



**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE 54TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY ON
GENERAL SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM POLICY AND
ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS TABLED ON 23 NOVEMBER 2023**

Mr. President, I beg to move that this Plenary Assembly do adopt the Report of the Executive Committee on General SADC PF Policy and Administrative Matters to the 54th Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, laid on the Table of this august House on 23rd November 2023.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S REPORT TO THE 54TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY

The Plenary Assembly is requested to note that the Executive Committee, meeting virtually on the 4th November 2023, has comprehensively dealt with strategic policy and operational matters of the organisation which are submitted to the Plenary Assembly for noting or approval in line with the mandates and functions of the Forum's organs under its Constitution and Rules of Procedure. This summary captures the main outcomes of the EXCO meeting which are submitted to this august 54th Plenary Assembly.

1. ISSUES FOR NOTING

- 1.1 The Plenary Assembly is requested to note that EXCO has considered the socio-economic outlook for the SADC region which require further targeted actions by Parliaments to leverage the gains made from the recent BRICS and G20 Summits, and to act promptly to protect the most vulnerable citizens within an already fragile society that is recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, and is being affected by the Ukraine- Russia conflict as well as the ongoing turmoil in the Middle East.
- 1.2 The Plenary Assembly is further requested to note that EXCO has considered issues relating to the modernisation of the organisation in line with international best practices of the 21st century coupled with the need to promptly implement Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this regard, EXCO has approved that the organisation embarks on a digital transformation journey *inter alia* by the successful transfer of the SAHUB to the SADC-PF, that the Forum proceeds with green organisational objectives that deliver climate justice and inhibit carbon emissions, and further that the Forum advances universal access to SRHR services under the Swedish-funded SRHR, HIV and AIDS Governance Project (2023-2026).
- 1.3 To promote financial transparency, EXCO has also approved that the net contributions of Member Parliaments be henceforth recorded, that is annual member subscriptions as well as in-kind subscriptions.
- 1.4 The Plenary Assembly is requested to note that EXCO approved the necessary arrangements for the 54th Plenary Assembly to take place from the 22nd-26th November 2023 in Port Louis, Mauritius, under the theme "***The Role of Parliaments in Promoting Coordination for Enhanced Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery Planning in the SADC Region***", the theme being most germane to the region in line with the approach of the cyclonic summer season 2023/2024;

- 1.5 The Plenary Assembly is called upon to note the prominence of African leadership in global institutions, notably through the recent appointment of Hon. Dr. Tulia Ackson, Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania, to the Presidency of the IPU. On the same score, the Plenary Assembly is requested to congratulate the Republic of Angola for successfully hosting the 147th IPU Assembly from the 23rd- 27th October 2023.

2. ISSUES FOR APPROVAL

- 2.1 On transformation of the Forum into a Regional Parliament, the Plenary Assembly is requested to approve that further lobbies with Heads of States and Government and other stakeholders be undertaken, with the facilitation of Hon. Speakers and Presiding Officers of Member Parliaments, to ensure that the required quorum of 12 Member States sign the Agreement to Amend the SADC Treaty establishing the SADC Parliament.
- 2.2 Given the need to ensure that democracy does not recede due to election irregularities and unfairness, the Plenary Assembly is requested to revive and remind Member Parliaments of its standing resolution on the deployment of Election Observation Missions (EOMs) whereby Member Parliaments are to contribute for the cost of participation of their representatives to the said Missions.
- 2.3 Since the Strategic Plan of the Forum is coming to an end on 31st December 2023, the Plenary Assembly is requested to approve the Blueprint of the Forum's revamped Strategy which contains the essential features to be approved as a matter of policy, following which the Secretariat will work out the operational features and the Results framework from the Blueprint.
- 2.4 Given the successful coming to end of the Secretary General's current contract and given favourable consideration of the application for renewal by EXCO under Rule 7.6.3 of the Administrative Rules and Regulations, the Plenary Assembly is requested to approve the renewal of contract in view of allowing the SG to continue with her diligent and productive work in the best interests of the Forum.
- 2.5 To allow staff to conduct enhanced financial planning, the Plenary Assembly is requested to approve amendments to Rule 6.3.1 and Rule 6.1.5.1 of the Administrative Rules and Regulations for staff advances to be paid back over three consecutive months and for gratuity to be paid on a monthly basis, respectively on the understanding that these amendments will come into operation as from 1st December 2023.

