



**REPORT OF THE SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM STANDING COMMITTEE
ON FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO THE SADC PF
51ST PLENARY ASSEMBLY SESSION**

**THEME: “PARTICIPATION OF PARLIAMENTS TOWARDS BUILDING
RESILIENT AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS IN THE SADC REGION THROUGH
ENHANCED PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT”**

Mr President, I beg to move that this Plenary Assembly do adopt the Report of the of the Standing Committee on Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources to the 51st Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, laid on the table on 12th July 20222022.

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1.0 COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee consisted of the following Members:

Hon. Ishmael J Ndaila Onani, MP (Malawi) (Chairperson)
Hon Hawa Subira Mwaifunga, MP (Tanzania) (Vice Chairperson)
Hon Andre Leon Tumba, MP (Democratic of Congo)
Hon. Lekhetho Mosito, MP (Lesotho)
Hon. Helena Bonguela Abel, MP (Angola)
Hon. Lova Herizo Rajaobelina, MP (Madagascar)
Hon. Seiso Joel Mohai, MP (South Africa)
Hon. Princess Phumelele Dlamini, MP (Eswatini)
Hon. Tambudzani Mohadi, MP (Zimbabwe)
Hon. Carlos Manuel, MP (Mozambique)
Hon. Marie Genevieve Stephanie Anquetil, MP (Mauritius)
Hon Mutinta Mazoka, MP (Zambia)
Hon Rocky Uranie, MP (Seychelles)
Hon Paulson Majaga, MP (Botswana)
Hon Phillipus Katamelo, MP (Namibia)

2.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE COMMITTEE

The SADC PF Standing Committee on Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) drew its mandate from Article 14 of the Constitution of the SADC PF and Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure.

3.0 NUMBER OF MEETINGS HELD, MEETING DATES AND THEME

The Standing Committee on FANR held one statutory meeting on Sunday, 1st May, 2022, to consider the theme “Participation of Parliaments towards Building Resilient Agricultural Systems in the SADC Region through Enhanced Public Finance Management.”

4.0 DELIBERATIONS ON THE THEME OF THE MEETING

4.1 Background

The majority of the world’s poor live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. Agriculture is both a source of food security and a core economic activity across all SADC Member States. Agriculture is, therefore, critical both for economic development and poverty reduction. Therefore, developing countries’ spending towards agriculture is one of the most important Government instruments for promoting economic growth and alleviating poverty in rural areas. The agriculture sector contributes between 4 percent and 27 percent of Gross Domestic Product among the different SADC countries, and approximately 13 percent of export earnings overall. Furthermore, about 70 percent of the region’s population depends on agriculture for food, income, and employment.

SADC countries have committed to several continental and regional aspirations on agriculture, some of which include the Maputo Declaration, which calls for Member States to increase agricultural budget allocations to 10 percent and pursue agricultural growth of 6 percent in addition to setting up the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). Instruments that inform and guide the agriculture sector in the region include the Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) of 2013 and Regional Agricultural Investment Plan (RAIP) for the period 2017-2022, among others.

Despite the above highlighted efforts, progress in agriculture in the region remains static, partly due to lack of accountability and transparency in the use of public resources in implementing agricultural programmes. Many countries in the world face challenges related to financial mismanagement such as poor financial reporting practice, weak internal control systems, weak financial administration, unethical relationships with vendors of agriculture supplies and uncoordinated spending at the end of the budget year. This, coupled with corruption in government contracts or licenses for agricultural supplies, makes it difficult to attain resilient agriculture systems.

4.2 Presentation on the Participation of Parliaments Towards Building Resilient Agricultural Systems in the SADC Region through Enhanced Public Finance Management by the Public Service Monitoring Accountability (PSAM)

The Committee noted that Public Finance Management (PFM) involved the collection, management and expenditure of public finances throughout an economy. The committee further noted that the central objective of PFM was to improve citizens' lives through better management of public finances. The Committee acknowledged that agriculture was core to the economies of most SADC Member states and played a fundamental role in transforming livelihoods of many African countries. In that regard, effective PFM was premised on the understanding that scarce resources had maximum impact if deployed where they were needed the most. This assisted Governments to achieve their agricultural policies and other development objectives in a progressive and sustainable way.

The Committee took cognisance that Members of Parliament, as elected officials representing their constituencies, played a pivotal role throughout the PFM Cycle. The Committee noted that sustainability of the budget, including debt management, was the responsibility of the respective Ministries of Finance which were charged with ensuring that there was efficiency among the different Government ministries and agencies. Emphasis was placed on the need to ensure robust conceptualisation of capital expenditures, especially those on infrastructure, through the annual and medium-term budgeting processes. The Committee also noted that in programme-based budgeting, there was need to

align planning and budgeting systems to ensure that outputs and outcomes were associated with public policy objectives. In terms of prudent budget execution, the Committee acknowledged that legislative oversight was integral to reviewing budget execution reports to ensure public resources were used in the manner they were approved.

