



SECONDING NOTES FOR HON HAWA SUBIRA MWAIFUNGA, MP ON THE REPORT OF THE SADC PF STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr President, I rise to support the Motion on the Report of the Standing Committee on Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources which has been so ably moved by the Chairperson, Hon Ishmael J Ndaila Onani, MP.

I concur with the Mover of the Motion that climate change has and continues to wreak havoc on the environment and thereby diminishing ecosystem services. However, it is noteworthy that climate change brings with it some opportunities too. The biggest opportunity is renewable energy from solar and wind. The SADC region is blessed with solar and wind, as a natural resource. Therefore, the capacity for the SADC region to produce solar and wind energy is enormous.

Sir, it is widely recognised that women and youths play a significant role in agriculture in the region. However, they are usually overlooked in many decision-making processes. During its

deliberations, the Committee noted that the involvement of marginalised sections of society is key in any decision-making process, including agriculture. In addition, SADC Member states should create platforms for citizens to contribute towards the growth of the agricultural sector. Specifically, there is need to create an enabling environment where citizens, small scale farmers in particular, who are the most hit by any turbulences in the sector such as the adverse effects of climate change can have enhanced resilience during these climatic events.

Mr President, as we embark on the energy transition journey, Parliamentarians and leaders in the SADC region should ensure that the process is inclusive by involving all stakeholders. Notably, this is an opportunity for the region to create jobs for youths in both the agriculture and energy sectors. Accordingly, Member States must strive to ensure that citizens are meaningfully and gainfully engaged in both sectors.

Given the above, Sir, let me underscore the importance of SADC Members State coming up with deliberate policies and legislation that can make it easy for youths and women to acquire land on title for agricultural and renewable energy projects such as mini grid systems.

Mr President, in supporting the Motion, let me also highlight one important aspect that needs to be considered as the energy

transition unfolds. And this has to do with safeguarding the renewable energy infrastructure. It is imperative for SADC countries to sensitise communities about the importance and benefits of renewable energies, with its accompanying infrastructure. This is can be achieved by involving citizens throughout the project cycle from initial until completion stage. This will make citizens appreciate the process and also have a sense of ownership and will ultimately result in community stewardship for the infrastructure.

The above notwithstanding, SADC Parliaments need to stiffen laws on vandalism of renewable energy infrastructure in order to deter perpetrators of the vice. This will help protect infrastructure that is costly to replace.

Mr President, let me emphasise that that meaningful participation of citizens in the energy sector could only be realised if there is promotion of skills development, especially those targeted at youths and women who were household heads, especially in rural communities.

Finally, Mr President, I support the proposal that SADC Member countries must undertake extensive research and use the findings to inform decision making so that the transition to renewable energies benefits all citizens of the region.

Mr President, I second the Motion.