The Annex to this Synopsis contains the full Report and further information for the attention of Members.

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THE EXCO REPORT TO THE 54TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY

1.0 PREAMBLE

Article 12(1) of the Constitution of the SADC PF provides that:

“The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the management of the affairs of the Forum, giving direction to the Secretariat and ensuring that the decisions of the Plenary Assembly are implemented and shall be answerable to the Plenary Assembly.”

Pursuant to this mandate, the Executive Committee (EXCO) of the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) met virtually on 4th November 2023 to consider various matters of strategic importance, as well as financial and policy matters of the SADC Parliamentary Forum. The EXCO now presents the first part of its report containing its recommendations and resolutions to the 54th Plenary Assembly Session for noting, decision and adoption as the case may be.

The Second part of the EXCO Report will constitute financial matters, which will be presented as the Treasurer’s Report.

2.0 MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

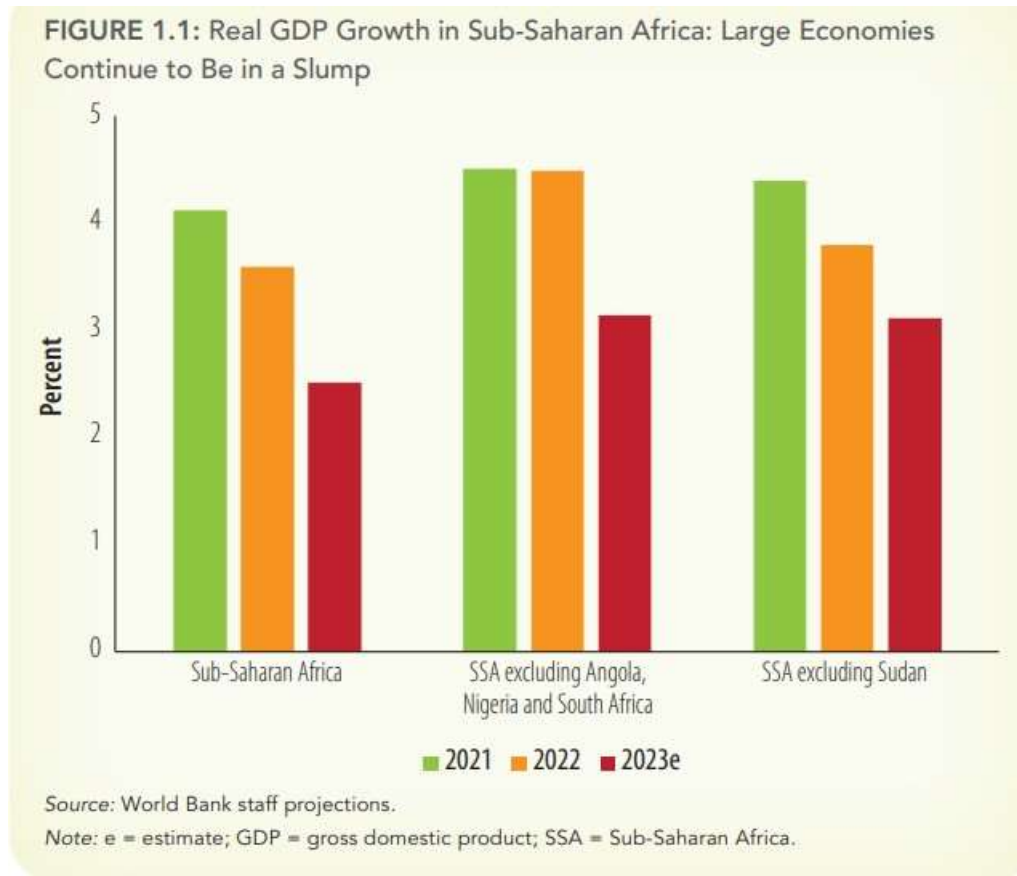
The full Membership of the Executive Committee is listed at Sub-Annexure 1. The Executive Committee met virtually on the 4th of November 2023 with a quorum.

