REPORT OF THE SADC PF STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRATISATION, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS 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 Democratisation, Governance and Human Rights (DGHR) laid on the Table on 23 October 2026.

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1.0 COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

The Standing Committee on Democratisation, Governance and Human Rights (DGHR) comprises the Members listed in Appendix I. Officials and resource persons are listed in Appendices II and III, respectively.

2.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The specific Terms of Reference for the DGHR Standing Committee are set out in Rule 42(d) of the Rules of Procedure of the SADC PF. In exercising its mandate, the Committee considered electoral governance, democratic accountability, human rights and emerging governance challenges.

3.0 MEETINGS HELD DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

The Committee held two meetings during the period under review. The first meeting took place on 22 May 2026 at the Southern Sun OR Tambo International Airport Hotel in Johannesburg, South Africa, under the theme *"From Commitment to Action: Strengthening Parliamentary Leadership in Domesticating the SADC Model Law on Elections."* The second meeting was held on 15 October 2026 at the Radisson Blu in Sandton, Johannesburg, under the theme *"Shaping Southern Africa's Democratic Future: Strengthening Parliamentary Foresight, Resilience and Responsive Governance."*

4.0 BACKGROUND

The Committee's work addressed two complementary priorities: implementing regional electoral commitments and strengthening parliamentary capacity to anticipate emerging democratic and governance challenges. Its deliberations linked immediate electoral reform and oversight needs to longer-term questions of institutional resilience and responsive governance. Electoral priorities included domestication of the SADC Model Law on Elections, implementation of regional electoral standards, transparent political financing and inclusive participation. Digital campaigning, misinformation, cybersecurity and electoral data protection presented additional challenges. The Committee also examined sustainable financing for SADC PF Election Observation Missions (EOMs) and parliamentary follow-up to observer recommendations.

The inquiry took account of activities under the project *"Strengthening National-Regional Linkages - Enhancing Accountability and Citizens' Participation in Regional Integration through a Regional Parliament"* (2025–2027), including national electoral-law engagements and development of the SADC Model Law on Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law. These activities supported broader work on accountability, citizen participation and the transformation of the Forum into a regional parliament. Demographic change, inequality, climate pressures, migration, technological developments and public confidence in institutions informed the Committee's examination of democratic futures. Strategic foresight provided a means of testing assumptions and considering plausible risks and opportunities before they became entrenched. The Committee therefore examined how parliamentary legislation, budget scrutiny, oversight and representation could translate regional commitments and longer-term analysis into practical action.

5.0 PRESENTATIONS AND DELIBERATIONS

5.1 Electoral Reform and Implementation of Regional Standards

The Committee noted persistent gaps in the domestication and implementation of the SADC Model Law on Elections, despite national electoral reforms. It emphasised the need for electoral legislation and institutions to reflect regional standards while adapting to evolving political and technological conditions. The regional domestication study conducted with the Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries (ECF-SADC) was considered a basis for identifying outstanding reforms.

Members highlighted parliamentary scrutiny of electoral laws, oversight of electoral management bodies within their legal mandates, political-finance transparency, and follow-up on SADC and SADC PF observer recommendations. Electoral frameworks also needed to address cybersecurity, misinformation and disinformation, digital campaigning, data protection, and emergency preparedness, while safeguarding fundamental rights. Members emphasised equitable participation by women, young people, persons with disabilities, and marginalised communities.

5.2 Election Observation Financing and Follow-Up

The Committee identified unpredictable financing as a persistent constraint on SADC PF EOMs. Sustainable funding was necessary to support parliamentary participation, continuity and institutional learning across pre-election assessment, observation and post-election follow-up. Members proposed that Member Parliaments provide appropriate budgetary provisions and prioritise representatives with governance, legal, electoral or human-rights responsibilities. They also emphasised coordinated tracking of observer recommendations through parliamentary committees and national reform processes.

