



PARLIAMENT OF MALAWI



## CONCEPT NOTE

### 51<sup>ST</sup> PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF THE SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

**HYBRID MEETING HOSTED BY THE PARLIAMENT OF  
MALAWI  
LILONGWE, MALAWI  
7<sup>TH</sup> TO 16<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2022**

**“THEME: “TOWARDS ENERGY EFFICIENCY, SUSTAINABILITY  
AND SELF SUFFICIENCY IN THE SADC REGION””**

## **I. BACKGROUND ON ENERGY SECURITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN SADC**

1. Over the last decades, there had been growing concerns over energy security across the SADC region, in particular since all SADC Member States are heavily dependent on fossil fuels to generate power. Although several policies have been put in place for renewable and green energy to countervail the depletion of oil, coal and natural reserves, the SADC region in 2022 still as a whole remains heavily dependent on fossil fuels to meet its energy demands. Fossil fuels still remain the most dominant source of fuel worldwide, accounting for over 80% of the global energy supply, with the main exporters including the United States (US), Russia, Iran and Canada. In the SADC region, fossil fuel is largely imported, with petroleum, crude oil, natural gas and even edible oil constituting frequent imports, on which SADC households rely for electricity and living purposes. With the recent Russia-Ukraine crisis and the ensuing US and European Union bans on oil imports from Russia, the speculations on oil trade have led to an unprecedented sky-rocketing of oil and natural gas prices which caused yet further uncertainties on energy security in Southern Africa.
2. Against this background, the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) has a longstanding record of promoting initiatives to heighten the transition to green and renewable energy sources in a bid to decarbonise the SADC region and reduce noxious air emissions that contribute to air pollution and global warming. The passage of cyclone Idai in March 2019 which devastated towns and villages in Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mozambique constituted yet another reminder for swift climate action, with the Forum promptly reacting through enhanced inter-parliamentary cooperation on climate action through its Plenary session and by contributions to an emergency item on a call for support at the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly.
3. In 2022, the need for renewable green energy has been marked by the energy crisis following the Russia-related sanctions, making renewable energy even more necessary, and yet the transition from fossil fuels to green energy were not expected to be so abrupt and sudden. The shortage of fossil fuels is causing the community of oil producing countries to ramp up oil and gas production to palliate the short-term deficit and thus pushing further away the commitment to achieve zero carbon emissions by 2030.
4. For the SADC region, the spikes in oil and natural gas reserves have served as a loud awakening call to reassess the state of the region's energy security. Without doubt, Southern Africa has also professed in favour of climate change action through adhesion to several initiatives such as Africa Agenda 2063, Sustainable Development Goal 7 on sustainable and modern energy for all, the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP 2020-2030), to cite but a few. Responsible climate change action will also mean tapping into green energy sources, which are renewable and

affordable to the SADC citizenry, thus sustaining energy security. As the Flag Bearer of Socio-Economic Development for the region, the SADC-PF is committed to energy security as several human rights are highly dependent on same such as the right to housing, which also means safe and clean electricity in households.

5. The recent developments on the international stage have thus demonstrated that there is a dire need to jumpstart measures towards green energy, and to reach energy goals with respect to hydroelectric, wind and solar farms faster and with renewed momentum. Furthermore, there is a need to increase Research and Development (R&D) on novel renewable energy sources in Southern Africa (such as tidal and geothermal energy), and ensure that countries are equipped with the tools to identify the best renewable energy sources that are available domestically to suit their needs.

## **II. THE 51<sup>ST</sup> PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF THE FORUM: THE NEED TO DISCUSS THE ROLE AND MANDATE OF PARLIAMENTS TO ADVANCE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND SECURITY**

6. Energy security remains a core concern for the SADC-PF since it has profound linkages with democratisation, the rule of law and parliamentarism. Indeed, while around 759 million people around the world lack access to electricity, 3 out of 4 live in Sub-Saharan Africa (SDGs Report 2021, UNStats). This is over and above consumers who cannot afford to purchase petroleum to aliment cooking stoves or procure edible oil during an energy crisis. The saying by Albert Einstein that "*An empty stomach is not a good political adviser*" is all the more relevant in an energy crisis, where the democratic order threatens to be eroded when a large segment of the population brims the deprivation of basic utilities and services.
7. As the representative of citizens and constituencies, Parliaments are powerful agents of change which should be capacitated to address energy efficiency and bolster energy security. Particularly at this time of worldwide energy deficit, there is a need for Parliamentarians to leverage their constitutional mandate as MPs to set the machinery of energy reform into motion. Attaining energy security is today a puzzle which consists of various interconnected pieces, notably the implementation of low-carbon policies, the adoption of enabling laws that unveil go-green measures, the provision of fiscal incentives for wind and solar power equipment, introduction of summertime hours, to cite but a few.
8. Parliament as an institution which is situated at the helm of the State, is sovereign to enact empowering legislation, exercise consistent oversight, and interrogate energy budgets to ensure that energy security is addressed. Furthermore, in the short term, Parliamentarians may also advise on the reframing of trade import agreements to ensure that their