3.0 PLENARY ASSEMBLY TO NOTE THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

3.1 EXCO invites the Plenary Assembly to note the projected decrease in economic growth for Sub-Saharan Africa prior to the anticipated rise in 2024 according to economic observers such as the International Monetary Fund. Equally, it was noted that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has decreased in Sub-Saharan Africa compared to previous years.

3.2 EXCO further invites the Plenary Assembly to note that the SADC region continues to face multi-faceted difficulties in the form of high unemployment, difficulties for citizens in accessing commodities, inflation (including artificial inflation), which calls for Parliaments to protect citizens. Furthermore, unrest in the Middle East is likely to cause an increase in oil prices which will further impact on energy security worldwide.

The table below illustrates the decreasing GDP in Sub-Saharan Africa, with the lowest GDP figures being registered in 2023.



Credit: World Bank Group, Africa Pulse, October 2023, p 9.

3.3 Furthermore, the Plenary Assembly is requested to note that the SADC region must brace for the cyclonic season in summer 2023/2024 which is likely to disproportionately affect vulnerable segments of society, including women and children. Accordingly, EXCO invites the Plenary Assembly to positively note that the theme for the 54th Plenary Assembly (to be dealt with hereunder) echoes with the need for prompt measures to be taken by countries due to the continued threats of extreme weather events caused by global warming.

3.4 Despite the above concerns, the Plenary Assembly is requested to note that there is room for optimism to redress the SADC economy through revamped strategies around international cooperation. Indeed, there are new geopolitical developments which may positively impact on the SADC region, notably the holding of the BRICS Summit by South Africa in August 2023 and the joining of the AU as a permanent member of the G20 Summit. For these developments to benefit the region, there is a continuous need for Parliaments to build capacity around North-South collaborations for countries to tap into new trade agreements under the auspices of the said Summits, especially as Africa is

highly dependent on G20 countries for access to high-quality medicines and other commodities.

DECISION

- a) The Plenary Assembly is requested to note the socio-economic outlook and to call for Parliaments to continue acting through legislation to secure commodity security and to protect citizens, especially those most vulnerable to economic turmoil, inflation and climate change.
- b) The Plenary Assembly is further requested to note that North-South collaborations by MPs are necessary to fully understand entry points for economic opportunities pursuant to the positive outcomes of the BRICS and the G20 Summits. In this respect, the Plenary Assembly is recommended to resolve that the Forum and its Member Parliaments explore opportunities for capacity development of SADC MPs on various aspects so that they share experiences with counterparts from emerging economies within the BRICS and soon-to-be BRICS + group as well as the G20. Further, to request the Parliament of South Africa to be the convener of future briefings on the margins of the Plenary Assemblies.
- c) The Plenary Assembly is further requested to congratulate South Africa for successfully hosting the BRICS and encourage Member countries to host international events which may have positive socio-economic ripple effects for the SADC region.

4.0 DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE SADC PF AND MEMBER PARLIAMENTS

- 4.1 The Plenary Assembly is requested to note that the Forum has consistently enhanced its ICT infrastructure over the past years and engaged in initiatives to digitally transform the organisation for improved efficiency. This is in line with international best practices, including the Guide released by the IPU and the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) on digital transformation, published in 2023.
- 4.2 The Plenary Assembly is requested to note that, in line with initiatives of the Forum to promote digitalisation, a Memorandum of Understanding to transfer the Southern African ICT Hub (SAHUB) to the Forum was signed between the Forum and the IPU on 24th October 2023. It is expected that the digital transformation of the Forum will in the future encourage Member Parliaments to upgrade their ICT infrastructure with technical assistance from the SAHUB.
- 4.3 The transfer of the SAHUB to the Forum will be pivotal to future ICT innovation of the SADC-PF and its Member Parliaments and ~~that~~ it is expected that it would spearhead initiatives around digitalisation of work processes, updating of systems and servers as well as promoting backups through cloud services.

This called for close collaboration between the Hub and the SADC Member Parliaments, which will be a critical success factor for the Hub.

DECISION

- a) The Plenary Assembly is requested to note the above positive development and congratulate the Forum on the signing of the MOU with the IPU regarding the transfer of the SAHUB effective 24th October 2023.
- b) Further, the Plenary Assembly is invited to encourage the Forum's Member Parliaments and other partners to collaborate closely with the SAHUB and support all its initiatives aimed at operationalising the Hub, including the establishment of technical committees and resource mobilisation, among others.

