

COMMUNIQUÉ

SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM 58TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY SESSION 30th NOVEMBER – 5th DECEMBER 2025

ETHEKWINI METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY (DURBAN) SOUTH AFRICA

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1. The SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) 58th Plenary Assembly was held from 30th November to 5th December 2025 in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality (Durban), Republic of South Africa, under the theme, *'The Impact of Climate Change on Women and Youth in the SADC Region and the Role of Parliaments in Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation.'*

2. The Plenary Assembly was attended by fourteen (14) of the fifteen (15) SADC PF Member Parliaments, namely, Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania tendered its apology.

3. The Plenary Assembly was also attended by representatives from partner organisations, including civil society, Members of Parliament from the Parliament of South Africa, who participated as observers, delegates from the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature, the South African Legislative Sector, eThekwini Municipality, Toyota South Africa—who presented on the theme—and academia, including the Thabo Mbeki African School of Public and International Affairs at UNISA.

4. The Plenary Assembly was officially opened by His Excellency Mr. Paul Mashatile, Acting President of the Republic of South Africa, who called for collective parliamentary action to address climate change, particularly its impact on women and youth. He highlighted key outcomes of the G20 Summit hosted by South Africa, including progress on climate resilience, energy access, food security, and youth empowerment. Commending

SADC's efforts to develop regional climate strategies, the Acting President emphasised the need for gender-responsive legislation, alignment of policies with international frameworks, and stronger oversight. Citing South Africa's 2024 Climate Change Act, the Acting President urged parliaments to allocate resources effectively, promote accountability, and ensure inclusive, people-centred climate policies.

5. The President of the SADC PF and Speaker of the Parliament of Madagascar, Hon. Randrianasoloniaiko Siteny Thierry, emphasised the Plenary Assembly's role in promoting democracy, good governance, and regional integration, while commending South Africa's leadership in championing the establishment of a SADC Parliament. He reaffirmed the Forum's commitment to inter-parliamentary cooperation and citizen participation, reiterated its readiness to evolve into a fully-fledged Parliament, anchored on strong governance and professional management systems, and called for support to ratify the Protocol to establish the SADC Parliament by August 2026.

6. In her welcome address, Hon. Thokozile Didiza, Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, underscored the urgency of collective action on climate change, citing recent climate-related disasters in the SADC region and stressed the need for climate-resilient policies and parliamentary leadership through legislation, oversight, and gender-responsive budgeting. Reflecting on COP30 outcomes, including the "Global Mutirao Decision" and the just transition mechanism, the Host Speaker called for harmonised legislative action across SADC member states to advance climate mitigation, adaptation, and inclusive development.

7. The Secretary General of the SADC PF, Her Excellency Boemo Sekgoma, in her introductory statement, paid tribute to South Africa's visionary leadership in global and regional affairs under the stewardship of President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa and highlighted eThekwini's legacy as a symbol of resilience and pan-African unity. Characterising climate change as a daily reality, she called for urgent, innovative, and bold parliamentary action rooted in regional solidarity and the legacy of the Frontline States. The Secretary General welcomed the Plenary Assembly's diverse representation, with 40.6% of the 69 parliamentarians in attendance being female.

8. Hon. Princess N. Mojapelo from the Southern Africa Youth Parliament, representing the youth, reaffirmed the vital role of young people in shaping policy in the SADC region, commended the SADC PF's youth-inclusive practices, and called for investment in youth leadership to address challenges such as unemployment, exclusion, conflict, gender-based violence, and climate change. She welcomed the establishment of the SADC PF Youth Caucus, urged parliaments to enact bold, inclusive legislation,

and concluded by declaring that youth are not leaders in waiting but leaders in motion.

9. The Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus (RWPC) Interim Chairperson, Hon. Senator Dr Lindiwe Nxumalo, commemorated the 2025 16 Days of Activism campaign by honouring iconic KwaZulu-Natal women leaders—Queen Nandi, Charlotte Maxeke, and Dorothy Nyembe—and called for urgent action against digital violence, gender-based violence, and climate vulnerability. The RWPC Interim Chairperson urged the domestication of the SADC PF Model Laws on GBV and Child Marriage, adoption of climate-smart, gender-responsive legislation, expanded SRHR access, and full women's representation, while commending South Africa's leadership through its National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide and recognition of GBV as a national crisis.

