



REPORT OF THE SADC PF STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN ADVANCEMENT AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (GEWAYD) TO THE 56TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY HOSTED BY THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA FROM 8TH TO 15TH DECEMBER 2024

Mr. President, I beg to move that the 56th Plenary Assembly do adopt the Report of the Standing Committee on Gender Equality, Women Advancement and Youth Development (GEWAYD) laid on the Table on 11th December 2024.

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1.0 COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

As at the date of the meeting, the Committee consisted of the following Members:

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| 1. Hon. Princess Kasune (Chairperson) | Zambia |
| 2. Hon. Senator Thato Mako Mohale (Vice Chairperson) | Lesotho |
| 3. Hon. Teresa José Adelina Neto | Angola |
| 4. Botswana (Parliament was dissolved pending elections on 30 th October 2024) | |
| 5. Hon. Cathy Moleka Sakombi | DRC |
| 6. Hon. Nokuthula Dlamini | Eswatini |
| 7. Madagascar (Member not yet assigned after 29 th May General Elections) | |
| 8. Malawi (Member yet to be assigned to the Committee) | |
| 9. Mauritius (Parliament was dissolved ahead of 10 th November elections) | |
| 10. Mozambique (Parliament was dissolved ahead of 9 th October elections) | |
| 11. Hon. Paula Kooper | Namibia |
| 12. Hon. Regina Esparon | Seychelles |
| 13. South Africa (Member not yet assigned after 29 th May general elections) | |
| 14. Hon. Shally Josepha Raymond | Tanzania |
| 15. Hon. Maybe Mbowa | Zimbabwe |

2.0 COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

Broadly, the GEWAYD Standing Committee deals with issues of gender equality, women's advancement and empowerment, youth development, and children as stipulated in its Terms of Reference under Rule 42 (a) of the Rules of Procedure of the SADC Parliamentary Forum.

3.0 NUMBER OF MEETINGS HELD AND MEETING DATES

The GEWAYD Committee held its virtual public hearing session on 23rd October 2024 under the theme: *“Leveraging the Role of SADC Parliamentary Forum in Facilitating Citizen Participation in SADC Regional Integration for Enhanced Accountability and Inclusive Socio-Economic Development.”*

4.0 BACKGROUND

The 2024 Public Hearing Session emphasised the importance of citizen participation and the strategic role of the SADC PF in promoting accountability, inclusive development, and social cohesion within SADC integration efforts. Over the years, the SADC PF has remained committed to involving citizens in legislative processes, particularly in advancing gender equality, youth empowerment, and social inclusion.

The GEWAYD Committee focused on how SADC Parliaments can enhance their legislative, oversight, and representative roles to promote inclusive citizen participation, particularly for women and youth. The session explored strategies to advance gender parity and youth development, addressing challenges and opportunities in areas such as youth employment, education,

entrepreneurship, and representation in decision-making. While progress in women's and youth representation was acknowledged, the Committee noted ongoing challenges, including gender disparities in leadership roles and barriers for rural and marginalised communities. It commended efforts to domesticate the SADC Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage, reinforcing the SADC PF's commitment to protecting the rights of women and children.

The Committee reviewed the revised SADC Gender Parity Framework, an update to the 2009 framework aimed at addressing ongoing gender disparities. While recognising historical milestones, such as the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and the 2008 Protocol, the Committee noted the continued under-representation of women in leadership positions, emphasising the need for immediate action. The Committee endorsed the revised Framework, which aims to further strengthen women's political engagement across SADC Member States. The discussions were supported by insights from UN Women, which highlighted the urgency of gender quotas and measures to address violence against women in politics. The public hearing also covered issues such as youth employment in the digital economy, the role of parliaments in advancing gender parity, and recommendations for policy reforms to improve youth representation and foster a more inclusive legislative environment.