5.0 GREENING THE SADC-PF TO CONTRIBUTE TO CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

- 5.1 The Plenary Assembly is requested to note that the Forum is pursuing green initiatives buttressed by its digital transformation and paperless policy. This is in accordance with Environmental scans required by donors as well as objectives contained in the Paris Agreement (2015) concerning the reduction of the carbon footprint. Furthermore, the Forum is poised to lead by example since climate change, and the need for rigorous environmental protection, are issues which have been amply canvassed by previous resolutions of the Plenary Assembly.
- 5.2 In this respect, the Plenary Assembly is requested to note that the Forum will ensure efficient waste management, promote renewable energy sources and will be taking measures to further reduce the carbon footprint at the SADCPF Headquarters. Moreover, climate justice and governance will become a new thematic area entrenched in the forthcoming Strategic Plan and will be dealt with by the Forum in a systematic manner.

DECISION

The Plenary Assembly is requested to positively note that the Forum is alive to the global environmental reality and will be including climate justice governance in its strategic blueprint to promote green initiatives within the organisation and lead Member Parliaments to follow suit with environmental protection.

6.0 PROGRESS ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE FORUM INTO A SADC REGIONAL PARLIAMENT

- 6.1 The Plenary Assembly is invited to favourably note that on the margins of the 43rd SADC Summit which took place from 17th to 18th August 2023 in Luanda, Angola, the Republic of Mozambique became the ninth Member State to sign the Agreement Amending the SADC Treaty to Establish the SADC Parliament, following further lobbies made to that effect.
- 6.2 The Plenary Assembly may recall that only when the threshold of 12 signatories for the Agreement is attained would Summit be able to approve that the Forum proceeds to finalise the Protocol on the SADC Parliament in consultation with the SADC Secretariat.
- 6.3 For transformation to be operationalised, there is pressing need to sensitise countries yet to sign the Agreement to do so well before the next SADC Council so that the latter may make a positive recommendation to the next SADC Summit on the finalisation of the Protocol.
- 6.4 In the meantime, Member States had also requested for a minimum of six months to consider the Protocol on the SADC Parliament once the draft has been finalised at the level of the SADC Secretariat. The proposed extended time for consultations would then need to be taken up with the SADC Secretariat at the appropriate stage.

DECISION

The Plenary Assembly is requested to approve the following:

- a) That countries which have not yet signed be lobbied through the Office of Speakers/Presiding Officers of Member Parliaments who may act as liaison with Ministries of Foreign affairs and Heads of State and Government, in view of signature of the Agreement Amending the SADC Treaty.
- b) That the SADC Protocol be finalised at the internal level with the SADC Secretariat whilst ensuring that Forum policy is reflected in the Protocol, and pending further comments to be made by Member countries when the Protocol is circulated. These include ensuring that there are transitional provisions in the Protocol which align with approved Forum policy.

7.0 SIDA CONTRIBUTION NO 14654 ON THE SRHR, HIV AND AIDS GOVERNANCE PROJECT (2023-2026)

- 7.1 The Plenary Assembly is requested to positively note that a new cooperation Agreement of SEK 52,000,000 (5 million USD) between SIDA and the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) to strengthen the capacity of parliaments on

Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and HIV/AIDS-related services in the SADC region became operational on 1st November 2023. The Project Proposal and the Budget have already been translated into the three official languages of the Forum and have been disseminated to all Member Parliaments.

DECISION

- a) In this regard, the Plenary Assembly is requested to note that national Parliaments will be requested to express their agreement in principle to operationalise the Project at national level, and this will be followed by a Project Implementation Agreement to be signed between the Forum and the national Parliament prior to orientation activities.
- b) The Plenary Assembly is invited to appeal to all its Member Parliaments to fully participate by conducting the first step of considering the Project Proposal and forthwith signing the Project Implementation Agreement with the Forum.
- c) The Parliaments of Botswana, Mauritius, South Africa, and Tanzania are encouraged to join all participating Parliaments and to recruit SRHR Researchers based at their Parliaments as part of fully operationalising the Project from 2023-2026.

