

# SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

# 57<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY ASSEMBLY SESSION 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY TO 7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2025 VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE

# REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO THE 57<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY ASSEMBLY ON GENERAL SADC PF POLICY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS TABLED ON 3<sup>RD</sup> JUNE 2025

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 57<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, held at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, laid on the Table of the House this 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025.

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Executive Committee (EXCO), as the management board of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, met on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025 in Windhoek, Namibia. This meeting of EXCO was preceded by an inaugural session held from 28<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025 which served to induct Members of EXCO on the statutory functions and the mandate of the Forum in line with the SADC-PF Strategic Plan (2024-2028).

The Plenary Assembly is requested to note that the current Report of EXCO to the 57<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly is made pursuant to the management and administrative functions of EXCO under Article 12(9) of the SADC-PF Constitution.

# 2.0 MATTERS FOR NOTING BY THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY

The 57<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly is requested to note the following issues which were processed by the Executive Committee:

#### 2.1. SUBMISSION OF COUNTRY REPORTS ON THE IMPACT OF TARIFFS AND COUNTER-TARIFFS IN THE FACE OF THE EVOLVING WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

- 2.1.1. EXCO considered reports including that of the World Economic Outlook (Jan 2025) published by the International Monetary Fund, and took note of the global turmoil in trade due to the imposition of tariffs and counter-tariffs by the world's prominent trading partners which will undeniably have ricocheting effects on the African continent. EXCO further took note that the SADC region depends on commodities and raw materials from the main trading partners worldwide and it will be indirectly influenced by the commercial conflict.
- 2.1.2. In this respect, EXCO approved that country reports be submitted to the Plenary Assembly on the impact of abrupt tariffs on the local economy including on inflation, purchasing power and economic growth, so that the Plenary Assembly can take stock of the matter and propose remedial measures, and further that the TIFI Committee be tasked to monitor these global developments and propose parliamentary actions for the Plenary Assembly's attention.

# 2.1.3. Recommendation

The 57<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly is requested to note the above initiative which will go a long way in keeping the Assembly abreast of trade difficulties faced by SADC nations. The Plenary Assembly is further requested to note that the first Reports will be tabled as part of country Reports commencing with the 58<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly Session.

# 2.2. RIPPLE EFFECTS OF PEACE AND SECURITY TRANSGRESSIONS WORLDWIDE INFLUENCING DIPLOMATIC TIES NEAR THE SADC REGION

- 2.2.1. The Executive Committee took note of peace and security concerns worldwide which tend to create divisive factions across the African continent, with countries increasingly requested to take sides, for instance, in the Israel-Palestine conflict, the Ukraine-Russia war or the tariff war waged between trading partners.
- 2.2.2. EXCO recalled that at the recent Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU-150), held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025, the Arab bloc deliberately sought to collaborate with the Africa- geopolitical group on an emergency item relating to ending armed conflicts. However, due to division of votes and lack of unanimous consent, the Emergency item did not succeed. In addition, EXCO took note that near the SADC borders, the Republic of Maldives had, on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2025, announced a travel ban on Israeli nationals as a means to side with the Palestinian people, hence reiterating the diplomatic divides which can exist between States in the face of international conflicts.

# 2.2.3. Recommendation

In this regard, the Plenary Assembly is requested to encourage SADC nations to embrace healthy intra-SADC diplomatic ties, in view of the value proposition for an investment case for Parliaments and the Forum to build capacity of MPs on peace building and conflict resolution, Parliament being widely known as the temple of democracy and the custodian of fair governance processes.

# 2.3. APPROVAL OF THE THEME FOR THE $57^{\text{TH}}$ PLENARY ASSEMBLY SESSION OF THE SADC-PF

2.3.1. In view of the fast pace at which Artificial Intelligence (AI) is gaining terrain in the realm of social and economic affairs, EXCO approved the theme "HARNESSING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) FOR EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT PARLIAMENTARY PROCESSES IN THE SADC REGION: EXPERIENCES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES" for the 57<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly Session.

# 2.3.2. Recommendation

The Plenary Assembly is requested to note EXCO's contributions in appropriately coordinating the affairs of the Plenary Assembly, including the choice of the main theme for deliberations. The successful Symposium bears testimony to the relevance of the theme to advance Parliamentarism.