5.0 CONSIDERATION OF THE CRITICAL MATTERS UNDER THE COMMITTEE'S AMBIT

The Committee considered some critical matters before moving to the training session as follows:

5.1 Call for Concerted Efforts to Address Violence Against Women in Politics and Elections (VAWPE) and Eliminate All Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls

The Committee noted the Secretariat's efforts, working collaboratively with various civil society organisations to advocate for the domestication of Model Laws to protect women's and girls' rights. In this regard, the Committee welcomed the initiative by SADC PF to co-organise a Regional Convening on the SADC Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage in Lusaka, Zambia, from 19th to 23rd August 2024, to review progress in domesticating the Model Law and promote best practices. The meeting, officially opened by the Chairperson Hon. Kasune, also the Minister of Justice of Zambia, with Secretary General H.E. Sekgoma delivering the keynote, also established a community of practice to end child marriage and developed an implementation roadmap.

5.2 Call For SADC PF Parliamentarians to Advocate for Gender Equality in Political and Decision-Making Positions and to Take Legislative and Other Measures to Promote Gender Equality

The Committee welcomed the ongoing collaboration between SADC PF and the SADC Secretariat to revise the SADC Gender Parity Framework as a

member of the Technical Working Group. The Framework provides guidelines for Member States to fulfil commitments on women's participation in political and decision-making roles, in line with Articles 12 and 13 of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. The Committee welcomed the opportunity to harness parliamentary perspectives during the review of the Framework and its Implementation Matrix.

5.3 Call for SADC PF to Promote Youth Empowerment and Participation in the SADC Region's Political, Economic, and Other Decision-Making Processes

The Committee commended the SADC PF's ongoing efforts to sustain momentum on youth engagement. This included giving priority to submissions by young people during public hearings. The Committee also welcomed the engagement of young people by the Secretary General who delivered a keynote address at the 6th Southern Africa Youth Forum, held from 10th to 13th August in Harare, Zimbabwe, on the sidelines of the 44th SADC Summit. The Forum brought together 300 young people from the 16 SADC Member States. Furthermore, the Committee welcomed the innovation of inviting a representative of young people to address the Plenary Assembly Session on youth issues in the SADC region. The Committee also recalled the Plenary Assembly resolution to establish a SADC PF Youth Caucus and resolved to champion its implementation.

5.4 Progress on the transformation of SADC PF into a SADC Parliament

The Committee welcomed the progress regarding the transformation of SADC PF into a SADC Parliament with 12 requisite Member States having signed the Agreement Amending the Treaty to establish the SADC Parliament as one of the SADC institutions under Article 9(1). The Agreement entered into force on 11th July 2024. The Committee further took note that the Draft Protocol Establishing SADC Parliament was disseminated to the Member States, and they were given 6 months to submit comments to the Secretariat.

6.0 SUMMARY OF THE PUBLIC HEARING SUBMISSIONS

6.1 Presentation on Draft Revised SADC Framework for Achieving Gender Parity in Politics and Decision-making Positions by 2035

Dr Makanatsa presented the revised SADC Gender Parity Framework, highlighting persistent barriers to women's full participation in political and decision-making roles across the SADC region, including poverty, entrenched cultural norms, and discriminatory electoral systems like first-past-the-post, which limit women's representation. The Framework aims to achieve gender parity by 2035, urging Member States to adopt gender-sensitive electoral systems and quotas to support women's political engagement, with specific recommendations for legislatures, executives, judiciaries, and local authorities to foster inclusive, gender-sensitive environments.

Key actions include gender quotas, legislative reforms, and protections against discrimination and violence, emphasising the importance of supporting marginalised women and recognising Southern African women's contributions to regional peace as proof of their leadership capacity. To support these goals, the Framework's Implementation Matrix outlines six strategic objectives to strengthen policy, monitor progress, and address emerging threats to women's leadership, such as cyberbullying, while advocating for greater gender equality across all sectors.

6.2 Legislative and Oversight Measures to Strengthen the Implementation of Regional Gender Parity Frameworks at the National Level

Two submissions were made in this area: Hon. Hilda Macheso, Southern Africa Youth Parliamentarian for Malawi, highlighted the need for gender parity, advocating equal representation of women and men and outlining key equality frameworks. She cited challenges including underrepresentation, economic disparities, and weak policy enforcement. Susan Tolmay, Gender and Governance Associate at Gender Links presented the 2024 Africa Women's Political Participation Barometer, noting progress in the SADC region but highlighting ongoing barriers such as violence against women in politics, limited youth representation, and socio-economic obstacles to women's full participation.