5.3 Regional Governance Cooperation and Project Implementation

The Committee noted progress on the 2025–2027 project, including work on the SADC Model Law on Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law, and on electoral model-law domestication engagements in Malawi and Lesotho. It acknowledged support from cooperating partners, including the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through GIZ, International Partnerships Austria, and the European Union. Members called for stronger committee oversight, stakeholder engagement and reporting on project activities. They also considered progress towards a regional parliament and the review of public hearings to inform future citizen-engagement programmes.

5.4 Citizen Participation and Public Confidence

The Committee linked democratic accountability and public confidence to citizens' ability to influence parliamentary work. It expressed concern about declining voter participation, particularly among young people, and about the frustration that could arise when institutions failed to acknowledge public contributions or explain how they were considered. Public consultations, petitions, hearings, constituency outreach and digital channels should reach underrepresented communities and connect directly with legislative and oversight processes. Members highlighted the

need for meaningful youth participation and for feedback to contributors, drawing on citizen-engagement guides developed by the International Parliament Engagement Network (IPEN) and INTER PARES.

5.5 Strategic Foresight and Democratic Resilience

Long-term country- and regional-level modelling towards 2043 examined the interplay of demographic change, health, agriculture, education, manufacturing, infrastructure, trade, financial flows and governance. The Committee recognised that foresight explored plausible trajectories and the consequences of current choices, rather than predicting a single future. Members emphasised that projections should be interpreted in light of their assumptions and data limitations, including uneven availability of updated information across countries and sectors. Institutional capacity, inclusion, transparent public resource management and effective oversight were identified as important for long-term development.

Horizon scanning, scenario analysis, research and public engagement could help committees identify emerging risks and assess the long-term effects of legislation, policy and development plans. Members favoured incremental integration into existing research and committee functions, tailored to each Parliament's capacity. Foresight exercises should reflect political plurality and include citizens, young people and the interests of future generations. Regional peer learning and strategic partnerships could strengthen research capacity and translate analysis into parliamentary priorities.

5.6 Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence

The Committee considered applications of artificial intelligence (AI) for document digitisation, legislative comparison, report summarisation, analysis of public submissions, and access to parliamentary information. Members emphasised that adoption required an institution-wide assessment of readiness, purpose, and risk. Safeguards should distinguish public information from confidential and pre-publication material, control access, protect data, and require verification of AI-assisted outputs. Human responsibility for parliamentary decisions and published work should remain explicit.

5.7 Inclusive Development of Regional Model Laws

Members emphasised that regional model-law development should enable meaningful participation by Member Parliaments and reflect diverse legal and parliamentary traditions. In particular, the Committee called for greater Francophone participation, supported by timely access to documents and opportunities for substantive technical input.

6.0 COMMITTEE OBSERVATIONS AND PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Following its deliberations at the two meetings, the Committee made the following observations:

RECOGNISING that regional electoral commitments require sustained national legislation, financing and oversight;

NOTING gaps in the domestication of the SADC Model Law on Elections and the need to address emerging digital and political-finance risks while protecting fundamental rights;

CONCERNED that disinformation, misinformation, cybersecurity threats, exclusion and declining participation may undermine electoral integrity and public confidence;

EMPHASISING the importance of inclusive participation, civic education and accessible parliamentary engagement;

ACKNOWLEDGING the need for sustainable EOM financing and coordinated follow-up to observer recommendations;

ACKNOWLEDGING progress under the 2025–2027 regional parliamentary project and the support of cooperating partners;

RECOGNISING that strategic foresight, research and public engagement can help parliaments anticipate risks and assess the long-term effects of their decisions;

NOTING the potential of AI to support parliamentary work and the need for institution-wide safeguards;

EMPHASISING responsible information management, verification and human accountability;

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

(i) **URGE** Member Parliaments to review and, where appropriate, align electoral laws and institutional frameworks with the SADC Model Law on Elections and the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, addressing digital campaigning, misinformation, cybersecurity, data protection, emergency preparedness and political-finance transparency while protecting fundamental rights and inclusive participation;

(ii) **CALL UPON** Member Parliaments to budget for participation in SADC PF Election Observation Missions, prioritise Members with relevant committee responsibilities and monitor implementation of observer recommendations through committee oversight;