The Committee appreciated the role of Parliaments in all stages of the Public Finance Management as set below.

- (i) **Budget Formulation** - the legislature contributed in determining the budget priorities in the medium-term.
- (ii) **Budget Approval** - during legislative debate of the executive's budget proposal, Members of Parliament scrutinised what was to be implemented taking into account existing revenue and debt levels.
- (iii) **Budget Execution** - the scrutiny of budget execution reports by legislative committees were essential to accountability;
- (iv) **Budget Evaluation** - legislatures could also conduct post-hoc review of budget execution by reviewing year-end report, financial statements, and external audits.

The Committee noted that in countries that PSAM had conducted research, it was established that there were weaknesses embedded in Public Finance Management systems. These included inadequate funding towards agricultural development policies which in turn compromised countries' ability to meet set objectives and commitments. The Committee recognised that low investments towards Agricultural Advisory Services were an impediment to agricultural extension services. Owing to that, agricultural extension officers failed to meet the needs of smallholder farmers, especially to assist them adapt or adopt climate smart strategies to ensure food security at household or even community level.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Now, therefore, the Standing Committee on Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources resolves to recommend to the 51st Plenary Assembly Session to:

- (i) **ENCOURAGE** SADC Member States to create an enabling environment for Parliaments to meaningfully engage in the budget process by ensuring that adequate time and resources are provided to allow Honourable Members execute their oversight role without any impediments.
- (ii) **CALL** on SADC Parliaments to build the capacity of Honourable Members of Parliaments with the necessary knowledge to effectively participate in the budget process, and notably, public spending in agriculture.
- (iii) **IMPLORE** SADC countries to recognise the important contribution that women and youths make towards agriculture in the region and set aside a specific quota in their national budgets to ensure food security in the region.

- (iv) **URGE** Members States to strengthen Parliaments' oversight role in order to effectively interrogate public finance spending, with a special focus on the procurement of agricultural inputs.
- (v) **ENCOURAGE** Member States to sensitise their citizens to enable them identify fraudulent public spending in the agriculture value chain.
- (vi) **FURTHER ENCOURAGE** Members States to provide citizens with platforms that they can utilise to report incidences of financial malpractices in the agriculture sector, noting that smallholder farmers are the most affected by illicit financial flows in the agriculture sector.

6.0 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON

In light of the fact that the term of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson was coming to an end during that Session, the Committee elected new office bearers to hold office for the period 2022 to 2024 as follows:

- (i) Chairperson – Hon Ishmael J Onani, MP (Malawi)
- (ii) Vice Chairperson – Hon Hawa Subira Mwaifunga, MP (Tanzania)

The Committee paid tribute to the outgoing Chairperson and Vice Chairperson for having steered the Committee successfully during their tenure and pledged their continuing support to the incoming leadership.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Agriculture is one of the key economic sectors and significantly contributes to the GDP and poverty reduction in the region. However, there are low investments towards the agriculture sector. The challenge is further exacerbated by imprudent utilisation of the meagre resources resulting in ill performing agriculture sectors and threatening the food security of the region. Resilient agriculture systems are, among others, a product of optimal utilisation of public resources and the principles inherent in Public Financial Management systems if well utilised can immensely contribute to the growth of the sector and help boost food security for the region. In addition, Parliaments can become a powerful tool to heighten the strength and resilience of agricultural systems through interrogating Government measures relating to agriculture in the budget and demand explanations on the fulfillment of the commitments that countries have made both at regional and global level. The proposed SADC Model Law on Public Financial Management, which being developed by the Forum, will augment existing Member States' efforts in ensuring accountability and transparency in the use of public resources in implementing agricultural programmes.

Finally, the Committee extends its gratitude to the Secretary General and staff of the SADC PF Secretariat for the tremendous work and facilitation of the statutory meeting which resulted in this report. The Committee further extends its appreciation to all the resource persons for rendering valuable input that if

implemented can result in sustainable water resource management in the region.

Appendix I – List of SADC PF Officials

Ms Boemo Mmandu Sekgoma	Secretary General
Ms Clare Musonda	Director, Corporate Governance
Mr Joseph Manzi	Director, Parliamentary Business and Programmes
Mr Sheuneni Kurasha	Programme Manager, Democracy, Governance and Human Rights
Ms Sharon Nyirongo	Committee Secretary
Ms Agness Lilungwe	Executive Assistant to the Secretary General
Mr Ronald Windwaai	Information and Communication Technology Officer
Ms Paulina Kanguatjivi	Assistant Procedural Officer and Coordinator

Appendix II

List of Resource Persons and Observers

Ms Julie Middleton	Consortium Project Manager, ActionAid International
Ms Rachel Gondo	Regional Learning Programme Officer, Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM)