



**PARLIAMENT OF BOTSWANA**

**SADC-PF**

**REPORT TO THE 57<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY ASSEMBLY ON  
IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS OF THE 56<sup>th</sup>  
PLENARY ASSEMBLY SESSION**

***(15 Mins)***

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The 56<sup>th</sup> SADC Parliamentary Forum Plenary Assembly Session was held in Livingstone, Republic of Zambia from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> December 2024 under the theme ***“LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR SMART, INCLUSIVE AND RESPONSIVE PARLIAMENTS IN THE SADC REGION”***.

At the end of the Plenary, Resolutions were passed for Member Parliaments to track implementation of progress made in the various key topics that were discussed. Botswana recognizes that these resolutions serve as a roadmap for parliamentary commitment and action, affirming the need for multi-faceted efforts that encompass gender inclusivity, cross-border cooperation, sustainable practices, and capacity building. By addressing these issues, SADC member states can work collectively to ensure that the region embraces technological solutions such that Parliaments in the SADC region can become more responsive to the needs of the population, particularly in contexts of rapid social change and technological disruption. This transformation will help build trust between citizens and their representatives while strengthening democratic governance structures.

Allow me Mr. President, to give a brief on how Botswana has fared in advancing the SADC Parliamentary Forum agenda on the following resolutions;

1. **RESOLUTIONS ON THE SYMPOSIUM ON THE THEME: “LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR SMART, INCLUSIVE AND RESPONSIVE PARLIAMENTS IN THE SADC REGION.”**

Technology and innovation can play a critical role in enhancing smart, inclusive and responsive Parliaments. They can enhance Parliamentary functions, improve oversight and facilitate better engagement with citizens. The use of technology and innovations can ensure greater participation from underrepresented groups, including women, youth and persons living with disabilities in legislative decision making. The use of innovation and digital platforms make parliamentary proceedings and decision making more accessible to the public, improving transparency in governance and holding elected Members accountable. However there is need for full appreciation and mitigation of the possible dangers inherent in such technology if it was to be used safely. Botswana has enacted several laws and is in the process of developing additional legislation to protect critical assets, ensuring privacy, and safeguarding children in the digital space, including considerations related to Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Botswana enacted its new Data Protection Act No. 18 of 2024, published on 29 October 2024 following Presidential assent, the enactment represented a step in Botswana’s approach to personal data privacy. The Act ensures that personal data is processed with integrity, transparency, and accountability. It addresses modern challenges such as cross-border data transfers, data breaches, and automated decision-making, all of which are increasingly relevant in today’s digital landscape.

There is public sensitisation and digital awareness campaigns to help citizens to use Government online services safely, protecting their personal information.

As Parliament of Botswana, we have a digital platform known as ***Botswana Speaks***, and through this platform citizens are educated and encouraged to communicate on communicating with their Members of Parliament. The platform is aimed at enhancing democracy through public participation and policy dialogue. It is about enhancing the representative role of the Member of Parliament and building a responsive Parliament and Government for improved service delivery. The platform is a tool through which all constituents are on board in an effort to enhance our traditional consultation systems (Kgotla meetings) while leveraging on new technologies. Our constituency offices offer guidance on responsible technology use and data privacy on this platform.

The platform, which is web-based and has a mobile application allows citizens to send messages directly via an online system using computers, laptops, tablets and smartphones. The messages are uploaded automatically into a tracker, and viewed regularly by the Members of Parliament for response. The platform ensures increased citizen participation in the democratic process, improves communication between Members of Parliament and Constituents and increase uptake and use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT's) in Botswana.

Botswana has undertaken significant initiatives to enhance its information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, to streamline government processes and improve service delivery without necessitating long-distance travel for citizens. A central component of these efforts is the SmartBots Village Connectivity project, which aims to bridge the digital divide by deploying state-of-the-art technology infrastructure across the country. The SmartBots program has installed over 1,100 free Wi-Fi hotspots in public areas such as clinics, schools, and traditional meeting places (Dikgotla), offering internet speeds up to 10 Mbps. These hotspots are utilized daily by more than 130,000 individuals, including students and senior citizens, and have amassed over 1.6 million users. Through Smartbots, we note that in 2024, approximately 2.09 million people in Botswana—about 77.3% of the population, were internet users, marking a significant increase from 42% in 2019.

Botswana has implemented several policies and initiatives to leverage technological advancements as catalysts for digital trade and employment, particularly focusing on youth and economic empowerment. Botswana conducted a comprehensive review of its National ICT Policy and developed an e-commerce strategy. This initiative aims to harness the country's strengths and address challenges hindering e-commerce expansion, emphasizing job creation and economic diversification.

Aligned with Vision 2036, Botswana reviewed its Science, Technology and Innovation Policy to emphasize the importance of science, technology, and innovation in transforming into a high-income, industrialized economy. The policy focuses on structural economic transformation and sustainable development goals.

Through these strategic policies and initiatives, Botswana is actively utilizing technological advancements to promote digital trade, enhance youth employment, and drive economic emancipation. A case in point, through e-government, Botswana

has implemented the Online Permit Management System (OPMS) which has digitized the application and approval processes for import and export permits, enhancing efficiency and transparency in trade operations. Notably, this system was developed by young Botswana developers, showcasing local talent in digital solutions development.

## **2. RESOLUTIONS ON ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRADE, INDUSTRY, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT**

- **On Member States being urged to create an environment that facilitates beneficiation of critical minerals to create employment, especially for the youths and create value chains:** Youth in Botswana represent a significant portion of the population and are key drivers of economic and social transformation where Botswana has fared well in its efforts to drive towards youth inclusion. To harness their potential, it is crucial to provide capacity-building programmes that go beyond formal education. These initiatives aim to ensure meaningful youth inclusion in decision-making and development in sectors such as entrepreneurship, technology, agriculture, governance, and climate change. The Government has implemented a number of initiatives to ensure that youth are not left behind and these include offering of grants and mentorship for youth-led businesses through the Youth Development Fund; Market access support through Local Enterprise Authority (LEA); and Innovation and Tech Start-up training through Botswana Innovation Hub and Orange Botswana Digital Centre; and lastly Leadership Capacity Building through organizations like Botswana National Youth Council, UNDP Botswana and Botswana Council of Non-Governmental Organizations. These are efforts that have been pioneered by the Government in conjunction with the civil society to ensure that youth are not only localized but form part of the regional platforms in all their facets.
- **On Member states being called upon to advocate for a model law on Public Private Partnership (PPP) to facilitate in-depth consultation with the private sector before governments engage in PPP contracts:** Botswana does not have a dedicated law on Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), it is however notable that in place of it, there is a Public Private Partnership Policy and implementation Framework of 2009 that acts as a guide on the development and implementation of projects. This policy is facilitated under the Ministry of Finance together with the department (unit) of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). This unit acts as a central coordinating body which helps determine whether projects should be financed through a partnership or via public debt.

Notable projects that the country has undertaken under this model includes the Ombudsman and Land Tribunal Office Accommodation Project of 2017. Furthermore, in 2021 the Government enacted the Public Procurement Act, which explicitly included PPP Projects by ways of stipulating how to procure for PPPs. Regarding the consultation process with the private sector the existence of the PPP Unit within the Ministry of Finance indicates a structured approach to interactions with the private

sector. Botswana has been proactively developing policies and frameworks governing PPP's and is actively working towards developing comprehensive legislation to further facilitate private sector participation in public infrastructure development. Botswana has implemented a number of mechanisms and legal frameworks to ensure there is a clear distinction between Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and Government debt. Parliamentary Oversight on the other hand is achieved by a system of reporting through the development budget and national development plan which are subject to scrutiny by Parliament. Taking it further, there are audit reports by the Auditor General which are presented to Parliament, through which Parliament is able to detect areas that need further scrutiny. Lastly, Parliamentary Committees through the Public Accounts Committee are privy to interrogating Government undertakings and this includes PPP projects.