(iii) **REQUEST** the Executive Committee to secure sustainable policy and budgetary commitments from Speakers and Presiding Officers for parliamentary election observation;

(iv) DIRECT the SADC PF Secretariat, within approved mandates and resources, to coordinate technical cooperation with relevant SADC structures, ECF-SADC, and cooperating partners on electoral reforms and parliamentary follow-up on the domestication of the Model Law on Elections;

(v) ENCOURAGE Member Parliaments to expand accessible consultations, petitions, public hearings, constituency outreach and digital engagement, prioritise young people and underrepresented communities, and report on how public contributions inform parliamentary work;

(vi) CALL UPON Member Parliaments to strengthen research capacity and integrate horizon scanning and scenario analysis into committee work, legislative scrutiny and oversight of development plans, incorporating diverse political and citizen perspectives and the interests of young people and future generations;

(vii) ENCOURAGE Member Parliaments to assess institutional readiness and risks before adopting artificial intelligence tools and establish safeguards for data protection, access controls, output verification and human accountability; and

(viii) URGED the SADC PF Secretariat to strengthen ongoing efforts to secure inclusive expert input into the development of model laws, ensuring participation across the Forum's official languages and legal traditions.

(ix) ENCOURAGE Member Parliaments to provide dedicated budget support for participation in SADC PF EOMs, prioritise Members with relevant committee responsibilities and track implementation of observer recommendations through parliamentary oversight; and

(x) REQUEST the Executive Committee to engage Speakers and Presiding Officers on sustainable policy and budgetary commitments for parliamentary election observation.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The Committee calls for parliamentary leadership that integrates the implementation of regional electoral commitments with inclusive participation, effective oversight and preparation for emerging governance challenges. Sustainable election observation, coordinated follow-up, stronger research and responsible use of technology can strengthen democratic accountability and public confidence. The Committee commends the proposed resolutions for the 59th Plenary Assembly for consideration and adoption. The Committee records its appreciation for the support of the Secretariat, resource persons and cooperating partners.

Mr President, I beg to move.

Hon. Napo Moshoeshoe	Mr Stanley Banda
CHAIRPERSON	**COMMITTEE SECRETARY**

8.0 APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

1. Hon. Napo Moshoeshoe (Lesotho) ***(Chairperson)***
2. Hon. Claudette Louise (Seychelles) ***(Vice Chairperson)***
3. Hon. Francoise Ndokwa Bemba (DRC)
4. Sen. Isaac Magagula (Eswatini)
5. Hon. Peter Dimba (Malawi)
6. Hon. Ratsiraka Sophie Soamiadana (Madagascar)
7. Hon. Raimundo Diomba (Mozambique)
8. Hon. Paula Kooper (Namibia)
9. Hon. Kenneth Mosimanegare Mmoiemang (South Africa)
10. Hon. Leepetswe Lesedi (Botswana)
11. Hon. Tendai Nyabani (Zimbabwe)
12. Hon. Pedro Sebastiao (Angola)
13. Hon. Raviraj Sihna Beechook (Mauritius)
14. Hon. Letengano George Mwalwiba (Tanzania)
15. Zambia — membership not specified in the submitted report
16. Proxy representative: Hon. Galenawabo Lekau (Botswana), for Hon. Leepetswe Lesedi

APPENDIX II: OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

1. Sheuneni Kurasha, Director, Parliamentary Business and Programmes, SADC PF Secretariat
2. Ndeutalala Amulungu, Monitoring and Evaluation, SADC PF Secretariat
3. Agnes Lilungwe, Executive Secretary to the Secretary General, SADC PF Secretariat
4. Stanley Banda, Staff – Zambia

APPENDIX III: RESOURCE PERSONS

1. Dr Henry Chingaipe, Director, Institute for Policy Research and Social Empowerment
2. Jakkie Cilliers, Chairperson, Institute for Security Studies
3. Professor Cristina Leston-Bandeira, University of Leeds and co-founder of IPEN
4. Marci Harris, INTER PARES and International IDEA
5. Ingrid Walker, INTER PARES and International IDEA