REPORT OF THE JOINT SITTING OF THE SADC PF STANDING COMMITTEES TO THE 59TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY SESSION

Mr President, I beg to move that the 59th Plenary Assembly do adopt the Report of the Joint Sitting of the Standing Committees of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, laid on the Table on 23 November 2026.

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1.0 COMPOSITION OF THE JOINT SITTING

The Joint Sitting comprised Members of the five SADC PF Standing Committees: Democratisation, Governance and Human Rights; Gender Equality, Women Advancement and Youth Development; Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Climate Action; Human and Social Development and Special Programmes; and Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment.

2.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference of the Joint Sitting are to consider cross-cutting issues of mutual interest to the Standing Committees, in accordance with parliamentary practice. The Joint Sitting provides a forum for coordinated deliberation and for making recommendations to the Plenary Assembly on matters of mutual interest to all the Committees.

3.0 NUMBER AND DATES OF MEETINGS

The Joint Sitting held two meetings in Johannesburg, South Africa: the first during the Standing Committee Session of 18–22 May 2026 at the Southern Sun O.R. Tambo Hotel, under the theme "Enhancing Parliamentary Advocacy for Effective Democratisation and Implementation of SADC Protocols for Democratic and Inclusive Governance"; and the second from 12 to 14 October 2026 at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Sandton, under the theme "From Regional Commitments to National Action: Strengthening Parliamentary Leadership for Regional Integration, Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law".

4.0 BACKGROUND

The SADC Treaty, Vision 2050, the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020–2030, regional protocols and SADC PF model laws set out shared commitments to regional integration, democratic governance, equality and human development. Their effectiveness depends on national legislation, adequate financing, capable institutions and sustained oversight. Over the two meetings, Members examined the gap between regional commitments and national implementation. Barriers included unequal political participation, weak institutional safeguards, fragmented implementation, inadequate resources, and limited opportunities for affected communities to influence decisions. These challenges linked gender equality, youth and disability inclusion to constitutional accountability and public confidence.

The May deliberations focused on women's political participation, cross-party cooperation, media narratives, inclusive governance, correctional oversight and safeguards against sexual harassment. The October meeting extended this work to include implementation monitoring, the prevention of child marriage, regional development financing and parliamentary capacity in constitutionalism, democratic resilience and the rule of law. This report consolidates their findings and recommendations.

5.0 PRESENTATIONS AND DELIBERATIONS

5.1 Women's Political Representation and Substantive Influence

Members identified party gatekeeping, discriminatory norms, unequal campaign resources, gender-based violence and care responsibilities as barriers to women's political participation. Deliberations examined gender-responsive party structures, transparent candidate selection, quotas, alternating women–men party lists, equitable financing and a safe political environment. Electoral reform design needed to reflect the national electoral system and constitutional framework. Political-party whips were identified as key links between party leaders, women's caucuses and parliamentary decision-making. Women's caucuses offered opportunities for cross-party cooperation, although party differences and inadequate funding could constrain collective action. Members proposed focused common agendas, dedicated institutional support, engagement with civil society and traditional leaders, and the involvement of men as allies.

The Joint Sitting emphasised the distinction between numerical representation and meaningful influence. Women required equitable access to committee leadership, agenda-setting, influential policy portfolios and institutional resources. Mentoring, research and communication support should be linked to opportunities to exercise authority. Regional monitoring instruments and political-participation barometers were considered useful for identifying gaps and tracking progress, while low youth representation reinforced the need for leadership pathways for young women.

5.2 Media Narratives and Safety in Political Life

Members highlighted unequal media visibility, sexist framing, and scrutiny of appearance or family status, all of which could undermine women's authority. Digital platforms offered direct communication opportunities, but access remained uneven, particularly in rural areas. Online harassment, manipulated images, and cloned voices posed additional risks. Priorities included fair and substantive media coverage, communication training, digital literacy, and effective protection and remedies. Members called for prevention, accessible reporting and legal assistance, and for investigation and accountability. Safeguards should protect participation and legitimate expression, with parliamentary communications services and independent media contributing in their respective roles.

5.3 Disability Inclusion and Youth Participation

The Joint Sitting considered the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the African disability-rights framework. Members identified uneven national implementation and weak accountability, and proposed stronger regional cooperation, including consideration of a dedicated SADC disability protocol. Parliamentary priorities included reviewing discriminatory laws, ensuring accessible buildings and information, consulting directly with organisations of persons with disabilities, scrutinising disability expenditure, and providing

regular government reporting. Inclusion required practical measures and resources, not legal recognition alone.

Young people were recognised as rights-holders and governance partners. Members proposed structured youth advisory platforms, youth-inclusive hearings, and pre-Plenary consultations linked to legislation, budgets, and oversight. Participation mechanisms should include young women, young people with disabilities, and rural and economically marginalised young people, and should provide feedback on how their contributions were considered.

5.4 Civil Society Cooperation and Socioeconomic Justice

Civil society organisations contributed research, community testimony and evidence of implementation gaps. The Joint Sitting called for structured cooperation that could withstand political transitions and link submissions to committee consideration, Plenary outcomes and follow-up. Members linked inequality to democratic accountability, noting overlapping barriers across education, health, employment, land, justice, social protection and digital access. Public accounts scrutiny, participatory budgeting and sector oversight should assess who benefited from expenditure and whether programmes reached excluded communities. Parliamentary partnerships should broaden access while preserving political plurality and institutional independence.

5.5 Correctional Oversight and Protection Against Sexual Harassment

The May meeting validated the draft SADC Model Law on Correctional Centre Oversight, subject to amendments, and considered the Regional Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy (RASHP). These instruments addressed accountability and dignity in different institutional settings and required separate approval and implementation processes.

Correctional priorities included independent oversight bodies with access to facilities, unannounced visits, adequate resources, and follow-up reporting. Members examined alternatives to detention for minor offences, the prolonged detention of foreign nationals and stateless persons, access to legal procedures, and protection for those providing information to oversight bodies. They also emphasised safeguards for pregnant women and children, appropriate nutrition and health services, rehabilitation and reintegration, family notification, and independent investigation of deaths or serious injuries in custody. The policy discussion covered designated focal points, referral to the Secretary General, secure digital reporting, an independent committee of retired judges, and emergency channels. Proposals to extend reporting periods from two to five years and to alter the judges' committee composition remained open for further consideration. Members also discussed knowingly false complaints; any provision would require careful drafting to preserve fair process and avoid deterring good-faith reporting.

Members affirmed that dress or perceived provocation could not justify harassment and that safeguards should apply to all genders, including online and AI-enabled abuse. Parliamentary privilege should not shield misconduct. Proposed implementation arrangements included constituting the

independent committee within 90 days of adoption, issuing operational guidance within 60 days and annual training during 2026–2028, subject to the final policy and Plenary decisions.

5.6 Child Marriage Prevention and Implementation Monitoring

The October meeting featured a demonstration of the Dashboard for monitoring the implementation of the SADC Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Children Already in Marriage. Ten years after the Model Law's adoption, the Dashboard offered a means of linking legal commitments with national trends, budgets, services and outcomes. The tool brought together child-marriage indicators and related health and education information, with definitions, sources, country comparisons and guidance materials. Members examined indicator definitions, minimum-age provisions, national action plans and budget data. The Dashboard relied on official, validated information; gaps in disability, location and community-level data required attention.

Members called for parliamentary focal points, regular data validation, and the use of findings in committee inquiries, legislative review, budget scrutiny, and questions to the Executive. Prevention also required closing legal loopholes, aligning customary and statutory protections, registration and age verification, referral services, poverty reduction, support for school retention and return, and engagement with young people and traditional leaders.

5.7 Regional Integration and Development Financing

The Joint Sitting considered SADC's institutional architecture, the RISDP, and the links among economic integration, infrastructure, human development, peace and governance. Members emphasised the need for systematic parliamentary tracking of regional commitments and stronger information exchange among national parliaments, the SADC PF and the SADC Secretariat. The SADC Regional Development Fund (RDF) was presented as a mechanism to mobilise Member State, development-partner and private-sector resources through four windows: infrastructure, regional integration and adjustment, industrial development, and social development. Presenters estimated an annual regional infrastructure financing gap of USD 30–40 billion.

The October briefing reported eleven signatures and four ratifications of the RDF Agreement, falling short of the entry-into-force threshold of eleven ratifications. It outlined a proof-of-concept phase with proposed Member State contributions of USD 120 million and support of USD 9.5 million from the African Development Bank. Members emphasised scrutiny of outstanding treaty procedures, contributions, governance, investment selection and national budget provision.

5.8 Constitutionalism and Accountable Public Institutions

Members highlighted the distinction between having a written Constitution and practising constitutionalism. Constitutional supremacy, legality, separation of powers, rights, judicial review and respect for institutional limits

require public institutions to act within their lawful powers and to account for their decisions. Constitutional review should follow lawful, transparent and participatory procedures. Members cautioned that formally lawful amendments could still weaken institutional independence, democratic safeguards or peaceful alternation. Parliament should seek reasoned explanations, assess the implications for rights and scrutinise proposals before safeguards are removed.