6.3 Tackling Child Marriage and Gender-Based Violence Among Youth Through Legislation and Education Programmes

Presentations by Washington Mumbamarwo, a Communications Expert from the Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYOF), and representatives from Women of the South Speak Out (WOSSO) and She-Hive Association addressed critical issues facing youth, especially young women in Southern Africa. Mumbamarwo highlighted the impact of poverty, cultural norms, and lack of education on child marriage and gender-based violence (GBV) among youth, stressing the need for legislative and community action. Refiloe Harris from She-Hive, along with Veronika Haimbili and Vimbai Nyika from WOSSO, discussed young women's challenges, including early marriage, GBV, limited healthcare access, and unsafe abortion practices, calling for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and the decriminalisation of abortion.

6.4 Measures to Ensure Equitable Access to Education and Skills Development for Women and Youth

Three submissions were received under this thematic area from Ludo Sekga, a Human Rights Lawyer at the African Centre for Governance, Hon. Antsaniavo Rameliniaina, a Southern Africa Youth Parliamentarian from Madagascar, and Hon. Fundile Nkala, a SADC Youth Parliamentarian from Zimbabwe. The presentations highlighted the urgent need for equitable educational access and skills development for women and youth in the SADC region, particularly for marginalised groups. All three speakers stressed the

importance of addressing challenges such as inadequate resources, limited gender inclusivity, and intersectional inequalities. They emphasised the need for inclusive education policies, economic empowerment, flexible learning systems, culturally responsive teaching, and stronger community involvement to create lasting change.

6.5 Improving Youth Representation in Decision-Making Processes at National And Regional Levels

Two submissions were received under the thematic area: one by Mandipa Ndlovu, Governance Researcher and Strategic Foresight Adviser, on "Mainstreaming Futures Thinking in SADC: Leveraging Existing Frameworks for Inclusive Development," and the other by Maureen Shonge from UN Women – East and Southern Africa. Ndlovu introduced futures thinking as a tool for enhancing resilience and long-term planning in the SADC region, stressing the need for gender and youth-focused policies to address gaps in data, digital transformation, and legislative support. Shonge's presentation focused on boosting youth participation in governance at national and regional levels, emphasising the creation of inclusive environments, capacity building, mentorship, and platforms for youth voices in policy discussions.

6.6 Initiatives to reduce the digital divide for women and youth, particularly in rural communities

Two submissions were received under the thematic area from Ompha Tshamano, Project Officer at the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, and Sally Ncube, Regional Representative for Southern Africa at Equality Now. Both highlighted the impact of the digital divide on rural communities, particularly women and youth. The lack of internet access and digital tools exacerbates inequalities, limiting economic, educational, and social inclusion. Barriers such as psychological, material, and skills-related challenges, along with insufficient digital infrastructure in rural areas, contribute to social and economic exclusion, limited access to healthcare and education, and entrenched poverty. Both presentations stressed the urgency of bridging this divide to promote inclusive participation in the digital economy and address regional disparities.

7.0 DELIBERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the presentations by the experts and citizens, the Committee deliberated on the issues raised and resolved to recommend to the 56th Plenary Assembly as follows:

On the Legislative and Oversight Measures to Strengthen the Implementation of Regional Gender Parity Frameworks at the National Level:

- i. **Welcome** the revision of the SADC Framework for Gender Parity and the involvement of parliamentarians and emphasised the importance

- of compliance through effective implementation and strengthening accountability mechanisms for tangible progress towards gender parity across all sectors in the SADC region.
- ii. **Notes** the urgent need to address legislative gaps in regulating digital tools, artificial intelligence, and social media, which have contributed to disinformation and cyberviolence, particularly against women in politics, while safeguarding freedom of expression.
 - iii. **Emphasises** the need to introduce constitutional or legislated gender parity quotas in decision-making positions, adopt more inclusive electoral systems, and appoint women to strategic roles, especially in social policy areas affecting marginalised groups.
 - iv. **Reiterates** the importance of addressing financial barriers for women in politics through political party funding laws that support women's campaigns, including linking public funding to gender parity.
 - v. **Emphasises** Parliament's critical role in achieving gender parity, including enacting rights-based laws, domestication of regional and international commitments on women's political participation, establishing gender-focused committees, and ensuring all parliamentary outputs eliminate gender discrimination.
 - vi. **Emphasises** the importance of partnering with civil society in gender parity advocacy and ensuring compliance, including through public interest litigation in cases of non-compliance with existing laws and policies.
 - vii. **Notes** the judiciary's role in promoting gender parity by adopting progressive, rights-based approaches, especially where customary law contradicts constitutional principles, such as male primogeniture.
 - viii. **Reiterates** the influential role of traditional leaders in advancing gender equality by addressing socio-cultural barriers, such as restrictive cultural practices and gender-based violence, and fostering inclusive attitudes in their communities.
 - ix. **Emphasises** the importance of fully including youth in governance processes to build a more inclusive and equitable society, recognising the significant proportion of young people in the region's population.
 - x. **Reiterates** the need to focus on women with disabilities, acknowledging their multiple forms of discrimination that hinder their social, economic, and political inclusion.