# 2.4. STAFFING UPDATE AND PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES

- **2.4.1** EXCO took note that the Secretariat has continued to face staffing shortages, especially to support its Programmes and Committee system. In this regard, EXCO reiterated the flexibility bequeathed to the Secretary General to reallocate staff by mutual consent and to strengthen the solicitation of seconded staff from national Parliaments in order to fill vacant positions which cannot be filled due to financial constraints.
- **2.4.2** Further, concerning staff capacity, EXCO noted that a full-time Monitoring and Evaluation Officer will be recruited under the SRHR Project to evaluate and appropriately report on the Project results framework. Following the departure of Ms Rachel Mundilo, Programme Manager of the Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Climate Action portfolio, effective 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025, EXCO approved that both the M&E Officer and a new Programme Manager responsible for the FANRCA and HSDSP portfolios should be recruited through a fast track procedure that would allow the new entrants sufficient time to achieve the programmed results anticipated under the SRHR Project which ends on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2026.
- **2.4.3** EXCO further noted that a staff retreat was held from the 24<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025 in Manong, Botswana, to promote self-reflection, awareness and increase performance efficiency of staff as they engaged with the SRHR Project (2023-2026).The staff retreat was facilitated by staff of the Parliament of South Africa who have specialised knowledge in change management, human resources and performance strategies. The retreat encouraged staff to work through agile job descriptions which would allow the organisation to exhibit leadership of its legal normative content around the world in view of advancing SRHR and human rights.
- **2.4.4** EXCO also noted that the Forum is proceeding with the arbitration relating to the case of Mr Lovemore Mabuku, ex Office Assistant at the Forum, and that the arbitration will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 at the Office of the Labour Commissioner of Namibia. EXCO noted that the Secretariat will keep EXCO informed of the outcome of the arbitration, the proceedings of which are confidential by nature.

# 2.4.5 Recommendations

- 2.4.5.1 The Plenary Assembly is requested to note the above staff movements and information on staff capacity building initiatives. In addition, the Plenary Assembly is requested to thank the Parliament of South Africa for its contributions in sharing valuable knowledge and expertise during staff trainings.
- 2.4.5.2 The Plenary Assembly is requested to support the secondment of Staff to strengthen the implementation capacity of the Secretariat. Communication has been sent to the Offices of Clerks and Secretaries

General on positions that would further augment the SADC Parliaments capacity.

# 2.5 PROGRESS MADE ON DONOR SUPPORTED PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED BY THE FORUM

- **2.5.1** The Plenary Assembly is requested to note that EXCO took cognisance of the update concerning the SRHR Project (2023-2026) which is in the second year of project implementation in relation to which an Annual Review Meeting was held with Sweden on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025. With the Project closing on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2026, EXCO impressed that all efforts be put in place for an efficient delivery in accordance with the Results Framework and for explicit annual narrative reports to be submitted to Sweden by the 30<sup>th</sup> November every year.
- 2.5.2 In addition, the Plenary Assembly is requested to note that the Secretariat is in the process of concluding a Grant Agreement of €1.4 million from the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and the European Union (EU) relating to the two-year funding (June 2025 to May 2027) of a new project titled "Enhancing Accountability and Citizens' Participation in Regional Integration through Regional Parliament". The funding will include experts in Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), Finance and Admin Support (integrated within the existing Corporate and Finance Department, for 24 months).
- **2.5.3** The GIZ Project aims at strengthening democratic governance, promoting gender equality and empowering women in political and decision-making roles within the region, and deepening regional integration through enhanced parliamentary engagement. The Project's key objectives are to strengthen SADC PF's capacity to implement its 2024–2028 Strategic Plan and SADC's frameworks, particularly the RISDP (2020–2030).

# 2.5.4 Recommendation

The Plenary Assembly is requested to note that both the SRHR Project and the GIZ Project are parliamentary projects which are grounded in pursuing good governance, accountability and in advancing human rights, thus indicating clear progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan (2024-2028) of the SADC-PF.

# 3.0 MATTERS FOR APPROVAL BY THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY

The 57<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly is requested to approve the following matters processed by the Executive Committee:

# 3.1. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE AND ITS MEMBERSHIP

**3.1.1.** Pursuant to the approval of the 56<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly which met in Livingstone, Zambia, in December 2024, for the establishment of the Audit and Risk Committee, including its Terms of Reference, in view of improving governance oversight within the institution, in addition to the financial functions already carried out by the Finance Sub-Committee, the EXCO took cognisance of the Members nominated by Member Parliaments to the Committee. EXCO also noted that the nominated Members possess the relevant qualifications and experience as specified in the TORs.

#### **3.1.2. Recommendations**

- 3.1.2.1. The Plenary Assembly is requested to approve that the Audit and Risk Committee pursues its functions in line with the approved TORs in view of strengthening good governance within the institution and promoting the zero-tolerance policy on anticorruption.
- 3.1.2.2. The Plenary Assembly is also invited to validate the following Members who have been nominated to serve in the Committee for a period of two years from February 2025 to February 2027;

<b>i</b> .	Hon. Kalalwe Mukosa – Chairperson	Zambia
ii.	Hon. Kenneth Mmoiemang – Vice Chairperson	South Africa
iii.	Hon. Diamantino Mussokola	Angola
iv.	Hon. Faustin Kaziteriko Kenda	DRC
v.	Hon. Leornard Mwalwanda	Malawi

# 3.2. APPROVAL OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE RESOURCE MOBILISATION COMMITTEE

- **3.2.1.** Pursuant to the decision of the 56<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly which met in Livingstone, Zambia in December 2024, which called for the establishment of a Resource Mobilisation Committee as an Ad Hoc Sub-Committee of EXCO, EXCO approved the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Committee in view of conferring diverse investment opportunities to philanthropic and other charitable organisations which would want to fund the Forum in line with the targets pertaining to democracy and human rights as specified in its Strategic Plan.
- **3.2.2.** EXCO resolved that the Committee is to be chaired by Hon Dr Pinkie Rosemary Manamolela, SADC PF Treasurer. The full list of the members,

which includes four Hon Speakers, as approved by the 56<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly is indicated below:

i.	Hon Dr Pinkie Rosemary Manamolela, Treasurer	Lesotho
ii.	Hon. Speaker Carolina Cerqueira	Angola
iii.	Hon. Speaker Jabulani Mabuza	Eswatini
iv.	Hon Speaker Angela Thokozile Didiza,	South Africa
v.	Hon. Speaker Adv. Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo Mudenda	Zimbabwe

- **3.2.3.** The proposed Terms of Reference of the Committee as recommended by EXCO are as follows:
- i. To assist the Forum in conducting resource mobilisation in accordance with the sources of finance outlined in Article 23(b) to (d) of the Forum's Constitution, that is sources other than annual mandatory contributions from Member Parliaments;
- ii. To identify donors, charitable organisations and other bodies which may make grants to the Forum in line with the objectives and targets specified in the Forum's Strategic Plan (2024-2028);
- iii. To ensure that the Forum's initiatives are visible to donors, charitable organisations and other bodies;
- iv. To act as emissaries of the Forum and canvass for funds with donors, charitable organisations and other bodies, as appropriate; and
- v. To report on resource mobilisation initiatives to EXCO on a regular basis.

# **3.2.4. Recommendation**

The Plenary Assembly is requested to approve the Terms of Reference of the Resource Mobilisation Committee as recommended by the Executive Committee.

#### 3.3. APPROVAL OF FINAL LOBBY INITIATIVES AND OTHER ACTIONS TO PURSUE FOR THE SADC-PF TRANSFORMATION INTO A REGIONAL PARLIAMENT

**3.3.1.** EXCO considered that the Republic of Botswana, under the hand of His Excellency Hon. Duma Gideon Boko, signed the Agreement Amending the SADC Treaty to Establish the SADC Parliament on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025. EXCO also noted that the Republic of Madagascar has equally informed of its policy approval to sign the Agreement in the margins of the 45<sup>th</sup> SADC Summit in August 2025. In this regard, EXCO recommended that lobby initiatives should continue in order to persuade the Republic of Mauritius to sign the Agreement and also to continue advocating for a swift approval of the Protocol by SADC Member States.

- **3.3.2.** Given that the Protocol will come into operation at an unknown date when a two-third majority of Member ratifications will be attained, there was also a need to revitalise the structure of the Forum and its human resources to upscale and meet the expectations of SADC citizens for the regional Parliament as a matter of priority, before the cut-off date.
- **3.3.3.** EXCO further noted that the Secretariat will need to implement a phased approach to the SADC Parliament in accordance with the approved Roadmap and this entailed meticulous planning and organisation.