The Joint Sitting emphasised the need for adequate resources and independence for Parliament, the courts, electoral commissions, Ombudsman institutions and other oversight bodies. Parliamentary scrutiny should extend throughout the legislative cycle, including delegated legislation, implementation and compliance with court decisions. Emergency powers should be necessary, proportionate, time-bound and subject to effective parliamentary and judicial oversight.

5.9 Democratic Space and Electoral Resilience

The October deliberations linked democratic decline to weakened checks and balances, restricted civic space, corruption, inequality, conflict and institutions' failure to respond to citizens. Public preference for democracy could coexist with dissatisfaction with its performance, particularly among young people. Freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly and access to information were identified as essential to accountability. Members called for scrutiny of laws affecting civil society, digital platforms and internet access, with proportionate safeguards against hate speech and incitement that did not suppress legitimate criticism. Constitutional literacy and inclusive participation could strengthen public confidence.

Electoral resilience required independent, adequately funded electoral bodies, transparent appointments, effective dispute resolution, and protection against violence, misinformation and electoral manipulation. Members proposed longer-term observation, clear benchmarks, public tracking of recommendations, and peer follow-up. Peaceful transitions in the region underscored the importance of credible processes and constitutional continuity.

5.10 Parliamentary Input into the Constitutionalism Model Law

The October meeting deepened Members' understanding of constitutionalism and identified perspectives to inform the draft SADC Model Law on Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law. These perspectives included checks and balances, constitutional literacy, public participation, term limits and peaceful alternation, independent institutions, electoral integrity, proportionate limitations on rights and emergency oversight. Members called for shared regional safeguards that respected constitutional diversity and were developed through inclusive regional dialogue. The discussions provided input for ongoing technical development and did not constitute final validation or adoption of the draft Model Law.

6.0 OBSERVATIONS AND PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

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

RECALLING regional commitments to equality, children's rights, inclusion, constitutional governance and people-centred integration;

CONCERNED that discrimination, violence, weak institutions, inadequate financing and limited oversight undermine implementation;

RECOGNISING the importance of cross-party cooperation, accessible public participation, reliable data and coordinated parliamentary follow-up;

ACKNOWLEDGING progress on correctional oversight, anti-sexual harassment safeguards and the child-marriage implementation Dashboard;

EMPHASISING constitutional supremacy, institutional independence, civic freedoms, credible elections and peaceful transfer of power; and

RECOGNISING the need to translate regional commitments into national laws, budgets, programmes and measurable results;

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

(i) **URGE** Member Parliaments to review electoral and party-financing laws and promote affirmative-action measures, including quotas and alternating women–men party lists where appropriate, to advance equal representation and equitable campaign financing;

(ii) **CALL UPON** Member Parliaments to resource cross-party women's caucuses, ensure equitable access to parliamentary leadership and institutional support, and strengthen cooperation with party whips, civil society and men as allies;

(iii) **DIRECT** the SADC PF Secretariat, working with Member Parliaments and within approved resources, to provide mentoring, research and communication support for women parliamentarians, young women leaders and supporting staff, and engage media organisations on fair coverage and digital safety;

(iv) **URGE** Member Parliaments to strengthen prevention, reporting, protection, legal assistance and accountability for violence against women in politics, including technology-facilitated abuse, while protecting legitimate expression;

(v) **CALL UPON** Member Parliaments to remove discriminatory legal provisions, scrutinise disability-related budgets, ensure accessible

facilities and information, and consult organisations of persons with disabilities;

(vi) **REQUEST** the SADC PF Secretariat to pursue discussions with relevant SADC structures on a regional disability protocol;

(vii) **ENCOURAGE** Member Parliaments and the SADC PF Secretariat to establish well-resourced, accessible youth advisory and consultation mechanisms linked to parliamentary business, with feedback arrangements and participation by underrepresented young people;

(viii) **CALL UPON** Member Parliaments to integrate civil society submissions and community evidence into legislation, budget scrutiny and oversight, track their consideration and inform contributors of resulting action;

(ix) **REQUEST** the SADC PF Secretariat to consolidate amendments to the draft correctional oversight Model Law and outstanding proposals on the Regional Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy (RASHP) for Plenary consideration, distinguish agreed provisions from those requiring decision, and submit a costed implementation and capacity-development plan;

(x) **URGE** Member Parliaments to designate child-marriage Dashboard focal points, facilitate regular validation and updating of official data, and use findings in legislative review, budget scrutiny and executive oversight;

(xi) **CALL UPON** Member Parliaments to close legal exceptions and implementation gaps permitting child marriage, and scrutinise funding and results for child protection, health and school retention and return, engaging young people, communities and traditional leaders;

