccines and for Parliaments to ensure effective implementation through greater social accountability and oversight.

Turning to the agricultural sector, Ms. Sekgoma pointed out that the outlook for 2020 to 2021 was declining due to Covid-19 disruptions and natural disasters like seasonal cyclones, floods and draughts. The SG called on parliaments to enhance oversight of the implementation of the Malabo Declaration, the Regional Agricultural Policy and Investment Plan and other regional commitments, adding that this was critical towards the realization of the full potential of the agricultural.

The Secretary General concluded by reiterating SADC PF's commitment, as the Flag-Bearer of Democratisation and Socio-Economic Development for the SADC region, to ensure domestication and implementation of regional commitments by Member States, adding that this was important in fostering democratic accountability and human rights.

## **5. STRENGTHENING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE SADC REGION - BACKGROUND ON THE PSA ALLIANCE AND HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2019 REGIONAL BUDGET SUMMIT COMMUNIQUÉ - JULIE MIDDLETON, CONSORTIUM PROJECT MANAGER, PSA ALLIANCE**

Ms. Julie Middleton expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to engage with MPs and informed the Joint Session that the Partnership for Social Accountability Alliance (PSA) was aimed at improving accountability and gender-responsiveness in public health management (particularly in the areas of HIV/SRH services for adolescents and youth) and agricultural (provision of services to smallholder farmers).

Ms Middleton informed the meeting that PSA hoped to achieve its objective through the facilitation of the implementation and oversight of selected SADC regional commitments across five SADC countries, namely, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. She also stated that PSA project interventions were principally guided by the promotion of the Social Accountability Systems that was based on an integrated five-stage process namely: planning and resource allocation; expenditure management; performance management; public integrity and oversight.

Ms Middleton indicated that the PSA had entered into a collaboration agreement with the SADC PF and was undertaking capacity building and advocacy activities at the national and regional levels. The work of PSA had for instance, led to the establishment of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) in Malawi three district councils receiving substantial funds to support women smallholder farmers in the 2021/2022 budgets in Tanzania. The collaboration between the PSA and the SADC PF had supported various activities, including the provision of resource persons to the meeting of the Standing Committee on FANR (November 2017, October 2019 and July 2020) and financing the learning exchange visit of FANR Standing Committee to the East African Legislative Assembly. In March 2019, the PSA and the SADC PF co-hosted a Regional Budget Summit which amongst other things, called for progressive allocation of at least 10% of the budget to agriculture in line with the Malabo Declaration and investments in agriculture to be aligned to smallholder farmers' priorities such as extension services and research and to finance such activities.

**ENHANCING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SADC REGIONAL COMMITMENTS THROUGH PUBLIC SERVICE ACCOUNTABILITY MONITORING (PSAM), MS. RACHEL GONDO**

Ms Gondo informed the meeting that PSAM was committed to work with interested multi-stakeholder groups in order to understand and contribute to addressing particular societal problems originating from systemic public resource management failures. She highlighted that most of the the problems emanated from poor policy formulation and implementation, misuse and abuse of public resources and disagreements between technocrats and politicians regarding the type and focus of service delivery mechanisms. She stated that it was imperative public resource management should include a functional Social Accountability Monitoring mechanism that ensured the provision of adequate access to goods and services as well as the realization of civil, political and socio-economic rights. In that regard, PSAM had adopted a rights-based approach to the Social Accountability Monitoring tool. The tool was helpful in the sense that it dealt with critical issues and questions at every stage of the process.

Ms Gondo apprised the meeting that there were many challenges in provision of SRH and HIV services in the project countries including unqualified, untrained volunteers, long waiting periods, workload frustrations, inadequate infrastructure and equipment and, in some instances unfriendly staff members. It was also highlighted that there was general a lack of a functional complaints handling mechanism and the problems encountered by aggrieved smallholder farmers were not adequately addressed.

## **INTERROGATING SADC COMMITMENTS ON SRHR FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE, MR. PERCY NGWERUME, SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY SPECIALIST**

Mr Percy Ngwerume, Social Accountability Specialist made a presentation on interrogating SADC commitments on SRHR for Adolescents and Young People (AYP). He indicated that the SADC Region was under obligation to fulfil its SRHR commitments, which were made at different levels. At a global level, the region had a commitment to realise the objectives of the Sustainable Goals (SDGs) especially Goal number 3 on Health and number 5 on Gender Equality. It was noted that SDGs 4 and 10 as well as the 90-90-90 HIV Treatment Target were also important in the attainment of SRHR objectives. At the continental level, the region was a party to Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, Revised Maputo Plan of Action (2016-2030) and the Abuja Declaration on Health Funding.