#### **3.3.4. Recommendations**

#### The Plenary Assembly is requested to approve that:

- 3.3.4.1. Further lobby initiatives be conducted under the leadership of Hon. Adv J.F.N. Mudenda, Speaker of the National Assembly of Zimbabwe, and Chairperson of the SADC PF Transformation Lobby Group., to engage the Republic of Mauritius to sign the Agreement to amend the SADC Treaty. Further to engage with member countries for the Protocol to be signed and ratified in good time;
- 3.3.4.2. The Secretary General be bestowed with a supportive workforce and that contracts for staff be reviewed and reset by mutual consent with bespoke job descriptions to fill the prevailing human resource gaps. This exercise should be completed in the next 6 months;
- 3.3.4.3. The Forum conducts a thorough analysis of the requirements for the phased approach to transformation to be implemented in collaboration with Member Parliaments in order to prepare the ground for quick progress following the ascension to a SADC Regional Parliament;
- 3.3.4.4. The relevant Committees of the Forum articulate a clear proposal for a new structure, anchored in measurable environmental, social, and governance (ESG) commitments.

#### 3.4. APPRECIATING PROGRESS MADE IN DISSEMINATING THE SADC MODEL LAW ON GBV AND FACILITATING THE PARTICPATION OF CHAIRPERSONS OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUSES AT ANNUAL CSW SESSIONS

**3.4.1.** EXCO took note that the Forum led by Hon. Shally Raymond, Chairperson of the RWPC, engaged partners at the 69<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) which was held from the 10<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> March 2025 under the theme of "Beijing Plus 30" in view of evaluating the progress made in advancing women and children's rights since the Beijing Declaration. On this occasion, Hon. Lesego Chombo, Minister of Gender and Youth Affairs from the Republic of Botswana was the guest of honour at a dedicated

session on "Reflecting on Progress and Forging New Pathways" to advance women's health rights in the region and the session represented a unique opportunity for the Forum to call for the domestication of the SADC Model Law on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) which responds to the underlying challenges outlined by the Beijing Declaration. The Forum also participated at side meetings at the CSW, including one which explored the linkages between faith dialogue and women empowerment, among others.

**3.4.2.** EXCO also noted the remarkable progress made by the Forum in disseminating the Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriages and Protecting Children Already in Marriages, and GBV Model law on the international scene.

# 3.4.3.Recommendations

- 3.4.3.1. The Plenary Assembly is requested to approve that the Forum continues to participate in successive CSW sessions in view of promoting women empowerment and remaining visible as a leader in normative standards on gender equality.
- 3.4.3.2. The Plenary Assembly is further requested to urge Member Parliaments to consider sponsoring their Chairpersons of the national parliamentary women's caucuses to participate at the CSW sessions held in March annually in New York, USA.

# 3.5. CONSOLIDATING SADC INTERESTS AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

- **3.5.1.** EXCO took note that the Forum successfully consolidated SADC interests in the margins of the 150<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) which was held from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, under the theme centred on *"parliamentary action for social development and justice."*
- **3.5.2.** EXCO noted that the President of the Forum delegated the chairpersonship of the SADC Group meeting to Hon. Dithapelo Keorapetse, Speaker of the National Assembly of Botswana, who graciously coordinated the event and assisted to align the interests of countries from the SADC geopolitical perspective. In this regard, the Plenary Assembly is requested to express its appreciation to Hon. Dithapelo Keorapetse, Speaker of the National Assembly of Botswana, for his sterling efforts in chairing the SADC group meeting and captaining live issues relevant to the region's best interests
- **3.5.3.** The Forum further engaged on the preparation of emergency items on pressing issues such as the Israel-Palestine, DRC and Sudan conflicts as well as global warming and although the items were not passed due to lack of votes, the consideration of same by Members reinforced and consolidated SADC interests and underscored the region's priorities.

# **3.5.4. Recommendations**

The Plenary Assembly is requested to approve that the Forum continues to consistently hold SADC Group meetings in the margins of the IPU Assembly and to continue to budget for the same. In doing so, to note the positive impact of the Forum's contributions to promoting inter-parliamentary cooperation at international level.

# 3.6. PROMOTING STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE YOUTH

- **3.6.1.** EXCO noted that, pending the establishment of a Committee of Youth at the Forum, the SADC-PF has a standing working arrangement with the Southern Africa Youth Parliament to encourage youth involvement and activism in parliamentary affairs, in line with the Strategic Plan (2024-2028) of the SADC-PF. In this regard, the Forum continued to trailblaze in elevating the youth of the region to take on higher responsibilities in promoting democratisation and human rights.
- **3.6.2.** The Forum actively participated at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Southern African Youth Parliament which took place from the 24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025. In this regard, EXCO noted that several resolutions of the Parliament were made in concert with the Forum, including recommendations for enhanced interaction of the Southern Africa Youth Parliament Standing Committees with the SADC-PF Standing Committees, the implementation of a SADC civil leadership programme which *inter alia* promotes political literacy, as well as the Joint Commemoration of International Youth Day.

