



SPEECH TO BE DELIVERED BY HON ISHMAEL J NDAILA ONANI, MP, ON THE REPORT OF THE SADC PF STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO THE SADC PF 52ND PLENARY ASSEMBLY SESSION

Mr President, I beg to move that this Plenary Assembly do adopt the Report of the SADC PF Standing Committee on Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) to the 52nd Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, laid on the table on..., 2022.

Mr President, the Committee draws its mandate from Article 14 (1) of the Constitution of the SADC PF as read together with Rule 42 (c) of the Rules of Procedure.

In performance of its functions as enshrined in the aforementioned provisions, the Committee met on Saturday, 26th November, 2022, to consider the theme 'Consolidating Democracy by Bringing Parliament to the People'.

Mr President, in deliberating on this theme, the Committee benefitted from highly qualified and experienced resource persons from within the SADC Region. Notably, the Committee also had an opportunity to interact with citizens within the SADC region. Both the resource persons and citizen representatives made valuable recommendations which formed part of the recommendations that this Committee is making to the Plenary Assembly.

Further, Mr President, in the course of its deliberations, the Committee appreciated the fact that agriculture is critical in fostering economic growth, poverty reduction and food security in the Southern African region. However, climate change is increasing risks of natural hazards and hydrological events. Consequently, this poses a serious threat to agriculture production and food security, especially that almost 95 per cent of agriculture in the SADC region is rain fed.

Additionally, the protection of water and land is critical for food security, economic growth, job creation and poverty reduction. Further, this calls for all Member States to prioritise sustainable agricultural practices, among other measures that are meant to boost agriculture in the region. Most importantly, SADC Members must strive to domestic and/or honour continental and regional commitments on agriculture such as those enshrined in the Malabo Declaration, Comprehensive African Agriculture Development

Programme (CAADP), SADC Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP), among others.

Mr President, this Committee recognises that access to energy is one of the fundamental human rights. Further, there is a direct link between access to water and energy on the one hand, and agriculture on the other. To that end, the Committee further recognises the need for governments to decentralise access to energy to allow and encourage citizens to produce their own energy. The region should seriously begin to consider how citizens, especially those in rural communities, can be given opportunities to produce or access cheap solar and wind energy. This will facilitate agriculture production and food processing, and contribute to fighting poverty, hunger and unemployment.

Mr President, in terms of efforts being spearheaded to roll-out renewable energies in the regional level, the Committee notes the existence of the SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREE) which was established in 2015 by the SADC Energy Ministers. The Centre was created to among others, promote increased access to modern energy services and to improve energy security across the SADC Region through the promotion of market-based adoption of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies and energy services.

Mr President, it is important to be mindful that in our quest to ameliorate the energy challenges in the region, we do not become over-burdened with debt, a situation which some countries in the region are currently grappling with. This caution emanates from the fact that actualisation of the energy transition will require significant investments both in terms of technical and financial resources and taking cognisance that domestic resources may not be adequate to implement renewable energy projects.

Sir, given these deliberations and observations, the Committee has recommends to the 52nd Plenary Assembly to:

- (i) **CALL ON** Member States to collaborate and utilise local capacities vested in institutions of higher learning such as universities, colleges and research institutions to conduct extensive research to inform decision making in deployment of renewable energies. This will assist to determine the best and cost effect methods of deploying renewable energies in the SADC region.
- (ii) **ENCOURAGE** SADC Member State to lobby respective Governments to put in place deliberate measures such as renewable energy tax rebates, duties, tax holidays, among others, in order to attract participation of local investors.
- (iii) **URGE** Member States to review school curricular at primary, secondary/higher and tertiary levels so as to

ensure that there is practical content on agriculture and sustainable energy issues for the learners.

- (iv) **ENCOURAGE** SADC Member States to support the creation of a special purpose regional investment fund for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.
- (v) **URGE** SADC Members States to come 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.
- (vi) **URGE** SADC Member States to leverage on the potential job creation that will result from the energy transition. Governments should, therefore, focus on providing the necessary skills and financing for youths to participate in the sector.
- (vii) **ENCOURAGE** SADC Members States to undertake to involve citizens at an early stage in renewable energy projects so as to create a sense of ownership by the communities.
- (viii) **IMPLORE** SADC Parliaments 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.

With the aforesaid, Mr President, allow me once again to state that agriculture is critical in fostering economic growth, poverty reduction and food security in the Southern African region.

Therefore, a regional approach to using natural resources to ensure food security and access to energy could be the solution.

Let me conclude by reiterating the Committee's gratitude to the Secretary General and staff of the SADC PF for the tremendous work which culminated into this Report. The Committee further extends its appreciation to all the Resource Persons for rendering valuable input that, if implemented, will contribute towards building resilient agricultural systems in the region.

Mr President, I beg to move.
