REPORT OF THE SADC PF STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN ADVANCEMENT AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT TO THE 59TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY SESSION

Mr President, I beg to move that the 59th Plenary Assembly do adopt the Report of the Standing Committee on Gender Equality, Women Advancement and Youth Development (GEWAYD), laid on the Table on 23 November 2026.

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1.0 COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

The GEWAYD Standing Committee comprises the Members listed in Appendix I. Observers, officials and resource persons are listed in Appendices II, III and IV, respectively.

2.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The specific Terms of Reference for the GEWAYD Standing Committee are set out in Rule 42(a) of the SADC PF Rules of Procedure, which mandates the Committee to address issues of gender equality, women's advancement and empowerment, youth development and children.

3.0 MEETINGS HELD DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

The Standing Committee on Gender Equality, Women Advancement and Youth Development (GEWAYD) held two statutory meetings in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 22 May and 15 October 2026, under the respective themes "Enhancing Parliamentary Advocacy for the Effective Domestication and Implementation of the SADC Protocols for Democratic and Inclusive Governance" and "Enhancing Parliamentary Advocacy for the Effective Domestication and Implementation of SADC Commitments on Gender Equality and Women's Political Participation".

4.0 BACKGROUND

The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and the SADC Framework for Achieving Gender Parity (2025–2035) provide a regional foundation for advancing gender equality, women's empowerment and equal participation in political and public decision-making. These instruments aim to translate regional commitments into national measures, including progress towards equal representation of women and men. However, persistent disparities reveal ongoing gaps between these commitments and their implementation. Progress remains constrained by legislative gaps, limited institutional capacity, inadequate financing and discriminatory practices. Political-party gatekeeping, unequal access to campaign resources, gender stereotypes and gender-based violence restrict women's opportunities to enter and influence decision-making. Technology-facilitated violence and online harassment create additional barriers, particularly for young women in political and public life.

Weak integration of gender-responsive budgeting into public financial management also limits the allocation and tracking of resources intended to address inequality. Effective implementation requires scrutiny of how public expenditure responds to different needs, including unpaid care responsibilities, access to services and economic opportunities. Reliable, disaggregated data and clear reporting arrangements are essential for assessing results.

Parliaments play a central role in closing these gaps through legislation, budget scrutiny, oversight and public engagement. The Committee therefore examined how parliamentary action could operationalise the Gender Parity Framework, strengthen gender-responsive budgeting and hold governments accountable for regional commitments. Its deliberations also addressed youth representation and

participation, protection from online violence, and the constitutional and legal processes by which regional instruments are translated into national laws, policies and adequately funded programmes.

5.0 PRESENTATIONS AND DELIBERATIONS

The Committee considered gender-responsive budgeting, the implementation of the SADC Gender Parity Framework, barriers to women's political participation, the domestication of regional instruments, and the relationship between constitutionalism, the rule of law, and gender equality.

5.1 Gender-Responsive Budgeting and Parliamentary Oversight

The Committee examined gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) as a means of assessing whether public revenue and expenditure addressed the distinct needs of women, men and marginalised groups. Members noted that budgeting practices could perpetuate inequalities in access to services, economic opportunities and unpaid care responsibilities. Priorities included gender-impact assessments, gender budget statements, adequate allocations for women's empowerment and for preventing gender-based violence, and scrutiny of expenditure and results. Sex-disaggregated data and committee hearings were identified as key accountability tools. The Committee also emphasised institutional capacity and cooperation among parliaments, government agencies and civil society. It identified wider use of the SADC PF Gender-Responsive Oversight Model (GROM) as a means of strengthening parliamentary scrutiny.

5.2 Gender Parity and Women's Political Participation

The Committee considered the implementation of the SADC Gender Parity Framework 2025–2035 and its target of 50% representation of women in political and public decision-making. Members linked this objective to the Revised SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and to wider regional commitments. Structural barriers included political-party gatekeeping, unequal access to campaign funding, patriarchal norms, gender stereotypes and gender-based violence. Affirmative action measures, quotas, gender-responsive legislation and economic empowerment were discussed as complementary responses.

Members emphasised the use of committee inquiries, questions to Ministers, motions, debates and legislative proposals to scrutinise national implementation and to seek corrective action. Progress required sustained political commitment, adequate resources and reliable data on representation and participation. Technology-facilitated gender-based violence, cyberviolence and coordinated online harassment were identified as threats to women leaders, particularly young women. The Committee highlighted the need for effective reporting, protection and accountability mechanisms, and for a review of relevant regional model-law guidance.

5.3 Youth Participation and Regional Programme Implementation

The Committee identified resource constraints and weak coordination as barriers to effective youth networks and to implementing the Youth Development Scorecard. It

called for clearer operational arrangements for the Regional SADC PF Youth Caucus and for a regional baseline on youth representation, committee participation and leadership. In considering the project to enhance accountability and citizens' participation in regional integration (2025–2027), the Committee emphasised the need to integrate gender expertise, monitoring and evaluation, and reliable data into programme delivery. It also recognised the value of intergenerational dialogue and sustained engagement with women and young people.