8.0 RESUSCITATION OF THE RESOLUTION TO DEPLOY SADC PF ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSIONS TO ALL SADC MEMBER STATES TO CONSOLIDATE DEMOCRACY IN THE REGION

- 8.1 The Plenary Assembly is invited to recall that it has adopted several standing resolutions requiring the Forum to deploy Election Observation Missions to all SADC Member States when they hold elections. In addition, the resolutions have consistently emphasised that these Missions are to be financed through specific contributions by the Member Parliaments over and above the annual Member Contributions, with the exception that the SADC-PF will contribute to logistics such as conference venues and stationery.
- 8.2 The Plenary Assembly is invited to note that despite several reminders to that effect, there has been a poor response to requests for Member Parliaments to make financial contributions towards SADC PF Election Observation Missions and to nominate Members to participate in SADC PF Election Observation Missions. Notably, only three Member Parliaments responded to the requests to participate in the case of the elections being held in 2023-2024.
- 8.3 As a result of the poor response registered from the Member Parliaments, the Forum has been unable to deploy Election Observation Missions to the various Member States over time. This lack of response leads to a loss of faith in Forum processes and is unfair for parliaments which have diligently invested

in similar missions for election observation in other countries. Consequently, the Forum has been unable to deploy Election Observation Missions to various SADC countries that have held elections so far in 2023 and it is unlikely to be able to deploy Missions to the countries scheduled to hold elections later in 2023 and in 2024.

DECISION

- a) The Plenary Assembly is invited to note that the poor response and failure to deploy Election Observation Missions renders the Forum non-compliant to its own decisions, therefore in effect rescinding its previous resolutions on the same subject matter.
- b) The Plenary Assembly is requested to call upon Member Parliaments to revive their interests in Election Observation Missions since they are fundamental to democracy, peace, and security in Southern Africa. Not giving MPs an opportunity to observe elections in peer countries would erode democracy and inter-parliamentary solidarity.

9.0 THE THEME OF THE 54TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY AND APPRECIATION OF ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR A SMOOTH PLENARY ASSEMBLY

- 9.1 The Plenary Assembly is requested to note with appreciation that the theme selected for the 54th Plenary Assembly, *“The Role of Parliaments in Promoting Coordination for Enhanced Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery Planning in the SADC Region”* is highly relevant to the SADC region and is expected to result in resolutions that would encourage robust parliamentary oversight on disaster preparedness to mitigate the impact of extreme weather events.
- 9.2 The theme would also enable the 54th Plenary Assembly to focus on global initiatives to reduce global warming and would highlight the importance of Parliament’s role in addressing climate issues.

DECISION

- a) The Plenary Assembly is requested to place on record its sincere thanks to the Parliament of the Republic of Mauritius, led by Hon. Speaker Sooroojdev Phokeer, G.C.S.K., G.O.S.K. for graciously accepting to host the 54th Plenary Assembly Session and to appreciate the selection of an appropriate theme to focus the deliberations of the Plenary Assembly.
- b) The Plenary Assembly is further invited to convey its gratitude through the Host Speaker, Hon. Sooroojdev Phokeer, G.C.S.K., G.O.S.K. Speaker of the Mauritius National Assembly to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, Honourable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, for accepting to officially open the 54th Plenary Assembly Session.

- c) The Plenary Assembly is further requested to place on record its sincere gratitude to the people, Parliament and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius for making the necessary arrangements for a successful 54th Plenary Assembly.

10.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 2024-2028

- 10.1 The Plenary Assembly is requested to note that the Forum's current Strategic Plan which comes to an end on the 31st December 2023 has served the Forum well and has enabled the organisation to make astounding progress towards the achievement of its strategic objectives over the past five years.
- 10.2 The Plenary Assembly is requested to further note that Headhunters Consultancy Company has been engaged to develop the next 5-year Strategic Plan for the period 1st January 2024 to 31st December 2028. The Consultant is in process of reaching out widely to stakeholders and compiling empirical information that will inform the Strategy. In this regard, the blueprint of the Strategic Plan which contains the main essential features of the organisation in terms of policy direction is being submitted to the Plenary Assembly for approval. The Strategy Results Framework and Outputs will then be worked out by the Secretariat guided by the policy guidance contained in the blueprint.

