SPEECH SECONDING THE MOTION FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE SADC MODEL LAW ON CORRECTIONAL CENTRE OVERSIGHT

Mr President, I rise to second the Motion for the adoption of the SADC Model Law on Correctional Centre Oversight ably moved by the Mover.

Mr President, the strength of a democracy is measured not only by how it treats those who enjoy freedom and power, but also by how it treats those who are most vulnerable. Among them are persons deprived of their liberty and placed under the care of the State. Their rights and dignity must remain protected, regardless of the circumstances of their detention.

This is why the Model Law before us is so important. It recognises that correctional centre oversight is not merely an administrative responsibility, but a fundamental requirement of good governance, accountability and the rule of law.

Mr President,

What distinguishes this Model Law is its emphasis on **independent and effective oversight**. It provides a framework for institutions with the authority and independence to inspect correctional facilities, investigate complaints, access information and hold responsible authorities accountable. Without effective oversight, abuse and neglect can remain hidden from public scrutiny.

Of particular importance is the role assigned to **national Parliaments under Part 11**. Our responsibility does not end with passing legislation or approving budgets. We must scrutinise conditions of detention, examine inspection reports, conduct inquiries, follow up on recommendations and ensure that oversight findings lead to meaningful reforms.

The Model Law also gives special attention to persons facing additional barriers, including women, children, persons with disabilities, refugees and migrants. It recognises that effective protection requires oversight arrangements that respond to their particular circumstances and needs.

Equally important is its emphasis on **prevention rather than reaction**. Through regular inspections, monitoring and early identification of risks, oversight institutions can help prevent overcrowding, ill-treatment, violence, inadequate healthcare and deaths in custody. We should not have to wait for a tragedy before demanding accountability.

Mr President,

Ultimately, this Model Law is about ensuring that correctional institutions respect human dignity, uphold the law and fulfil their responsibility to rehabilitate and reintegrate persons into society.

Its adoption will provide our Member States with a common framework for strengthening accountability while respecting their different legal and institutional systems. It will also reinforce Parliaments' responsibility to ensure that places of detention are never beyond public oversight.

Mr President, correctional centres may restrict liberty, but they must never extinguish human dignity. That is the principle we must uphold through this Model Law.

For these reasons, I fully support its adoption and urge Honourable Members to do likewise.

Mr President, I am pleased to second the Motion for the adoption of the SADC Model Law on Correctional Centre Oversight.

I thank you.