10. The Executive Mayor of eThekwini Municipality, Councillor Cyril Xaba, welcomed delegates to the city and emphasised that eThekwini has consistently borne the brunt of climate change impacts—such as catastrophic floods and extreme weather events—making it a fitting venue for critical regional dialogue on mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.

11. The Minister of Human Settlements of the Republic of South Africa, Hon. Thembi Simelane, emphasised the urgent need for deliberate and sustained investment in research, development, and innovative financing mechanisms to support climate-resilient infrastructure. The Minister underscored that rebuilding after climate-induced disasters requires a fundamental shift toward housing, human settlements, and public works that are capable of withstanding future shocks—thereby safeguarding communities and advancing sustainable development across the SADC region.

12. The Plenary Assembly expressed profound concern over the escalating impacts of climate change in the SADC region, including intensified droughts, devastating floods, tropical cyclones, and rising sea levels, which threaten food security, water access, public health, and socio-economic stability, thereby undermining the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and SADC's regional integration agenda.

13. The Plenary Assembly acknowledged that climate change is neither gender-neutral nor generation-blind, recognising that women and youth bear a disproportionate burden due to pre-existing socio-economic inequalities, reliance on climate-sensitive resources, and limited access to decision-making, finance, and technology.

14. The Plenary Assembly resolved to prioritise parliamentary oversight and promote regional policy harmonisation to combat the climate crisis,

safeguarding citizens and aligning climate action with the developmental aspirations of the SADC region as outlined in the SADC Vision 2050, the AU Agenda 2063, the outcomes of the 2025 G20 Summit, and COP30.

15. The Plenary Assembly reaffirmed the critical interlinkages between climate change, health, and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), noting that climate-induced disasters disrupt healthcare systems, restrict access to essential SRHR services, and heighten risks of maternal mortality, gender-based violence, child marriage, and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

16. The Plenary Assembly reaffirmed the central role of Parliaments in enacting climate-responsive legislation, approving climate-sensitive budgets, and strengthening oversight, while emphasising the need for dedicated climate research funding and the urgent adoption of gender-responsive, youth-sensitive policies that recognise women and youth as key agents of change.
17. The Plenary Assembly underscored the importance of strong parliamentary oversight to ensure transparency and accountability in climate finance, while promoting innovative financing for a just transition, and urged Member Parliaments to integrate climate resilience into national policies on agriculture, water management, and energy in response to threats to food sovereignty and water security.

18. The Plenary Assembly commended Member Parliaments for their progress in implementing previous resolutions and exercising effective oversight over the Executive. It further applauded the comprehensive country reports presented, reflecting a strong commitment to peer learning, mutual accountability, and advancing the SADC PF's strategic objective of strengthening the implementation capacity of SADC.

19. The Plenary Assembly adopted the reports of the Standing Committees, the Joint Sitting of Standing Committees, and the RWPC, which had convened under the theme, *'Enhancing the Role of Parliamentarians in Advocating for the Signing, Ratification, Accession, Domestication, and Implementation of SADC Protocols.'* The Committees had deliberated on a wide range of critical regional instruments essential for deepening integration and governance, with a particular focus on key SADC Protocols, including those on Energy (1996), Combating Corruption, Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (2001), Health (1999), Trade (1996), Industry (2019), the Facilitation of Movement of Persons (2005), Finance and Investment (2006), the Revised Protocol on Gender and Development (2016), and the Protocol on Employment and Labour (2025).

20. The Standing Committees had also examined crucial governance frameworks such as the Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2021), strategic commitments like the SADC Strategy

for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (2019-2030), and the SADC Declaration on Youth Development and Empowerment (2015), as well as key SADC Model Laws on Eradicating Child Marriage, on Gender-Based Violence, and on Elections. Accordingly, the Assembly;

(i) Called for parliamentary action to address the regional energy deficit by URGING national Parliaments to prioritise the ratification and domestication of the SADC Energy Protocol, strengthen oversight of its implementation and regional power pool integration, and utilise their budgetary authority to approve strategic investments in renewable energy and grid modernisation to promote a just energy transition;