DECISION

- a) The Plenary Assembly is requested to consider and approve the Blueprint for the organisation's Strategic Plan 2024-2028, which encapsulates the Forum's policy with respect to its Vision and Mission Statement upon which other operational parts of the Strategy will be anchored by the Secretariat.

11.0 PURSUING TRANSPARENCY BY DEMONSTRATING THE NET VALUE OF MEMBER PARLIAMENTS' CONTRIBUTIONS

- 11.1 The Plenary Assembly is invited to recall that the Forum has always pursued prudential financial planning and transparency which translates into the need to indicate all direct and indirect sources of revenue on the Forum's records.
- 11.2 The Plenary Assembly will further recall that in addition to Mandatory Member contributions, some parliaments make additional in-kind contributions towards the work of the Forum which are not reflected in the financial records of the Forum in terms of net value. The net value would demonstrate the money-worth value of contributions made in-kind as well as the financial contributions made by the Member Parliament. In-kind contributions are in the form of secondments of staff to the Forum, infrastructure support, among others.

- 11.3 The Plenary Assembly is invited to note the need to acknowledge and reflect these contributions in the financial records of the Forum as they constitute part of the resources that enable the Forum to conduct its business effectively.

DECISION

To improve financial transparency, the Plenary Assembly is invited to note that henceforth, when annual mandatory contributions are indicated, the net value of in-kind contributions will also be specified, including secondment of staff or infrastructure to show the real money worth of Member Parliaments' contributions.

12.0 KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 147TH IPU ASSEMBLY IN LUANDA, ANGOLA, FROM 23RD- 27TH OCTOBER 2023 AND ELECTION OF HON DR TULIA ACKSON AS PRESIDENT OF THE INTER PARLIAMENTARY UNION

- 12.1 The Plenary Assembly is invited to note that the 147th Assembly of the IPU and Related Meetings were successfully hosted in Luanda by the Parliament of Angola from 21st to 27th October 2023 under the theme ***“Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions”***. It was attended by about 1,500 participants drawn from 130 countries.
- 12.2 The Plenary Assembly is requested to recall that, at its 53rd Plenary Assembly, a resolution was adopted to support the candidature of Hon Dr Tulia Ackson, Speaker of the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania for the Presidency of the IPU. Subsequently, in line with the resolution, the Forum established a Campaign Team to spearhead the campaign for Dr Ackson, in collaboration with the Parliament of Tanzania.
- 12.3 The Plenary Assembly is further invited to *inter alia* positively note that during the 147th Assembly, the Governing Council of the IPU elected Hon. Dr. Tulia Ackson, Speaker of the United Republic of Tanzania, as the 31st President of the IPU, to serve for the period 2023 to 2026.

DECISION

- a) The Plenary Assembly is further invited to congratulate Hon Dr Tulia Ackson, Speaker of the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania, on her welldeserved election as President of the IPU, a development which has made SADC proud as well as the Africa Geopolitical Group because it was Africa's turn to have the IPU Presidency.
- b) Noting that the 147th Assembly of the IPU was a resounding success, the Plenary Assembly is invited to congratulate the Parliament, the people, and the Government of the Republic of Angola, for the resoundingly successful hosting of the event.

- c) The Plenary Assembly may wish to, in the same vein, also pay tribute to the Campaign Team for its dedication and work, which contributed to this positive outcome for the SADC region as well as the Africa Geopolitical Group.
- d) The Plenary Assembly may wish to note that the SADC Group and the Africa Geopolitical Group was unsuccessful in their bid to support an Emergency Item entitled, “*Stopping the war and the violations of human rights in Gaza*” which was co-sponsored by South Africa, Algeria, Kuwait on behalf of the Arab Group, Indonesia, and Iran delegations.
- e) The Plenary is invited to applaud the stalwart leadership of the Hon. Speaker Adv. Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo of Zimbabwe who has served in the IPU Executive for the past four years, and to congratulate Rt. Hon. Nelly BK Mutti, Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia, who was elected as the incoming Member of the 2023 to 2026 IPU Executive Committee, representing the Africa Geopolitical Group.
- f) The Plenary Assembly may wish to note the detailed Report on the 147th IPU Assembly and Related Meetings.