On Tackling Child Marriage and Gender-Based Violence Among Youth Through Legislation and Education Programmes:

- i. **Calls** for increased advocacy for the domestication of the SADC Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage, stricter penalties for offenders, stronger child marriage laws, and the decriminalisation of abortion to ensure women and girls have autonomy over their reproductive health decisions.
- ii. **Urges** more awareness campaigns to challenge harmful cultural practices, involve local leaders in shifting norms, and engage youth as advocates against child marriage and GBV, equipping them to promote gender equality and peer education on rights.

- iii. **Calls** for expanded educational opportunities for girls, alongside life skills and economic empowerment programmes, to reduce pressures for early marriage and vulnerability to GBV, fostering self-sufficiency and informed choices.
- iv. **Calls** for the establishment of safe spaces, counselling, and legal support for survivors of child marriage and GBV to ensure proper care and reintegration while making SRHR services youth-friendly and accessible, particularly in rural areas.

On Measures to Ensure Equitable Access to Education and Skills Development for Women and Youth:

- i. **Calls** for the implementation of regular impact evaluations, gender-disaggregated data collection, and feedback mechanisms to assess educational access and adapt programmes for improved outcomes.
- ii. **Encourages** the Integration of gender-sensitive curricula, the increase of the proportion of female teachers, the establishment of culturally responsive teaching methods, and the provision of safe spaces and targeted support to create inclusive educational environments for marginalised students.
- iii. **Calls** for the adoption of inclusive education policies, anti-discrimination laws, and quotas for women in education and vocational programmes and the launch of awareness campaigns to challenge stereotypes, promote equality, and inform women and youth about educational and career opportunities.

On Improving Youth Representation in Decision-Making Processes At National and Regional Levels:

- (i) **Encourages** prioritising futures thinking in SADC policy-making to ensure long-term, inclusive growth, leveraging frameworks like the SADC Youth Development Policy and the Protocol on Gender and Development.
- (ii) **Calls** for urgent action to address youth employment, digital literacy, and skills gaps, particularly for women, to reduce disparities and promote equal economic participation across the region.
- (iii) **Calls** for stronger partnerships between parliaments, civil society, youth organisations, and experts to improve data collection and inform governance.
- (iv) **Encourages** the establishment of youth-inclusive policies to create pathways for youth involvement in decision-making at national and regional levels.
- (v) **Urges** Parliaments to keep promoting platforms for youth dialogue and integrate their voices into policy discussions through forums, consultative bodies, and cross-sector partnerships.

On Initiatives To Reduce The Digital Divide For Women and Youth, Particularly in Rural Communities:

- i. **Urges** SADC Member States to act swiftly on digital inclusion commitments and provide regular progress reports, focusing on women and youth.
- ii. **Calls** for urgent measures to address legal gaps and ensure gender- and youth-responsive budgeting for expanding digital infrastructure, particularly in underserved rural areas.
- iii. **Encourages** the formulation of policies that promote affordable Internet access through pricing models, subsidies, and the creation of safe, accessible public Internet centres.
- iv. **Calls** for the integration of digital literacy and gender equality into educational curricula from an early age to equip youth for active participation in digital spaces.
- v. **Urges** for the development of ICT policies with gender-specific targets to enhance the representation of women and youth in digital governance and work with traditional leaders to address social barriers and ensure online safety.

