



SPEECH TO BE DELIVERED BY THE SECONDER OF THE MOTION THAT THE 52ND PLENARY OF THE ASSEMBLY DO ADOPT THE REPORT OF THE REGIONAL WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS DURING PRESENTATION OF THE MOTION

Mr. President, I rise to second and express support for the Motion on the adoption of the Report of the Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus, which is now before this august House.

Mr. President, in seconding this Motion, I wish to reiterate the gratitude of the Chairperson to the various citizen representatives and partners for their well – thought – out presentations. The presentations enriched our deliberations on the various issues, key among them the following thematic areas;

- (i) How can citizens promote women's participation in decision-making processes in the public service at all levels?
- (ii) Which measures may be put in place to increase women representation in Parliament to attain the 50 – 50 gender parity?

- (iii) Should budgets passed in Parliament consider and mainstream women issues?
- (iv) Which measures should be put in place to increase the representation of women on the boards of private enterprises?

Arising from its interactions and deliberations during the meeting, the RWPC expressed concern that although women represent a large percentage of the population in the region, they are grossly underrepresented in decision-making structures and processes at various levels.

The RWPC also remained alive to the fact that SADC member States are party to both regional and international conventions that aim at promoting the participation of women in politics and other decision-making structures. In this vein, the RWPC encouraged SADC member States to domesticate the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development to ensure its implementation at national level.

Mr. President, while appreciating the various efforts by SADC member States to work towards the attainment of the 50 – 50 gender parity, we further recognized the need for SADC Member States to mainstream women’s issues in their national budgets. This is an area where, undoubtedly, Parliaments can play a leading role by taking a firm stand and insisting that their national budgets must be engendered and taking a gender sensitive approach in considering their national budgets.

In the private sector, the RWPC also realized that there was need for the boards of private corporations to put in place an enabling legal framework or provisions for increasing and promoting women's participation in decision-making structures.

All in all, Mr. President, the deliberations on the above themes offered us as duty bearers an opportunity to offer viable solutions to issues that affect women's empowerment and their participation in matters that affect their lives in general. We are indeed hopeful that through some of our recommendations as contained in our report, the region can move towards promoting the representation and full participation of women in all decision-making structures in the region.

Finally, Mr President, allow me to echo the appreciation of the Chairperson for the excellent facilitation of our meetings by the Secretary General and her team. This was our inaugural public hearing and we hope that this modus operandi can be strengthened in order to cement our networking with the citizens we represent.

Mr. President, Honourable Members, with the few remarks, I wish to second the Motion and I thank you.