13.0 APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF CONTRACT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL PURSUANT TO RULE 7.6.3 (ii)

- 13.1 The Plenary Assembly is invited to note that EXCO considered an application submitted to the office of the President from the Secretary General for renewal of her contract. The application was submitted timely ahead of the expiration of the current contract of the Secretary General in July 2024 as provided for in Rule 7.6.3(ii) of the SADC PF Administrative Rules and Regulations which requires that the Secretary General should inform the Chairperson of the SADC-PF of her intention to seek contract renewal at least nine months prior to the expiration of the current contract. This requirement was thus duly fulfilled.
- 13.2 In conjunction with the application letter, the Secretary General had also submitted a Motivation Letter outlining her vision and plans for the next five years, a vision which she believes would contribute to the continued success and growth of the SADC Parliamentary Forum.
- 13.3 The Plenary Assembly is further invited to note that in considering the application, EXCO noted that the Secretary General had performed her duties with utmost diligence, commitment, hard work and dedication during the tenure of her current contract and consequently, EXCO favourably recommends the renewal of the contract.

DECISION

- a) The Plenary Assembly is invited to note that EXCO favourably considered the application in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Administrative Rules and Regulations and found it to be compliant.
- b) In this regard, the Plenary Assembly is requested to approve the renewal of the contract of the Secretary General for a second five-year term.

14.0 CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE FORUM IN RELATION TO SALARY ADVANCES AND PAYMENT OF GRATUITY IN VIEW OF FACILITATING FINANCIAL PLANNING FOR STAFF

14.1 The Plenary Assembly is requested to note that EXCO considered that staff of the Forum are often faced with financial difficulties with respect to payment of private pensions and other financial schemes which are not covered by the organisation. Since staff often utilise salary advances and payment of gratuity to fund these out-of-pocket expenses, EXCO has favourably considered that the legal provisions relating to same may be streamlined to facilitate financial planning but without in any way affecting the cash flow of the organisation.

14.2 In this regard, the Plenary Assembly is requested to approve Amendments of the Administrative Rules and Regulations with regards to the following:

- (a) The option by staff to elect for payment of gratuity on a monthly basis, instead of the option for half payment at mid-term and half payment at end of contract, or for the option for full payment at end of contract only.
- (b) The possibility for staff to pay for advances on salary by instalments within three consecutive months instead of by instalment at the end of the month.
- (c) That the above amended provisions come into force with effect as from 1st December 2023.

14.3 Proposed Amendment to Administrative Rules and Regulations

14.3.1 In view of the above recommendation by EXCO regarding salary advances, Rule 6.3.1 of the Administrative Rules and Regulations is proposed to be amended as follows:

CURRENT PROVISIONS RELATING TO ADVANCES

6.3.1 Advances

RULES

- (i) *Advances of salary shall be granted on written application in circumstances approved by the Secretary General.*
- (ii) *Advances of salary shall not exceed 50% of one month's salary and shall be deducted in full from the employee's salary at the end of the month.*
- (iii) *No advance of salary shall be granted until any existing advance has been fully repaid.*

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Rules 6.3.1.(i) and (iii) will remain the same.

The following amendment to Rule 6.3.1. (ii) is made (in shaded bold lettering):

- (ii) Advances of salary shall not exceed 50% of one month's salary and shall be deducted **in instalments amortised over a period not exceeding three months. Deductions shall be effected at the date of the payroll. The number of instalments and the amount of each instalment shall be approved by the Secretary General.**

14.3.2 In view of the above recommendation by EXCO regarding payment of gratuity to staff, Rule 6.1.5.1 of the Administrative Rules and Regulations is proposed to be amended as follows:

CURRENT PROVISIONS

6.1.5.1. Gratuity for Regional Staff & Local Staff in Managerial Positions

- (i) All Regional Staff and Local Staff in Managerial Positions shall be eligible for a gratuity, payable on satisfactory completion of contract, at the rate ruling at the time for each completed month of service.
- (ii) The earned gratuity shall be paid to the employees on expiration of their employment contracts.
- (iii) Gratuity may also be paid in two installments, one being paid mid-way into the contract, and the final payment on the expiration of the contract, subject to approval by the Secretary General.