- **On the appeal to Member States to come up with strategies to recover job losses occasioned by the Covid 19 pandemic through industry closures so as to jump start and resuscitate industry and boost trade and employment;**

Botswana's strategies to recover from COVID-19-related job losses are multifaceted, focusing on economic diversification, youth empowerment, Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) support, and digital transformation. These efforts aim to build a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economy while fostering job creation and industrial growth. The Government has implemented several strategies to recover from these impacts, focusing on revitalizing industries, boosting employment, and promoting trade. These include the Economic Recovery and Transformation Plan of 2020, financial support for SMME's and a tourism recovery plan which encompassed a lot of domestic tourism promotion. All of these with the aim of stimulating the economy towards recovery and job creation thus demonstrating commitment towards returning operations to normalcy.

- **On advocating for more health financing which will enable the attainment of Universal Health Coverage, thereby fostering positive SRHR outcomes;**

Botswana has demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing health financing to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC), which has positively influenced Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) outcomes. Botswana has collaborated with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), scaled up the integration of SRHR into the healthcare system with the aim to increase access to a broad range of quality, client-centred services and the success of this program led to Botswana being counted amongst performers. For instance, to promote Youth Empowerment and Access to Services, Botswana has prioritized adolescent and youth SRHR through targeted programs. It should be noted that between 2018 and 2021, UNFPA invested over \$1.8 million to empower young people, especially adolescent girls, enhancing their access to SRHR services and information. This investment supported the development of policies and programs aimed at improving the well-being of adolescents and youth, including skills development and capacity building for informed decision-making. Botswana is also treaty to the Abuja Health Declaration of 2001, solidifying its position

on health budget advocacy. Furthermore, Botswana has developed a plan to reduce unmet needs for family planning by 2030. This plan underscores the country's dedication to improving SRHR outcomes through strategic investments and policy development.

- **On harmonising existing legislation with the PFM Model Law with a view of promoting transparency and information sharing with the Executive, especially on debt management:** Botswana has made efforts to align its public financial management (PFM) practices with regional standards, including the Southern African Development Community (SADC) PFM Model Law, to enhance transparency and information sharing, particularly in debt management. It has fared well in debt management transparency because of its public budget document; public mid-year review documents; and public debt statistics published by Ministry of Finance. Dialogue between the Executive and Parliament exists as the Executive has an obligation to bring forth a bill of intent to borrow that has to be passed by Parliament. Although Parliament is responsible for passing debt bills, there are still grey areas in which some of them include minimal information sharing from the Executive on technical issues of the debt being incurred thus breeding uncertainty within the legislative arm of Government in terms of contingent liabilities. Although Botswana has taken steps to improve its PFM framework and align with regional standards, there are ongoing efforts to enhance transparency, particularly in debt management and information sharing as outlined by the SADC Model Law on Public Finance Management.

### **3. RESOLUTIONS ON ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOOD, AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES AND CLIMATE ACTION**

- As we battle with environmental challenges and climate change considerations, we also must be in a position to benefit from international input that will impact on food security. The informal sector is, presently, estimated to contribute around 3% to the GDP. With radical transformation in the land and agricultural sectors, Botswana aims to help push the informal sector's contribution to a much higher figure. In the current financial year (25/26), The Ministry of Agriculture was allocated only 3.7 percent of the total budget, taking the seventh largest share. Clearly, we need to do more!
- In regard to energy, Botswana is making notable progress, albeit rather slow, in transforming our power generation sources from predominantly coal to solar primary energy resources. In this regard, the first utility-scale solar PV plant, Phase 1 of the Mmadinare Solar Cluster, with a capacity of 50MW, achieved commercial operation on 12th March 2025. The second phase of the project reached financial close on 19th December 2024, enabling commencement of the project, which is expected to provide another 50MW of clean energy by the end of 2025.

