



**COMMUNIQUE
OF THE SYMPOSIUM FOR THE 54TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY SESSION**

**“THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN PROMOTING COORDINATION FOR ENHANCED
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND RECOVERY PLANNING IN THE SADC REGION”**

22ND NOVEMBER 2023

The Symposium on the Role of Parliaments in Promoting Coordination for Enhanced Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery Planning in the SADC Region held during the 54th Plenary Assembly of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, on the 22nd November 2023, at the Sir Harilal Vaghjee Memorial Hall, Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius, was presided by Hon. Dr Mohammad Anwar Husnoo, Vice Prime Minister & Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management of the Republic of Mauritius.

The following Resolutions emanating from the Symposium are now released as a Communiqué for the attention of Members, partners and other stakeholders:

DEEPLY CONCERNED that global warming, which is *inter alia* induced by human activity, has led to devastating weather effects in Southern Africa and in other regions of the world, including slower effects such as the melting of ice caps, the erosion of beaches and the sinking of land;

STRESSING that extreme weather events damage physical infrastructure and impact socio-economic life, and recognising that the SADC region has been affected by several destructive cyclones including cyclones Idai, Batsirai and Freddy recently which caused extensive damage and caused hundreds of human casualties, as well as internally displaced persons;

CONSCIOUS that the international community is activating strategies to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and that the goals in the Paris Agreement (2015) as well as progress reported at the Conference of Parties (COP) meetings remain highly relevant to enhance climate resilience;

FURTHER CONSCIOUS that if no action is taken to drastically reduce carbon emissions, temperatures can rise as high as 3 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels by the end of the 21st century, with every increment translating into more severe and extreme weather events;

AFFIRMING that to mitigate damage caused by extreme weather events in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, there is a need for a multi-sectoral approach whereby public and private stakeholders collaborate to save infrastructure and lives, and ensure that citizens are widely sensitised on disaster preparedness through regular awareness campaigns;

RECALLING that disaster preparedness is pivotal to achieving the Sustainable Agenda 2030 which has been subscribed to by most SADC nations since any progress made in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be lost due to natural calamities such as torrential rains, flash floods and landslides;

MINDFUL that during and in the aftermath of climate disasters, the weak and vulnerable segments of society are often disproportionately affected and lose shelter, clothing, food or even basic amenities, thus requiring the spontaneous response and assistance of authorities concerned;

HAVING RECEIVED pertinent and germane presentations on weather surveillance and meteorological services, environmental protection and the coordination necessary for disaster preparedness at the national level;

RECOGNISING the astounding progress made by the Republic of Mauritius whereby governance on the matter has shifted from ‘managing disasters’ to ‘managing disaster risks’ which include proactive measures such as the setting up of Early Warning Systems, training of personnel in fire safety, first aid, water rescue activities and other emergency skills, as well as simulation exercises for oil spills and tsunamis;

NOW, therefore, the Symposium of the 54th Plenary Assembly:

- 1) **COMMENDS** the Republic of Mauritius, which is host of the 54th Plenary Assembly, for developing a National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategic Framework (2020-2030) as well as an Action Plan for the same period consolidate climate resilience, in addition to enacting targeted legislation such as the Land Drainage Authority Act and the Climate Change Act;
- 2) **URGES** countries to meet total financial needs for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), estimated at USD 6.5 billion, including USD 4.5 billion for adaptation and USD 2 billion for mitigation, since such early investments will save the world from damage in multi-fold figures in the future;
- 3) **CALLS UPON** Member Parliaments to the SADC Parliamentary Forum to develop the synergies with policy makers, academia, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), traditional and faith leaders, Community Based Organisations (CBOs), youth representatives and other stakeholders to promote climate justice by reducing the carbon footprint through measures in line with the Paris Agreement regularly reported to the COP;
- 4) **FURTHER CALLS UPON** Member Parliaments to enact laws, adopt budgets, exercise oversight and represent communities to address climate resilience in a way which mainstreams gender and ensures that the voices of women are heard in decision-making processes on disaster preparedness;
- 5) **UNDERScores** the importance of regional cooperation in disaster risk reduction and preparedness, especially since countries of the same geographical region witness similar weather patterns and are affected by similar climate events;

- 6) **CALLS UPON** Member States to share best practices, technology, contemporaneous weather data and lessons to promote disaster preparedness and risk reduction;
- 7) **FURTHER CALLS UPON** the Plenary Assembly to remain seized of the matter through exchanges of country reports in booklet form and through an implementation matrix which can be updated from time to time;
- 8) **INSTRUCTS** the Secretariat of the SADC Parliamentary Forum to ensure that climate governance including disaster preparedness is consistently addressed through its relevant Standing Committee.

Done at Port Louis, Mauritius, on 22nd November 2023

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