



REPORT OF THE SADC PF REGIONAL WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS TO THE 50TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY SESSION, BASED ON THE VIRTUAL MEETING THAT WAS HELD ON 19TH OCTOBER 2021 UNDER THE THEME "EMPOWERING WOMEN IN A SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY-FOCUSED WORKFORCE IN SADC: A FOCUS ON SOCIAL PROTECTION"

Mr. President, I beg to move that this Plenary Assembly do adopt the Report of the Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus to the 50th Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, laid on the table on 10th of December 2021.

TABLE OF CONTENT

1.0	COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE	3
2.0	TERMS OF REFERENCE	3
3.0	NUMBER AND DATES OF MEETINGS	3
4.0	BACKGROUND	4
5.0	SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS	5
6.0	OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	8
7.0	CONCLUSION	8
8.0	APPENDIXES	9

1.0 COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee consisted of the following Members:

1. Hon. Anne Marie Mbilambangu, DRC,, (Chairperson)
2. Hon. Shally Josepha Raymond, Tanzania (Vice Chairperson)
3. Hon. Josefina Perpétua Diakité, Angola
4. Hon. Ruth Adriano Mendes, Angola
5. Hon. Maria Nascimento, Angola
6. Hon. Hon. Helena Bonguela Abel, Angola
7. Hon. Talita Monnakgotla, Botswana
8. HRH. Sen. Princess Phumelele Dlamini, Eswatini
9. Sen. Busisiwe Dlamini, Eswatini
10. Hon. Tsepang Tsita-Mosena, Lesotho
11. Hon. Ntasalla P. Mafa, Lesotho
12. Hon. Marie Jeanne d'Arc Masy Goulamaly, Madagascar
13. Hon. Emiline Ramaroso, Madagascar
14. Hon. Monica Chang'anamuno, Malawi
15. Hon. Rachel Zulu, Malawi
16. Hon. Marie Genevieve Stephanie Anquetil, Mauritius
17. Hon Marie Joanne Sabrina Tour, Mauritius
18. Hon. Jerónima Agostinho, Mozambique
19. Hon. Maria Marta Fernando, Mozambique
20. Hon. Paula Kooper, Namibia
21. Hon. Utaara Mootu, Namibia
22. Hon. Agnes Kafula, Namibia
23. Hon. Regina Esparon, Seychelles
24. Hon. Rosie Bistoquet, Seychelles
25. Hon. Audrey Vidot, Seychelles
26. Hon. Kelly Samynadin, Seychelles
27. Hon. Nkhensani Kate Bilankulu, South Africa
28. Hon. Hlengiwe Mkhali, South Africa
29. Hon. Hawa Subira Mwaifunga, Tanzania
30. Hon. Julien Nyemba, Zambia
31. Hon. Mutinta Mazoka, Zambia
32. Hon. Goodlucky Kwaramba, Zimbabwe
33. Hon. Paurina Mpariwa, Zimbabwe
34. Hon. Tambudzani Mohadi, Zimbabwe

2.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mr President, the Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus (RWPC), guided by its mandate in terms of Rule 42 (d) of the SADC PF Rules of Procedure.

3.0 NUMBER AND DATES OF MEETINGS

The RWPC convened its meeting virtually on 19th October 2021, to consider the theme of "Empowering Women in a Sustainable Industry-Focused Workforce: A Focus on Social Protection."

4.0 BACKGROUND

The 41st Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community was held in August of 2021 under the theme “Bolstering Production Capacities in the Face of COVID-19 Pandemic for Inclusive, Sustainable, Economic and Industrial Transformation”. During this meeting, States were urged to accelerate the implementation for the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030, especially the Industrialisation and Market Integration pillars. This inclusive approach for development constituted an ambitious yet necessary measure, to tackle the consequences of the economic and financial crisis brought about by the COVID-19 Pandemic, which had exacerbated unemployment figures across the SADC region.

The consequences of COVID-19 had disproportionately affected women workers. Women on the African continent, and in the SADC region specifically, accounted for a significant influx of informal and cross border trading, agriculture and entrepreneurship, working as nannies, street vendors and domestic workers. These were jobs where access to social security, pension schemes, health insurance and entitlement to sick leave was either limited or simply not provided.

The status of women workers in the SADC region was worrying, as the SADC Development Monitor in 2016 emphasized. SADC women continued to bear most of the burden of free domestic work and be part of the poor and informal sector, mainly due to high levels of illiteracy, limited access to productive resources and discriminatory laws.

Despite the discouraging data, women’s participation in the economy was seen to be key for economic recovery. The pandemic posed numerous challenges to the implementation of RISDP, but on the other hand, it also represented a unique opportunity for a deeper collective response to the challenges. The meeting of the RWPC under this theme, therefore, was an opportunity for the female parliamentarians of the SADC Region to reflect together on the challenges that women in the region were facing.