The presenter stressed that Parliaments through their representative, legislative, budgetary and oversight functions had an important role to play in the promotion of SRHR services. Parliamentarians could amplify the voices of communities regarding access to SRHR and other services. This should be done at the constituency, national and regional level. Parliamentarians should champion the cause of SRHR and use evidence to address social, economic and structural barriers to SRHR and public health in general. Furthermore, parliaments needed to strengthen collaboration with civil society organisations in order to use evidence and up to date information in their advocacy. Members of Parliament should use their legislative powers to enact laws which will promote the tenets of the Bill of Rights which is contained in most SADC constitutions and laws. Mr Ngwerume also appealed to the Members to urge their respective Parliaments to ratify and implement international and regional human rights instruments and the financing for their domestication should be budgeted.

### **Plenary Deliberations and Recommendations**

In the ensuing deliberations, the meeting resolved the following:

- (a) Noting the financial limitations that had led to the project being confined to five countries and the indirect benefit of the other countries through the work of the SADC PF Plenary Assembly sessions and Joint Committee meetings, Members pleaded projects in the future to include all the SADC countries.
- (b) Expressed support for the work of the PSA Alliance in promoting public awareness for increased social accountability in project countries.
- (c) Reiterated that the challenge in the agricultural sector of declining productivity despite increase in funding needed to be urgently addressed.

- (d) Noted that some instruments such as the Agriculture Food Security Vision (2050) were too futuristic, and this presented monitoring and evaluation challenges.
- (e) Lamented the lack of a SADC Regional rural development policy and strategy, adding that this needed to be addressed.
- (f) Reiterated that SADC governments needed to have political will and capacity to meet the respective stated financing targets for health and agriculture. They welcomed SADC PF's innovation of developing and adopting model laws to facilitate domestication of regional commitments.
- (g) Lauded the focus on agriculture, especially smallholder farming which was predominantly spearheaded by women, in view of the fact that SADC was generally food insecure due to climate change, now exacerbated by the COVID-19.
- (h) Noted with concern the prevalence of malnutrition and obesity and called on governments to address through food security and nutritional programmes.
- (i) Called for smallholder farmers to be supported beyond mere subsistence and grow food for the market.
- (j) Called for social accountability in the SADC Region to be enhanced through continuous capacity building around the five key processes and this should in turn address systemic public resource management failures.
- (k) Called for the strengthening of policy advocacy engagements at the regional, national and local levels in order to ensure the effective implementation of regional commitments in health (SRH services) and agriculture.

**6. IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY CHALLENGES IN SERVICE DELIVERY – A FOCUS ON FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURAL SERVICES FOR SMALLHOLDER FARMERS –MR. JOE MZINGA - ESAFF**

Mr. Joe Mzinga's presentation focused on social accountability gaps in the provision of agricultural services and proposed action that Parliaments could undertake. He stated that planning and resource allocation suffered from lack of consultation, resulting in priorities of smallholder farmers being excluded from the process. It was also indicated that even at the regional level, consultations with the relevant stakeholders was more *ad-hoc*. He therefore, called for meaningful participation of smallholder farmers, especially women, and the devolution of powers to local levels. The institutionalisation of SADC National Committees in each SADC Member State was identified as an opportunity that could improve local participation.

With regard budget and expenditure management, eSwatini, Lesotho and Malawi were said to be the only Member States meeting the financing targets

set in the Malabo Declaration and SADC countries were still failing to achieve the targeted agricultural growth of 6% per annum. Mr Mzinga also indicated that about 70% financing of agriculture is donor driven, off budget, which means it is not recorded in the respective national financing reporting systems. Most ministries of agriculture generally received their funds late and they rarely receive their full allocations as per budget. As a result, important projects such as irrigation schemes, markets and processing plants are in some instances stalled.

The meeting was informed that there was lack of planning and reporting frameworks at district and ministerial levels and SADC countries were generally not allocating enough money on research and development. The general lack of data, with official reports lacking the necessary statistics for stakeholders to engage meaningfully was stated as one of the existing challenges. A strong call of action was made on SADC countries to endeavour to realise the set target of 10% allocation to the agriculture sector and domestic resources should gradually replace reliance on external resources. Budget and expenditure management challenges could be addressed by aligning SADC Member States' National Agricultural Implementation Plans to the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Plan (CAADP). Research and Development as well as the generation of data should be prioritised.

Finally, the presenter stressed that oversight of the agricultural sector could be improved through independent research and rendering technical assistance to the elected representatives. The transformation of the SADC Parliamentary Forum into a Regional Parliament could enhance oversight at the regional level.

**IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY CHALLENGES IN SERVICE DELIVERY – A FOCUS ON SRHR FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE PRESENTED BY PERCY NGWERUME, SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY SPECIALIST.**

Mr Ngwerume stated that although the African Union (AU) countries in 2001 agreed to commit at least 15% of their annual budgets to improve the health sector, the current average annual allocation was about 5.3%. The dilemma of financing the health sector was amongst other things exacerbated by global recession emanating from the effects of COVID-19, the decline in donor funding, corruption and misalignment of priorities. Respective SADC ministries of health and other implementing agencies should be made to account for any compromises regarding the management of public resources as well as their failure to implement the recommendations from auditor general, ombudsman, Parliamentary Committees and other public integrity institutions.

He also stated that Parliaments should review and introduce laws that could reduce the cost of essential HIV/SRH lifesaving commodities. Laws should be

enacted to ensure access to and adequate utilisation of SRH and HIV services by AYP. This should also cater for the needs of AYP key populations, AYP living with disability, sex workers and other such vulnerable people. National budgets should be aligned to the country's commitments to HIV/SRHR and priorities. AYP should be engaged through public hearings in order to facilitate the inclusion of their views in the planning and implementation of SRH and HIV services.

Evidence-based information on the provision of HIV/SRH services should be gathered through engagements with civil society and AYP networks. SADC Parliaments were encouraged to review the relevant SADC Model Laws and use the set benchmarks in the execution of their legislative work.

### **Plenary discussions and Recommendations**

The meetings deliberated and resolved as follows:

- (a) Raised concern that the general health questionnaire being administered with the COVID-19 vaccinations seemed to compromise people's health confidentiality.
- (b) Noted with concern that young people had to obtain parental consent before accessing SRH services such as family planning, adding that a mechanism should be found to address parental concerns whilst enabling young people to freely access SRH services.
- (c) Urged SADC governments and stakeholders in the health and agricultural sectors to ensure broad based participation in the provision of SRH services. Pre-budget consultations and program implementation in the health and agricultural sectors should identify and include the priorities of intended beneficiaries.
- (d) Called for the youth, people with disability and other vulnerable groups to be specifically catered for in terms budget allocations and for youth participation in pre-budget and other development initiative consultations to be equal to the benefits they will draw from these initiatives.
- (e) Expressed concern that up to 70% of national budgets in the SADC Region are externally supported by donors, and called on SADC countries to address their capacity gaps in revenue collection and leakages through illicit financial flows.
- (f) Called on countries to revisit some of the tax incentives they give to multinationals and examine their overall benefits to the country. Public Private Partnerships (PPP) should be explored as they held potential for addressing capacity and investment gaps and they were important for improving service delivery.
- (g) Called for human resource audits to be undertaken in order to address public resources losses through ghost workers. Resources were often lost



through incomplete capital projects and the failure to optimally use such projects upon completion and this should be addressed.

- (h) Urged Parliaments to investigate public institutions' uptake of audit and other recommendations and propose corrective measures. The audit of public institutions and the oversight work of the Public Accounts Committees should be done timeously to ensure that corrective measures are taken immediately.

**7. THE ROLE OF THE SADC PARLIAMENTARY IN ENHANCING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL AGREEMENTS - MR. SHEUNENI KURASHA, SADC PF PROGRAMME MANAGER FOR DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE/PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS FOCAL PERSON**

Mr. Kurasha informed the meeting that Africa's economic regionalism was from the beginning led by the executive and characterized by shallow institutional frameworks to the exclusion of other branches of the state such as the judiciary and the legislature. SADC had identified and expressed commitment to work in different thematic areas and the SADC PF accordingly established programs and Standing Committees which were in tandem with the SADC's thematic areas.

The presenter stated that the SADC Summit established the SADC PF to fill the parliamentary vacuum with the ultimate goal being the establishment of a Regional Parliamentary Framework. This was the context in which SADC PF was lobbying for its ultimate transformation into a SADC Regional Parliament.

Mr Kurasha informed the meeting that the SADC PF championed the promotion of the implementation of regional commitments through the work of Standing Committees, the Regional Parliamentary Model Law Oversight Committee (RPMLOC) and RWPC. These structures as well as the Plenary Assembly sought to ensure that the parliamentary perspectives on matters of regional importance were taken on board, including through the development of model laws. Resolutions taken by SADC Parliamentarians were shared with national Parliaments which in turn share them with Member States. Resolutions of the Plenary Assembly were particularly important for drawing the attention of Member States to critical matters that affect the region including issues of health and agriculture.

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Hon. Andre Leon Tumba  
**CHAIRPERSON**

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Ms Sharon Nyirongo  
**COMMITTEE SECRETARY**