(ii) Reaffirmed the critical role of Parliamentarians in election observation for democratic consolidation, called for predictable funding and increased parliamentary participation in SADC PF Election Observation Missions (EOMs), and urged the institutionalisation of EOM funding within the national budgets of Member Parliaments;

(iii) Encouraged Member Parliaments to strengthen oversight of anti-corruption strategies, advocate for the ratification of the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, and lead the revision of the SADC Model Law on Elections to address contemporary challenges such as cybersecurity, digital disinformation, and the conduct of elections during public health emergencies;

(iv) Expressed strong support for the RWPC's advocacy for gender-responsive climate action and encouraged Member Parliaments to ensure that climate policies and financing are guided by robust gender analysis, supported by gender-disaggregated data in carbon markets, and reinforced by strengthened oversight to hold implementing agencies accountable to gender inclusion standards;

(v) Commended the landmark benchmarking visit to Lesotho by the Regional Parliamentary Model Laws Oversight Committee and urged Member Parliaments to institutionalise similar peer-learning processes to support the domestication of SADC Model Laws, strengthen legal drafting capacity, enhance multi-stakeholder collaboration, and establish dedicated budgetary allocations and robust monitoring frameworks to translate model laws into tangible outcomes for SADC citizens;

(vi) Commended the ongoing development of the SADC Model Law on Safe Abortion, as mandated by the Plenary Assembly, and urged Member Parliaments to actively champion it as a vital, harmonised regional

framework, while facilitating inclusive national consultations on its context-sensitive, rights-based provisions;

(vii) Urged national parliaments to: advocate for the ratification and domestication of the Gender Protocol; accelerate the adoption of gender-responsive budgeting; strengthen monitoring frameworks; implement reforms to address digital gender-based violence; and promote expanded intergenerational dialogue.

(viii) Reaffirmed the SADC PF's commitment to gender equality and youth empowerment, and called for the development of a Youth Development Scorecard, alongside the institutionalisation of multisectoral engagement and sustained resource allocation to ensure inclusive and effective regional implementation;

(ix) Emphasised the critical need for strengthened parliamentary oversight in the areas of health and labour, by urging parliaments to: ensure adequate domestic funding for health protocols; ring-fence resources for HIV/AIDS and TB programmes; and expedite the ratification of the SADC Protocol on Employment and Labour;

(x) Strongly recommended that the SADC PF advocate for the elevation of the SADC SRHR Strategy into a legally binding Protocol, to ensure uniform legal reforms, enforceable commitments, and mandatory budget allocations across Member States—thereby strengthening accountability, enhancing implementation, and promoting sustainable progress in SRHR;

(xi) Reiterated that regional economic integration relies on effective parliamentary action, and urged Member Parliaments to prioritise the ratification of key trade and industry protocols and their annexes, align national legislation to eliminate non-tariff barriers, and enhance oversight of Executive commitments related to regional trade obligations;

(xii) Resolved to urge SADC Member Parliaments to fast-track ratification and domestication of the Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons, align national laws to support regional integration and a unified investment zone, and enhance oversight to ensure timely implementation of related commitments;

21. The Plenary Assembly adopted the Report of the 151st Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly held in Geneva from 19th to 23rd October 2025, welcomed the active participation of SADC Member Parliaments, acknowledged key outcomes—including the Geneva Declaration on

humanitarian norms, resolutions on illegal international adoptions, and the call for a female UN Secretary-General—and commended both Member Parliaments for their continued engagement in global processes and the SADC PF for its effective coordination which ensures a unified SADC voice within the African geopolitical group.

22. The Plenary Assembly expressed its deep gratitude to the Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, Hon. Angela Thokozile Didiza and Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces of South Africa, Hon. Refilwe Mtsweni-Tsipane and, through them, to the Government and people of the Republic of South Africa for their exceptional hospitality, flawless execution, and steadfast commitment to the resounding success of the 58th Plenary Assembly Session.

23. The Plenary Assembly also expressed its appreciation to the National Assembly of the Republic of Seychelles, through Hon. Speaker Azarel Jolinda Ernesta, for offering to host the 59th Plenary Assembly scheduled for the second quarter of 2026.

Done at eThekwini City, South Africa, on 4th December 2025