The Committee expressed its apologies to the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) and SAfAIDS, whose submissions were waitlisted and could not be presented due to the oversubscription. While regrettable, this development reflects the growing popularity of the public hearing as a platform for citizen participation.

Hon. Princess KASUNE
CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Sheuneni KURASHA
COMMITTEE SECRETARY

8.0 APPENDICES

APPENDIX I - LIST OF OFFICIALS

- i. Boemo Sekgoma, Secretary General, SADC PF Secretariat
- ii. Joseph Manzi, Director of Parliamentary Business and Programmes, SADC PF Secretariat
- iii. Sheuneni Kurasha, Programme Manager and Committee Secretary for Democracy, Governance and Human Rights & GEWAYD, SADC PF Secretariat
- iv. Rachel Mundilo, Programme Manager FANRCJ, SADC PF Secretariat
- v. Masenate Molapo, Programme Manager TIFI, SADC PF Secretariat
- vi. Dr Moses Magadza, Media Officer, SADC PF Secretariat
- vii. Ronald Wandwaai, ICT Officer, SADC PF Secretariat
- viii. Paulina Kanguatjivi, Procedural Assistant and Coordinator, SADC PF Secretariat

APPENDIX II – LIST OF EXPERTS AND CITIZENS WHO MADE SUBMISSIONS DURING THE PUBLIC HEARING

<p>Draft Revised SADC Framework for Achieving Gender Parity in Politics and Decision-Making Positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory Remarks on the revised Framework - Ms Phemelo Maitetso, Head of Gender, SADC Secretariat • Perspectives on Gender Equality - Maureen Shonge, Regional Policy Specialist – Women’s Political Participation, UN Women- East and Southern Africa from UN Women • Presentation of the revised Framework and its Implementation Matrix - Dr Makanaka Makonese, SADC Consultant
<p>Mainstreaming Futures Thinking in SADC: Leveraging Existing Frameworks for Inclusive Development, Mandipa Ndlovu, Governance Researcher and Strategic Foresight Adviser Email: info@mandipandlovu.com</p>
<p>Gender Parity in Action: Parliamentary Measures for Sustainable Change- Hon. Hilda Macheso, Southern Africa Youth Parliamentarian (Malawi) Email: machesohilda@gmail.com</p>
<p>Access to education and skills development for women and youth, guided by the question: what measures can be implemented to ensure equitable access to education and skills development for women and youth? Ms Ludo Sekga (Human Rights Lawyer) - The African Centre for Governance, Email: tumelo@africancentregov.org</p>
<p>Role of Parliaments in Implementing the Gender Parity Framework - Hon. Patience Munyenyembe, Speaker Southern Africa Youth Parliament (Malawi) Email: munyenymbepeshy@gmail.com</p>
<p>How can youth representation in decision-making processes be improved at both national and regional levels? UN Women- East and Southern Africa Email: maureen.shonge@unwomen.org</p>
<p>What initiatives can reduce the digital divide for women and youth, particularly in rural communities? - Ompha Tshamano, Project Officer: Expression, Information, and Digital Rights Unit Email: ompha.tshamano@up.ac.za</p>
<p>Measures to ensure equitable access to Education and Skills Development - Hon. Antsaniavo Rameliniaina, Southern Africa Youth Parliamentarian & Chairperson Standing Committee on Disability Rights, Gender, and Young Women Development (Madagascar) Email: antsaniavo.emergence@gmail.com</p>
<p>Women’s Political Participation in Africa: Unpacking the Africa barometer 2024 focusing on the SADC region, Susan Tolmay, Gender and Governance Associate, Gender Links Email: governance@genderlinks.org.za</p>

Addressing Intersectionality measures for Equitable Education and Skills Development for marginalized women and youth - Hon. Fundile Nkala, SADC Youth Parliamentarian (Zimbabwe)
Email: fundynkala@gmail.com

Voice and Choice: A Safe and Productive future for young women in SADC- Veronika Haimbili, Vimbai Nyika and Refiloe Harris - Youths at Gender Links

Addressing child marriage and gender-based violence among youth - Washington Mumbamarwo, Communications Expert, SAYOF Email: info.sayof@gmail.com

Measures to reduce the digital divide for women and youth, particularly in rural communities - Sally Ncube, Regional Representative Southern Africa, Equality Now
Email: sncube@equalitynow.org