In order to increase women’s participation in the labour market and in economic growth in an integrated and sustainable manner, SADC must focus on policies, including social protection, geared towards women workers, that would allow women to gain and retain employment.

The theme of the meeting of the RWPC was selected in the quest to expose the participating MPs to the Conventions and Social Protections Schemes offered by the ILO, and to capacitate them to urge their States to align themselves with international and regional targets and standards of development and gender equality, which included addressing discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

5.0 SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

Members appreciated presentations about the work of the ILO concerning the crafting of International Labour Standard by lawyers, workers and governments, to constitute the common good of what is called the “International Code of Labour”.

During its meeting, the RWPC was informed, through presentations by representatives of the International Labour Organization (ILO), about the multiplicity of mechanisms and measures available for Parliaments to use as guidelines for policies that may guarantee social protection in the workplace and to ensure that women were not left behind, considering the rapid recovery, industry-induced, fast-changing job market that was being created in the SADC region and in the world, as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Once ratified by Parliaments, ILO Conventions and Recommendations may assist legislative bodies to implement changes in their national labour legislation and provide guiding tools for employers to establish gender-sensitive workplace regulatory instruments, that specifically included protections for women from all kinds of discrimination.

The first presentation was delivered by Mr. Markov Kroum, Social Protection Policy and Legal Officer, and Ms. Maya Stern-Plaza, Social Protection Standards and Legal Officer, both based in Geneva, Switzerland. Appreciating the first part of presentation, on the theme of “International Labour Standards and Women’s Rights” the meeting noted the following:

- i. International Labour Standards established principles and rights at work, with a goal to improve conditions on a global scale, and specified the rights recognised by international human rights treaties, by providing definitions and concepts directly related to the world of work;
- ii. The gender inequalities of every society and the socio-economic status of women and girls were reflected in the labour market;
- iii. Although most countries had basic non-discrimination and equal pay provisions, national laws were weakened by the fact that they did not protect certain groups of workers, they did not cover certain forms of discrimination, they did not fully reflect the principles as defined internationally and they allowed for exceptions, contrary to international standards;
- iv. In order to be effective, gender equality policies should cover the issues addressed in the following key Gender Equality Conventions: the Equal Remuneration Convention, the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, The Workers with Family Responsibilities Recommendation, and the Maternity Protection Convention;
- v. Progress to achieve de facto equality required a focus on work and family issues;
- vi. Maternity protection contributed to eliminating discrimination against women and promoted their equality.

In the second part of the presentation, titled “International Labour Standards and Women’s Rights: a Focus on Social Protection”, the meeting noted that:

- i. social protection was only part of the solution, not the sole solution to the issue of discrimination of women in the workplace;
- ii. Globally, 30.6% of people, men and women, had coverage of the most basic social protections (protection from unemployment, old age, pregnancy, work injury, sickness, invalidity and death of a survivor);
- iii. Of that global 30.6, women were 8% less covered than men;
- iv. 44,9% of women worldwide received a cash maternity benefit, in Africa only 15%, and in sub-Saharan Africa approximately 7.5%;
- v. Gender-sensitive contributory pension schemes based on collective financing and solidarity played a key role in adequate pension coverage for women if, for example, care credits were recognized and rewarded for periods spent caring for children or other family members, and if a minimum pension was guaranteed;
- vi. In terms of maternity benefits and childcare, it was important for policy makers and development workers to consider how the introduction of policies like paternity leave and childcare services could be best implemented to serve the needs of children and women, first;
- vii. It was important that social health protection took into consideration the fact that women, adolescent and the elderly included, could make their own decisions in regard to their own health;
- viii. Coverage gaps disproportionately affected women due to their need for long-term health care given their overall greater longevity, the burden of additional unpaid work caring for others, lesser participation unpaid employment and their limited access to social security coverage;
- ix. There was a fear that some of the gains that had been made in gender equality in recent decades were being reversed because of the pandemic, which had brought to light the coverage gaps in social protection;
- x. The global jobs and social protection response to the Covid crisis had essentially been largely gender blind;
- xi. The ILO main social security standards included the Employment Injury Benefits Convention, the Invalidity, Old-Age and Survivors’ Benefits Convention, the Medical Care and Sickness Benefits Convention, the Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, the Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention and the Social Protection Floors Recommendation;
- xii. The social protection floors should comprise at least the following basic social security guarantees: access to a set of goods and services constituting essential health care, including maternity care, basic income security for children, basic income security for persons in

- active age unable to earn sufficient income, basic income security for persons in old age;
- xiii. Convention 102 established minimum standards of social security, and although none of the countries in the SADC region had ratified it, except for the Democratic Republic of Congo, it had been used as a guideline by many.

The third presentation was about the results of a UNDP-ILO study on the “Informality and Social Protection in African Countries: A Forward-looking Assessment of Contributor Schemes”. It was a joint-presentation by Mr. Lorenzo Mancini, an Economist at UNDP, and Ms. Denise Monteiro, Social Protection officer, both based in Luanda.

