



**REPORT OF THE SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM STANDING COMMITTEE
ON GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN ADVANCEMENT AND YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT TO THE 49TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY SESSION, BASED ON
THE MEETING THAT WAS HELD VIRTUALLY ON 14TH APRIL, 2021 UNDER
THE THEME “UNPAID AND DOMESTIC WORK: WHY SHOULD PARLIAMENT
CARE.”**

Mr. President, I beg to move that this Plenary Assembly do adopt the Report of the Standing Committee on Gender Equality, Women Advancement and Youth Development to the 49th Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum.

1.0 PREAMBLE

Mr President, the Standing Committee on Gender Equality, Women Advancement and Youth Development (GEWAYD), guided by its mandate in terms of Rule 42(a) of the SADC PF Rules of Procedure, convened its meeting virtually on Wednesday, 14th April, 2021, on the occasion of the Committee Session of the SADC PF Standing Committees which took place from 11th to 16th April, 2021.

2.0 CREDENTIALS OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ten of the fifteen representatives of the SADC PF Member Parliaments were present as follows:

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| 1. Hon Maria do Carmo do Nascimento | Angola |
| 2. Hon. Talita Monnakgotla | Botswana |
| 3. Sen. Busisiwe Dlamini | Eswatini |
| 4. Hon. Marie Jeanne d’Arc MASY GOULAMALY | Madagascar |
| 5. Hon. Lonnie Chijere Phiri | Malawi |
| 6. Hon. Maria Marta Fernando | Mozambique |
| 7. Hon. Kelly Samynadin | Seychelles |
| 8. Hon. Nkhensani Kate Bilankulu | South Africa |
| 9. Hon. Ponde Chunga Mecha | Zambia |
| 10. Hon. Goodlucky Kwaramba | Zimbabwe |

Apologies were received from the following representatives:

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| 1. Hon. Peete Peete Ramoqai | Lesotho |
| 2. Hon. Anne-Marie Mbilambangu | DRC |
| 3. Hon Marie Joanne Sabrina Tour | Mauritius |
| 4. Namibia | |
| 5. Tanzania | |

3.0 WELCOME REMARKS BY THE VICE CHAIRPERSON

In her key note, the Vice Chairperson, Hon. Marie Jeanne d’Arc MASY GOULAMALY, informed the meeting that women’s empowerment had in the recent years become a key focus in the eradication of poverty. She noted, however, that this empowerment, and the autonomy of women as well as the improvement of their socio-economic, political and health status had been hampered by a lot of factors, one of which was unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW).

The Standing Committee on Gender Equality, Women Advancement and Youth Development met under the theme “*Unpaid Care and Domestic Work: Why Should Parliament Care,*” whereupon the Vice Chairperson noted with great concern that as at 2018, 606 million women of working age declared themselves to be unavailable for employment because unpaid care while only 41 million men were inactive for the same reason. Hon. Marie Jeanne d’Arc MASY GOULAMALY was of the considered view that this undermined women’s

well-being, fostered financial dependence and limited the options for decent work, to a point of restricting women to a low status.

The Vice Chairperson observed that national Parliaments had the opportunity and influence to provide insight into the importance of addressing gender inequality with regard to unpaid care and domestic work by catalysing and strengthening effective national and regional mechanisms that can develop responses to this type of work. She stated that by recognising, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work, time will be freed for women and girls to engage in formal jobs, socio-economic and political activities. She, therefore, enthused national parliaments to make unpaid care and domestic work a dialogue issue with the relevant stakeholders and promote the systematic use of gender responsive budgeting as a method of analysing this type of work and incorporating it into the development agenda.