(xii) **URGE** Member Parliaments to seek government reports on outstanding steps towards signature and ratification of the Regional Development Fund Agreement, and scrutinise contributions, governance, financing windows and proposed investments;

(xiii) **ENCOURAGE** Member Parliaments to track regional commitments through implementation matrices covering treaty procedures, legislation, responsible institutions, budgets and reporting, and share progress through SADC PF mechanisms;

(xiv) **CALL UPON** Member Parliaments to scrutinise constitutional compliance before and after enactment, facilitate public participation, oversee delegated powers and emergency measures, and monitor compliance with court decisions and constitutional obligations;

(xv) **URGE** Member Parliaments to protect the independence and adequate resourcing of constitutional institutions, scrutinise appointments and removals within their mandates, and review laws affecting civic freedoms, access to information and inclusive participation; and

(xvi) **CALL UPON** Member Parliaments to strengthen oversight of electoral institutions, financing, dispute resolution and safeguards against violence and misinformation, and monitor the implementation of election-observation recommendations.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The two meetings reinforced parliaments' responsibility to align regional commitments with national laws, budgets, accountable institutions, and public participation. The Joint Sitting calls for sustained follow-up to advance equality and inclusion, protect children and human dignity, and strengthen constitutional democracy. It commends the proposed resolutions for the 59th Plenary Assembly for consideration and adoption.

Mr President, I beg to move.

Hon. Mwanahamisi A. MUNKUNDA	Sheuneni KURASHA
CHAIRPERSON OF THE JOINT SITTING	**COMMITTEE SECRETARY**

8.0 APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

1.	Hon. Luisa P. F. Damiao Santos	Angola
2.	Hon. Teresa José Adelina Neto	Angola
3.	Hon. Lazaro de Oliveira G. Kakunha	Angola
4.	Hon. Pedro Sebastiao	Angola
5.	Hon. Ruth Mendes	Angola
6.	Hon Galenawabo Lekau	Botswana
7.	Hon. Dumelang Saleshando	Botswana
8.	Hon. Karabo Gare	Botswana
9.	Hon. Francoise Ndokwa Bemba	DRC
10.	Hon, Anicet Bababanga	DRC
11.	Hon. Celestin Loleke Ekoto	DRC
12.	Hon. Faustin Kenda Kaziteriko	DRC
13.	Hon. Cathy Moleka Sakombi	DRC
14.	Sen. Isaac Mmemo Magagula	Eswatini
15.	Sen. Lorraine Nxumalo	Eswatini
16.	Hon. Michael Masilela	Eswatini
17.	Hon. Nokuthula Margaret Dlamini	Eswatini
18.	Hon. Sicelo Jele	Eswatini
19.	Hon. Mope Francis Khati	Lesotho
20.	Hon. Mamamello Holomo	Lesotho
21.	Hon. Napo Moshoeshoe	Lesotho
22.	Hon. Senator Thato 'Mako Mohale	Lesotho
23.	Hon. Ratsiraka Sophie Soamiadana	Madagascar
24.	Hon. FIAROVANA Lovanirina Celestin	Madagascar
25.	Hon. Bismark Monk-Mann	Madagascar
26.	Hon. RABY S. Ain'Harimanga Gabrielle	Madagascar
27.	Hon. RAJAOBELINA Lova Herizo	Madagascar
28.	Hon.Govinden Pynivel Venkatasami	Mauritius
29.	Hon. Raviraj Sinha Beechook	Mauritius
30.	Hon. Jacques Edouard	Mauritius
31.	Hon. Marie Roxana Collet	Mauritius
32.	Hon. Peter Dimba	Malawi
33.	Hon. Dr. William Susuwele Banda	Malawi
34.	Hon. Mary Maulidi Khembo	Malawi
35.	Hon. Abigail Sheriff Bongwe	Malawi
36.	Hon. Francis Lucky Phiso	Malawi
37.	Hon. Jeronima Agostinho	Mozambique
38.	Hon. Saimone Muhambi Macuiana	Mozambique
39.	Hon. Marquita Alexandre Loforte Jaime	Mozambique
40.	Hon. Raimundo Diomba	Mozambique
41.	Hon. Ivandro Massingue	Mozambique
42.	Hon. Paula Kooper	Namibia
43.	Hon. John Musialela Likando	Namibia
44.	Hon. Nelson Kalangula	Namibia
45.	Hon. Shaalukeni John Moonde	Namibia
46.	Hon. Progress Sipapela	Namibia
47.	Hon. Sharonice Busch	Namibia
48.	Hon. Gervais Henrie	Seychelles
49.	Hon. Denise Clarisse	Seychelles
50.	Hon. Rocky Uranie	Seychelles