5.4 Constitutionalism and Domestication of Regional Commitments

The Committee regarded constitutional supremacy, the rule of law, separation of powers, fundamental rights and independent institutions as foundations of gender equality. Examples from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Malawi and Mozambique illustrated the importance of constitutional guarantees for women's rights and representation, and how these interact with customary and personal laws. The discussion distinguished between signature, ratification or accession, entry into force, and domestic implementation of international instruments. The applicable process varied by each country's constitutional and legal system, including monist, dualist and mixed approaches. Members noted that implementation could require legislative incorporation, policy measures, institutional arrangements and adequate financing. Members emphasised parliamentary engagement across the policy, legislative and budget cycles to identify legal gaps, monitor implementation and ensure that regional commitments translated into practical benefits.

6.0 COMMITTEE OBSERVATIONS AND PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Following the presentations and deliberations at the two meetings, the Committee made the following observations and recommendations:

RECALLING regional commitments to gender equality and equal representation under the SADC Gender Parity Framework 2025–2035;

CONCERNED that discriminatory party practices, financing barriers, unequal care burdens and gender-based violence, including online abuse, restrict women's political participation;

RECOGNISING Member Parliaments' responsibility to advance equality through legislation, budget scrutiny, oversight and representation;

ACKNOWLEDGING the value of the Gender-Responsive Oversight Model (GROM), gender budget statements and gender-impact assessments in strengthening accountability;

CONCERNED about resource and coordination gaps affecting youth representation and participation;

EMPHASISING the need for gender expertise, disaggregated data, monitoring and evaluation, and intergenerational dialogue;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Committee resolved to recommend that the 59th Plenary Assembly should:

(i) **URGE** Member Parliaments to seek annual government reports on the implementation of the Revised SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and the SADC Gender Parity Framework 2025–2035, to scrutinise progress, and to pursue legislative and institutional reforms to remove barriers to women's political participation;

(ii) **CALL UPON** Member Parliaments to institutionalise gender-responsive budget scrutiny by using gender budget statements, gender-impact assessments and disaggregated expenditure data; to strengthen committee capacity through GROM; and to monitor allocations, expenditure and results for gender equality and youth development;

(iii) **REQUEST** the SADC PF Secretariat to submit a costed plan to the appropriate governing structure for approval to operationalise the Regional SADC PF Youth Caucus, specifying membership, governance, activities and resource requirements;

(iv) **REQUEST** the SADC PF Secretariat to finalise and circulate the Scorecard on Youth Representation and Participation within SADC PF Member Parliaments;

(v) **CALL UPON** Member Parliaments to provide data on youth representation, committee participation and leadership to establish a regional baseline and inform targeted action; and

(vi) **WELCOMED** the Plenary Assembly's decision to amend the SADC Model Law on Elections to include provisions addressing technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and called for these provisions to cover reporting, investigation, victim protection and accountability, and for the development of model guidance on parliamentary responses to online violence against women in political and public life.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The Committee calls for parliamentary action to translate regional gender and youth commitments into legislation, adequately funded programmes and measurable results. Priorities include removing barriers to women's political participation, strengthening gender-responsive budgeting, protecting women from online violence and improving youth representation. The Committee commends the proposed resolutions for the 59th Plenary Assembly for consideration and adoption, and urges sustained follow-up by Member Parliaments and the Secretariat.

Mr President, I beg to move.

Hon. Helen Pushy MANYENENG i	Ms. Tlotlego CHABALALA
CHAIRPERSON	**COMMITTEE SECRETARY**

8.0 APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

1. Hon. Helen Pushy Manyeneng, MP (Botswana) ***(Chairperson)***
2. Hon. Govinden Pynivel Venkatasami (Mauritius) ***(Vice Chairperson)***
3. Hon. Teresa José Adelina Neto (Angola)
4. Hon. Cathy Moleka Sakombi (DRC)
5. Hon. Nokuthula Dlamini (Eswatini)
6. Hon. Senator Thato 'Mako Mohale (Lesotho)
7. Hon. Bismark Monk-Mann (Madagascar)
8. Hon. Francis Lucky Phiso (Malawi)
9. Hon. Ivandro Massingue (Mozambique)
10. Hon. Progress Sipapela M (Namibia)
11. Hon. Denise Clarisse (Seychelles)
12. Hon. Sylvia Lucas (South Africa)
13. Hon. Prof. Joyce Lazaro Ndalichako (Tanzania)
14. The Parliament of Zambia is yet to constitute its membership of the Committee.
15. Hon. Maybe Mbohwa (Zimbabwe)

APPENDIX II: OBSERVERS

Hon. Sharonice Busch	Namibia

APPENDIX III: LIST OF OFFICIALS

Ms. Tlotlego Chabalala	Committee Secretary
Ms. Paulina Kanguatjivi	SADC PF
Ms. Mwala Neo	Namibia
Mr. Rosa Iteta	Namibia

APPENDIX IV: RESOURCE PERSONS

Ms. Portia Kurima	OXFAM
Mr. Philip Muziri	OXFAM