4.0 UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK: WHY SHOULD PARLIAMENT CARE

The Standing Committee on Gender Equality, Women Advancement and Youth Development held a virtual meeting on 14th April, 2021. The meeting was convened under the theme “*Unpaid Care and Domestic Work: Why Should Parliament Care.*” The GEWAYD Standing Committee received expert presentations on theme from the following resource persons:

1. Ms Chama Mwandalesa, Women’s Rights Programme Manager, Oxfam Zambia
2. Ms Simasiku Ketty Sangende, Women’s Rights Manager, Action Aid Zambia

The Committee took note that around the world, women and girls were responsible for 75 per cent of unpaid care and domestic work in homes and communities, and that the current measure of most economies ignored a large portion of this work. The Committee further noted that because unpaid care and domestic work was driven by women and girls, this left them with little or no time to get an education, earn a decent living, or to be involved in their communities and/or decision-making positions.

The Committee took cognisance that if not considered in development policies, unpaid care could have severe consequences for development outcomes such as leaving women and girls trapped at the bottom of the economy. The Committee appreciated the fact that without investing time, effort and resources in unpaid care and domestic work, communities, workplaces, and whole economies would grind to a halt.

The Committee took note that globally, women and girls made up two-thirds of the paid care workforce. Further, the Committee noted that 12.5 billion hours of unpaid care work was carried out by women and girls every day, and that when valued at minimum wage, this would represent a contribution to the

global economy of at least \$10.8 trillion a year, which was more than three times the size of the global tech industry. In that regard, the Committee noted with deep concern that this disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work underpinned and reinforced every aspect of gender inequality.

Of great concern to the Committee was how this heavy and unequal care and gendered social norms prevented women from engaging in political decision-making and leadership roles, as well as preventing them from taking part in collective action to promote their sexual and reproductive health rights, decent and dignified work and a life free from violence. The Committee also noted with concern that with respect to unpaid care and domestic work, there were doubts as follows:

- (a) It was a private and not a public issue
- (b) It was divisive and controversial
- (c) Unpaid care was complex
- (d) It was insignificant
- (e) It was not about income or profits
- (f) It was too long term
- (g) It was not an urgent matter
- (h) There was no real evidence to support the importance of unpaid care

5.0 CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING UNPAID CARE WORK IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: POLICY LEVEL

The Committee took note, with deep concern, that unpaid care and domestic work as a social, economic and development issue remained low in most developing countries and that concrete policy commitment and financial investments in care-supporting services and infrastructure were also low. The Committee further noted that policy interventions on unpaid and domestic work tended to be limited to women's role in caring for family and community members' health, particularly in relation to HIV/AIDS.

The Committee took cognisance, with sadness, that care work was seen as unskilled, unproductive and not 'work', despite it being essential to the functioning of societies and economies. The Committee noted that despite increases in women's participation in paid work and the growing irrelevance of the male breadwinner model around the world, men's participation in unpaid care work had not increased in any substantial way.

6.0 STRATEGIES TO ADDRESSING UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK: INCORPORATION INTO THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The Committee appreciated the 4Rs strategy in addressing unpaid care and domestic work as set out below.

Recognise that unpaid care work was mainly done by women; acknowledge it as work – a type of production that created real value and recognise it as such in relevant policies.

Reduce the total number of hours needed to be spent on unpaid care and domestic work by improving access to affordable time-saving technologies and care supporting infrastructure such as water, electricity and public transport.

Redistribute unpaid care work within the household, shift some of the cost, responsibility and opportunity associated with unpaid care work to the state and the private sector.

Represent caregivers effectively in design and decision-making so that they could voice their concerns and shape policies, budgets and plans.

The Committee further took note of the other approaches that could be employed to address unpaid care and domestic work as set out hereunder.

- (a) Address patriarchy and promote feminist approach in advancing the need for shared roles and responsibilities
- (b) Ensure that communities and citizens understood and were convinced about the burden of unpaid care work
- (c) Ensure unconditional social cash transfer schemes and social services by States that relieved women and girls from unpaid care work. i.e., day care or cooperatives to supplement women who worked to raise incomes

7.0 IMPORTANCE OF TIME-USE SURVEYS

The Committee took note that time-use surveys (TUS) offered a unique tool for exploring a wide range of policy concerns including assessing quality of life or general well-being, analysing the division of labour between women and men, improving estimates of all forms of work (paid and unpaid) and estimating household production and its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Committee further noted with concern that although some countries had made efforts to understand the size and contribution of this non-market sector, the ambiguities surrounding the concept of this type of work and lack of its understanding seemed to add to the poor generation of data. Time-use surveys would cause unpaid care work to be counted in statistics, accounted for in representations of the economy, and taken into account in policy making.

With regard to time-use data collection in Africa, the Committee took note, with great concern that as at 2018, only sixteen African countries had national time-use data which provided a good basis for discussing unpaid care work in more concrete terms, and in exploring how responsibility for this interacted with the performance of other activities, such as earning an income. The Committee also took note that time-use data was increasingly relevant to development policy. Time-use data showed how many minutes or hours individuals devoted to activities such as paid work, unpaid work, including household chores and childcare, leisure, and self-care activities. The data could, therefore, improve the understanding of how people made decisions

about time, and expand our knowledge of well-being. Time-use data revealed how, partly due to gender norms and roles, men and women spent their time differently, which created an unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work time, with women generally bearing a disproportionately higher responsibility for unpaid work and spending proportionately less time in paid work than men. The Committee reiterated how integral the collection of time-use data was to Sustainable Development Goal 5 target 5.4, which called for recognising, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work as a condition for achieving gender equality. With time-use data, it was possible to determine what, how, why and how long activities were carried out. However, the Committee noted, with deep concern, that between 2000 and 2015, 135 countries had no data on the proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, rendering the bulk of unpaid domestic work in developing countries invisible.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE GEWAYD COMMITTEE HEREBY RESOLVES TO:

URGE national Parliaments to begin unpacking policies with respect to unpaid work, and strengthen and enforce laws and policies for domestic workers as well as hold to account those that violated the rights of such workers. Labour policies that recognise unpaid and domestic work should be put in place for the protection of women and girls, who are the majority in unpaid and domestic work.

AGREE that the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid work will draw attention to the role of care in society and provide a basis for monitoring and measuring the effects of planned governmental policies; free time for women and girls to engage in formal jobs and social and political activities, and bring women to a level where they were not most vulnerable.

URGE national Parliamentary Committees to begin deliberating on unpaid and domestic work as it was no longer a social but a governance issue and find approaches to rally unjust treatment and inefficient allocation of work through the provision of affordable and better public and social services to both men and women.

URGE Parliaments to structurally initiate and take discussions of unpaid work more meaningfully, and look at the relevant valuable indicators that could be included when issues of labour are deliberated upon and begin to ask Ministers responsible for labour to account for unpaid care work.

RECOMMEND the conduct of time-use studies and adoption of policies to promote shared responsibility between men and women within the household and family to ease the burden of multiple roles played by women - drawing attention to this type of work would involve gathering quantitative information of its scope.

CALL upon national statistical offices and/or commissions to give the requisite data in order for States to act on the implications of unpaid care work.

IMPLORE national governments to provide infrastructure mills, wells, piped water, alternative fuels such as solar, wind energy and so that more time may be freed up for women and girls to engage in formal jobs, socio-economic and political activities as a result of reduced unpaid work. This is because the heavy and unequal workload unpaid work created for women and girls has a negative impact on their health, well-being, and decision-making positions.

APPEAL to female parliamentarians to use their influence profitably with regard to how Parliaments can begin to take the matter of unpaid care work further and influence how this type of work can affect the Gross Domestic Productions (GDPs) of individual States as well as their tax regimes.

REITERATE the significance of time-use data as an increasingly relevant tool in the development policies with respect to unpaid work. Notably, time-use data is integral to Sustainable Development Goal 5 target 5.4, which calls for recognising, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work as a condition for achieving gender equality.

ENCOURAGE the redistribution unpaid care, particularly at household level so that both men and women could reap the benefits of the development that would result from shared responsibilities.

Further **ENCOURAGE** policymakers and law makers to have conversations with respect to gender roles and how they affect society, but more importantly to eliminate the societal norms that dictate that unpaid work is women's work and ensure that men champion the matter.

Hon. Peete Peete Ramoqai
CHAIRPERSON

Betty Zulu
COMMITTEE SECRETARY