# **3.6.3. Recommendations**

The Plenary Assembly is requested to approve that the Forum considers the recommendations of the SADC Youth Parliament and to implement them so far as they do not carry major cost implications for the Forum. In doing so, the Plenary Assembly is requested to note the impetus of the Forum in promoting youth development in accordance with its Strategic Plan (2024-2028).

# 3.7. ENGAGEMENT OF COMMITTEES ON THE SADC MODEL LAW ON PRISON OVERSIGHT

- **3.7.1.** EXCO noted that the Joint Session of Standing Committees of the Forum met from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> April 2025 in Johannesburg, South Africa, which represented an opportunity for MPs to interact with the legal drafter and other resource persons on the outline of the SADC Model Law on Prison Oversight in view of framing a Position Paper.
- **3.7.2.** The Plenary Assembly is requested to note that the consultation with MPs was successfully coordinated and that the Model Law is poised to become a pivotal legal instrument which can act as a benchmark for the region and

build upon other legal texts such as the Nelson Mandela Rules and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

# 3.7.3. Recommendation

The Plenary Assembly is requested to approve that the SADC Model Law proceeds to the consultation stage with diverse stakeholder groupings and to be finalised for adoption at the 58<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly.

#### 3.8. FINALISATION OF A DASHBOARD ON THE SADC MODEL LAW ON CHILD MARRIAGES

- **3.8.1.** EXCO noted the immense progress made by the Forum in finalising an electronic Monitoring and Evaluation dashboard to assist in the domestication of the SADC Model Law on Child Marriages. Through a regional workshop held in Windhoek from the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> April 2025, the Forum engaged with multi-stakeholders from the region and reviewed the operational aspects of the dashboard which can make comparative real-time analysis of child marriage laws and policies per country, and thus be crucial for policy making, especially for MPs who desire to reform domestic laws in alignment with the SADC Model Law on Child Marriage.
- **3.8.2.** The Plenary Assembly is requested to note the above breakthrough which represents the gold standard in terms of monitoring and evaluation of Model Laws.

# **3.8.3. Recommendations**

- 3.8.3.1. The Plenary Assembly is requested to approve that the dashboard be disseminated to all Member Parliaments of the Forum to further catalyse domestication efforts. In this regard, the Plenary Assembly is invited to note that a launch is being canvassed to ensure that the dashboard and M&E framework are popularised before rolling out.
- 3.8.3.2. The Plenary Assembly is also requested to applaud the technical and financial contributions made by Plan International, Girls not Bride, Hivos, Care International, SAT, UNICEF, UNFPA and the government of Sweden.

# 4.0 PROMOTING PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY AND COOPERATION

The Plenary Assembly is advised that, in a crowning moment consistent with the leadership of the Forum's Executive Committee, the EXCO paid a courtesy call on the Hon Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, 8<sup>th</sup> Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia and Her Excellency Netumbo Nandi- Ndaitwah, the President of the Republic of Namibia. This is part of promoting soft Parliamentary diplomacy.

- 4.1. The Courtesy call on the Hon Speaker served to Congratulate the Hon Speaker for assuming office as the first female since independence of Namibia, and to welcome Madam Speaker into the SADC Parliamentary Forum's family as the host of the SADC Parliamentary Forum.
- 4.3. Similarly, the courtesy call on Her Excellency Netumbo Nandi- Ndaitwah, the President of the Republic of Namibia enabled the EXCO to congratulate Her Excellency on her recent election to the highest Office in the Republic of Namibia, as the first ever female head of State. The EXCO hailed Namibia's long-standing initiatives of promoting inter-Parliamentary integration dating back to the days of the founding father of the Namibian nation H.E Dr Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma and continuing through the leadership of H.E Hifikepunye Pohamba, and the late H.E. Dr Hage Godfrey Geingob. On her part, Her Excellency Netumbo Nandi- Ndaitwah appreciated the need for strong Parliamentary leadership and oversight given current and emerging issues affecting the region.
- 4.4. Earlier, the EXCO visited the Heroes Acre where the President of SADC PF Hon. Justin Tokley, laid wreaths on the tombs of the two former Heads of State, H.E. Dr Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma and the H.E. Dr Hage Godfrey Geingob interred at the national shrine.

# Mr President, I beg to move.

ENDS/