countries are adequately provided with oil and natural gas despite the temporary disruptions in the global supply chains.

9. Moreover, there is a need to moderate the speculations on the oil market which is causing uncertainty and pushing countries to stockpile oil instead of selling. Parliament can also press on the Executive to engage all relevant stakeholders to stop the energy crisis including the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the International Energy Agency (IEA), the Regional Electricity Regulatory Association and regional organisations which have leverage to lobby for preferential trade concessions on oil, natural gas and other fossil fuels to assist countries during the crisis period.
10. There is thus a need for the 51<sup>st</sup> Plenary Assembly to meet around the theme of "**TOWARDS ENERGY EFFICIENCY, SUSTAINABILITY AND SELF SUFFICIENCY IN THE SADC REGION**" to bring into the parliamentary spotlight the energy crisis, and the need to provide prompt and implementable solutions that can ease the availability of energy sources in view of heightening the purchasing power of SADC citizens.
11. In addition, there is a need to seek alignment with the noble goals and objectives of the SADC Protocol on Energy and the SADC Protocol on Investment which together envision to position Southern Africa and as a land of prosperity, wealth, energy self-reliance and sustainability. This inter-parliamentary discussion is all the more quintessential since most SADC countries are energy importers and export of fuel to other countries and regions is limited.

### **III. THE ADOPTION OF THE SADC MODEL LAW ON PFM AS YET ANOTHER TOOL TO ENSURE ENERGY EFFICIENCY, SUSTAINABILITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

12. During the 50<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly, it was underscored that consultations were in place for the development of the landmark SADC Model Law on Public Financial Management (PFM) under the directional guidance of the relevant Standing Committees of the SADC-PF and a Technical Working Group of Experts. The overarching objective of the Model Law is to heighten the oversight powers of Parliament over the PFM processes of the State in view of ensuring transparency, accountability and the necessary checks and balances.
13. The Model Law contains innovative provisions on PFM such as the need for alignment of State budgets with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other international commitments, the empowering of Public Accounts Committees (PACs), provisions on financial misappropriations and a Part on cryptocurrencies. The SADC Model Law on PFM accordingly provides routes to monitor domestication of regional instruments such as treaties relating to sustainable energy and climate change by requiring

that linkages are drawn by the Executive between proposed budget lines on energy-related measures taken and treaty commitments. The 51<sup>st</sup> Plenary Assembly will thus be the occasion to consider the progress made on the Model Law and appreciate its pertinence for the incorporation of measures from energy treaties, in particular those relating to low carbon emissions and greenhouse gases.

#### **IV. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE 51<sup>ST</sup> PLENARY ASSEMBLY**

14. The Plenary Assembly of the Forum is held by each of its Member Parliament on a rotational basis in accordance with Article 11 of the Forum's Constitution and the Rules 5-7 of the Rules of Procedure.
15. The objectives and expected outcomes of the 51<sup>st</sup> Plenary Assembly are:
  - a) to promote inter-parliamentary cooperation, diplomacy and solidarity amongst SADC Member Parliaments, and to celebrate the SADC identity;
  - b) to take stock of the energy efficiency and security situation in SADC in the trail of the global disruption in oil and gas supply;
  - c) to deliberate on energy security and the need to implement renewable energy solutions in line with climate change action;
  - d) to adopt the SADC Model Law on Public Financial Management;
  - e) to consider and approve reports of Standing Committees, the Regional Women Parliamentary Caucus and other organs of the Forum;
  - f) to consider motions and statements by MPs which are in line with the theme of the Plenary Assembly;
  - g) to promote inter-parliamentary policy among SADC Member Parliaments with respect to shared values and common agendas.

#### **V. VENUE**

16. The 51<sup>st</sup> Plenary Assembly will be a hybrid session (partly online) hosted physically by the National Assembly of Malawi, located in Lilongwe, Malawi.

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