The meeting noted that:

- i. The study highlighted the initiatives by African governments to extend social protection schemes, with a focus on vulnerable groups and the informal sector;
- ii. The informal sector economy was heterogeneous;
- iii. A strategy to extend the social protection to informal work needed to progressively ensure higher levels of protection, guided by Convention 102, and to guarantee access to essential health care and minimum income security for all, guided by Recommendation 202;
- iv. The role of the State in extending social protection to informal workers included the following commitments: to develop strategies for the extension of social protection (emphasizing on data collection and information), to establish an enabling environment for the coverage of previously uncovered workers by drafting laws and policies, to adapt the financing of social protection schemes to the situation of informal workers, to simplify and adapt contributions to social economic conditions in the informal economy, to match co-contributions, to draw on alternative economic relationships to co-finance worker contributions, to promote gender equality through financing, to actively facilitate access to social protection schemes, to ensure compliance and incentives, monitoring and evaluation, and to build trust.
- v. The transition to the formal economy required integrated policies: education, health, social protection, employment, vocational training, and gender equality;
- vi. Incentives were needed such as extension of social security, simple taxation, access to micro-enterprise and financial services, and vocational training.
- vii. States needed to rethink contributions and think about solidarity financing models, or perhaps contributory with the non-contributory social security systems, with special attention to women;
- viii. There was a need to adopt a simplified social protection regime for self-employed workers;
- ix. Continuous, open and honest social dialogue was key. Policies and strategies must be designed considering the needs and wishes of the groups they aimed to reach, to achieve greater adherence to social security systems.

6.0 OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the foregoing deliberations, the Committee resolved to recommend that the 50th Plenary Assembly of the Forum that the Assembly:

- i. **Implore** Member Parliaments to ratify Convention 102 on Social Security (Minimum Standards) and to consider ratifying other more advanced standards;
- ii. **Urge** States to invest in gender specific data collection and information gathering regarding labour, for better directed policy creation;
- iii. **Further urge** Member Parliaments to create laws that could sustain social protection strategies for vulnerable persons and groups;
- iv. **Call upon** Member States to maintain women's empowerment at the center of all economic recovery policies;
- v. **Encourage** Member States to engage in continuous, open and honest social dialogue with members of the informal sector to better meet their needs.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The RWPC took note of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the already underrepresented and unaccounted for group of women workers. The protection of women's rights in the workplace needs to be deemed as a priority for governments in order to encourage women to get involved in economic activity, and to feel secure in doing so. Women may be considered as an untapped resource for development in our countries. All their levels and spaces of activity need to be considered as added valued. Women should be included at all levels of the implementation of economic development policies, keeping women and girls's empowerment as one of the priorities.

The Caucus wishes to express its gratitude to the Secretariat for the support and guidance rendered to it. The Committee is also indebted to the resource persons for their expert presentations on the theme under consideration.

8.0 APPENDIXES

1. APPENDIX I – LIST OF OFFICIALS

Ms Boemo Sekgoma, Secretary General
Ms Clare Musonda, Director – Corporate Governance
Ms Yapoka Mungandi, Director – Administration, Finance and Human Resources
Mr Sheuneni Kurasha, Programme Manager – DGHR
Mrs Edna Kanguya Zgambo, Committee Secretary – TIFI
Ms Betty Zulu, Committee Secretary – GEWAYD
Mrs Sharon Muteto Nyirongo, Committee Secretary – FANR
Mr Dennis Gondwe, Committee Secretary – HSDSP
Ms Luziela Fernandes, Committee Secretary – RWPC
Mr Ronald Windwaai, Webmaster
Ms Paulina Kanguatjivi, Programmes Coordinator
Mr Wilfried Kongolo, ICT Intern
Ms Agnes Lilungwe, Personal Assistant to the Secretary General
Mr Modise Kabeli, Media Officer
Veronica Ribeiro – Desk Officer, Angola

2. APPENDIX II – OBSERVERS

Ms. Yande Kalengo – Action Aid Zambia

Mr. Innocent Manda – Chirundu FM, Malawi

Ms. Philile Faith Shande – Grountville Youth Organization, South Africa
Diplomats Extra Magazine, Nigeria

Ms. Nana Yaa Kyeretwie - Vision 1 FM, Ghana

Ms. Mmapula Malapoing – Sunday Standard Newspaper, Botswana

3. APPENDIX III – RESOURCE PERSONS

Maya Stern Plaza – Social Protection Standards and Legal Officer, ILO

Kroum Markov – Social Protection Policy and Legal Officer, ILO

Laura Kreft – ILO

Zeferino Teka – Programme Specialist Governance, UNDP

Denise Monteiro – Social Protection Officer, ILO

Joana Borges – ILO

Lorenzo Mancini – Economist, UNDP