- (iv) Staff may also take advances against the gratuity earned under terms approved by the Executive Committee, and subject to approval by the Secretary General.
- (v) In the event of a contract being prematurely terminated, a pro-rata gratuity shall be paid to the employee.
- (vi) Where an employee fails to pay any amount owing by him/her to SADC PF at the time of leaving service, the Secretary General shall cause such an amount to be deducted from the gratuity.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS (shaded in bold)

Please note that only paragraphs 6.1.5.1 (i) to (iv) are to be amended.

6.1.5.1. Gratuity for Regional Staff & Local Staff in Managerial Positions

- (i) All Regional Staff and Local Staff in Managerial Positions shall be eligible for a gratuity, **earned monthly at a percentage rate to be determined by the Executive Committee.**
- (ii) The earned gratuity shall be paid to the employee on expiration of their employment contracts, **unless otherwise agreed with the employee.**
- (iii) Gratuity may also be paid **monthly, subject to approval by the Secretary General.**
- (iv) **Where gratuity is not paid monthly, it may also be paid in two installments, one being paid mid-way into the contract, and the final payment on the expiration of the contract, subject to approval by the Secretary General. Where gratuity is not paid monthly, staff may also take advances against the gratuity upon approval by the Secretary General.**
- (v) In the event of a contract being prematurely terminated, a pro-rata gratuity shall be paid to the employee.
- (vi) Where an employee fails to pay any amount owing by him/her to SADC PF at the time of leaving service, the Secretary General shall cause such an amount to be deducted from the gratuity.

15.0 WAIVER OF NOTICE PERIOD AND AMENDMENT OF ARTICLE 35 AND THE EXECUTION CLAUSE OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FORUM

The Plenary Assembly is invited to note that as part of resolving the lacuna occasioned by lack of signatures on the execution Clause, EXCO requests for a waiver of the notice period of three months to amend the relevant part of Article 35 accordingly.

- i) Article 35 of the Constitution be amended, by deleting it and replacing it with a new Article 35.
- ii) The Execution Clause of the Constitution be amended by deleting the date.
- iii) The legal effect of deleting Article 35 and replacing it with a new Article 35 and deleting the date in the Execution Clause is that there will be a new Article 35 and there will be no Repeal provision. Consequently, the amended Article 35 will read as follows:

Title: Article 35 Authenticity of Text

The original texts of the Constitution in all three languages of the SADC PF are equally authentic.

DECISION

The 54th Plenary Assembly Session is requested to grant a waiver of the notice period to effect the above changes of the Constitution during this sitting.

Membership of the Executive Committee – 2022 to 2024

1. Hon. Speaker Roger Mancienne – *President* – Seychelles (Chairperson)
2. Hon Marie Joanne Sabrina Tour *Vice President* Mauritius
3. Hon. Mduduzi M. Matsebula, *Treasurer* Kingdom of Eswatini
4. Hon. Pedro Sebastião Angola
5. Hon. Speaker Phandu Tombola Chana Skelemani Botswana
6. Hon Nadine Mangabu Luabeya DRC
7. Rt. Hon. Speaker Tlohang Sekhamane Lesotho
8. Hon. Speaker Christine Harijaona Razanamahaso, Madagascar
9. Hon Rachel Zulu Malawi
10. Hon Esperança Laurinda Francisco Nhiuane Bias, Mozambique
11. Hon Phillipus Wido Katamelo Namibia
12. Hon Speaker Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula South Africa
13. Hon. Speaker Dr Tulia Ackson Tanzania
14. Hon Princess Kasune Zambia
15. Hon. Speaker Adv. Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo Mudenda Zimbabwe
16. Hon. Speaker Prof. Peter Hitjitevi Katjavivi (ex officio) Namibia
17. Hon. Regina Esparon, RWPC Chairperson (ex officio) Seychelles

INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY MEMBERS UNTIL DECEMBER 2023

18. Hon. Speaker [Carolina Cerqueira](#), Angola
19. Hon. Darren Bergman, *Former Treasurer* South Africa
20. Hon. Selemani Jumanne Zedi, Tanzania

21. Hon. Speaker Nelly B K Mutti
22. Hon. Dought Ndiweni

Zambia
Zimbabwe

Mr President, I beg to move.