51.	Hon. Bonginkosi Success Madikizela	South Africa
52.	Hon. David Skosana	South Africa
53.	Hon. Sylvia Lucas-Izaks	South Africa
54.	Hon. Kassim Hassan Haji	Tanzania
55.	Hon. Mwanahamisi A. Munkunda	Tanzania
56.	Hon. Prof. Joyce Lazaro Ndalichako	Tanzania
57.	Hon. Mohamed Khalifan Issa	Tanzania
58.	Hon. Tendai Nyabani	Zimbabwe
59.	Hon. Lynette Karenyi	Zimbabwe
60.	Hon. Mercy Mugomo	Zimbabwe
61.	Hon. Maybe Mbhowa	Zimbabwe
62.	Hon. Chinhenza Chigwadzara	Zimbabwe

APPENDIX II: OFFICIALS

1.	Ms. Boemo Sekgoma	Secretary General
2.	Mr. Sheuneni Kurasha	SADCPF Secretariat
3.	Ms. Yapoka Mungandi	SADCPF Secretariat
4.	Mr. Munashe Tofa	SADCPF Secretariat
5.	Dr. Jacob Segale	SADCPF Secretariat
6.	Ms. Masenate Molapo	SADCPF Secretariat
7.	Dr. Moses Magadza	SADCPF Secretariat
8.	Mr. Pedro Lusakalalu	SADCPF Secretariat
9.	Mr. Samuel Bokosi	SADCPF Secretariat
10.	Ms. Ndeutalala Amulungu	SADCPF Secretariat
11.	Mr. Unaro Mungendje	SADCPF Secretariat
12.	Ms. Samueline Kauvee	SADCPF Secretariat
13.	Ms. Lorenda Boois	SADCPF Secretariat
14.	Ms. Agnes Lilungwe	SADCPF Secretariat
15.	Ms. Paulina Kanguatjivi	SADCPF Secretariat
16.	Mr. Ronald Windwaai	SADCPF Secretariat
17.	Mr. Toivo Mwaala	SADCPF Secretariat
18.	Mr. Johannes Nekongo	SADCPF Secretariat
19.	Mr. John Kelly	SADCPF Secretariat
20.	Mr. Stanley Banda	Committee Secretary-DGHR
21.	Mr. Dennis Gondwe	Committee Secretary-FANRCA
22.	Ms. Tlotlego Chabalala	Gender Expert
23.	Mr. Marcelin Makitu Keba	DRC
24.	Ms. Gontse Tau	Botswana
25.	Mr. Luis Dava	Mozambique
26.	Mr. Neo Mwala	Namibia
27.	Ms. Annalisa Meroro	Namibia
28.	Ms. Rosa Iteta	Namibia
29.	Mr. Thembani Mbadlanyana	South Africa
30.	Ms. Idda Kombe	Tanzania
31.	Dr. Cleophas Gwakwara	Zimbabwe

APPENDIX III: RESOURCE PERSONS AND PARTNER REPRESENTATIVES

Dr. Justice Mavedzenge	Resource Person
Hon. Peya Mushelenga	Resource Person
Mr. Traquinho Conceicao	Resource Person
Ms. Jakkie Cilliers	ISS

Ms. Ouleymatou Ngom Africa Advocacy Coordinator, Resource Justice Network	
Dr. Sphephelo Zubane	UNISA
Dr. Mupingadhato Tafazwa	UNISA
Ms. Deli Kheswa Managing Director	ADA
Mr. Rato Razafindrakoto	SADC
Mr. Wazha Omphile	SADC
Bevis Kapaso	Plan-International
Ms. Antoinette Ngoma	Plan -International
Masimba Mujuru	Plan -International
Aneth Michael	Plan-International
Kudzai -Katsaya	Plan -International
Kelvin -Mulenga	Plan -International
Susan Suzika Chima	UNICEF
Lason Kapata	Care-International
Limpo Chinika	HIVOS
Kudzai Meda	HIVOS
Brave Kaatemba	HIVOS
Raphael -Ofware	Equality Now
Ms. Sally Ncube Equality Now	
Lynn Chinene	Care International
Chief Chamuka	UNFPA
Chief Madzimawe	UNFPA
Hon Princess Mojapelo	UNFPA
Ferosa Abel David Chaúque Zacarias	UNFPA
Russell Miska	UNFPA
Dina	UNFPA
Fumukazi Zilani	UNFPA
Ms. Meron Negussie	UNFPA
Dr. Adane Gebremeskel	GIZ
Mundia Situmbeko	GNB