- The Country has since reviewed renewable energy targets in the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) with the aim of fast-tracking the imperative energy transition. The new target is to achieve a 50% generation contribution from renewable energy sources to the country's power generation capacity by 2030. Botswana is one of the countries with the highest solar energy generation potential, with over 3,200 hours of sunshine per year and an average insolation on a flat surface of 21 megajoules per square meter. This makes Botswana a potential hub for clean energy generated from solar. A market study is being finalized to identify off takers in the region, which will enable us to realize our target of generating up to 8 gigawatts for the country's economy and export.
- The Legislative review and policy developments also marked a period of success for Botswana's mining sector. The successful passing by Parliament of the Mines and Minerals Act, along with the introduction of the Minerals Policy, provide a stronger legal and regulatory framework for the sector. These legislative advancements were designed to foster a more conducive environment for investment, ensure sustainable development, increase penalties to deter illegal mining, and enhance the governance of mineral resources.
- The Explosives Act of 1968 is currently under Review to focus on review of fees, development of regulation of fireworks and pyrotechnics, curbing illegal possession of explosives and introduction of regulations on the handling, storage, manufacturing and transporting of explosives.
- To maximize national benefits from mineral development while providing a competitive environment for investors, the Mineral Policy aims at promoting meaningful citizen participation in the mining industry, diversification within the minerals sector and increased value chain (Beneficiation) development in non-diamond minerals, particularly base metals and industrial minerals. To facilitate this, the Botswana Ministry of Minerals and Energy has commenced the development of a Mineral Resource Development, Exploration, Exploitation and Value Chain (Beneficiation) Strategy, which aims to accelerate the development of value chains for a diversified mineral endowment to drive investments into sustainable economic projects while enabling meaningful citizen participation.

#### **4. RESOLUTIONS ON ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRATISATION, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

- On Measures to Improve Electoral Transparency and Integrity to Prevent Post Election Violence and Build Trust: Botswana has enjoyed a tremendous reputation for political stability and peaceful elections leading to economic growth, peace and even good governance. In ensuring that the aforementioned continues to prevail, Botswana established certain measures which ensure that the country maintains transparency and fairness. These include among others; the establishment of an Independent

Electoral Commission; whose core values are Transparency, Inclusiveness, Botho and Impartiality. The Commission is responsible for organising and supervising local and national elections. It ensures that elections are conducted efficiently, properly, freely and fairly. The Commission conducts Civic and Voter Education campaigns and educates citizens on their voting rights and responsibilities, as well as the importance of participating in elections and how to register and vote.

The Electoral Act consolidates laws relating to elections of the National Assembly and District Councils and also provides for the qualifications and registration of voters. It further provides for the conduct of such elections and for other purposes in relation to such elections (Electoral Act Section 3 and 4). There are also organised forums such as on National Television close to the election date, where all candidates are invited and the debates are broadcast live on national TV. These debates allow for equal representation of candidates and exposure of all political parties' manifestos. In 2024 Parliament approved political party funding in the quest to neutralise the political field. Following the 2024 General Elections, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of Botswana submitted its draft Amendment of the Electoral Act to the Minister for State President for tabling to Parliament – this is in the quest to continuously improve electoral procedures having taken into consideration stakeholder's recommendations post elections. In the further quest to improve electoral management, the IEC has disclosed in May 2025 that it is also considering a draft of the Advance or Early Voting Management Plan that would guide and perfect the implementation of early voting.

- **On the appeal for member states to reform Electoral Systems and Political Processes for Greater Youth Participation and Representation in Elections and Governance:** To promote greater youth participation and representation in elections a multi-faceted approach that targets both electoral reforms and broader political processes is essential. The country needs to re-look at its electoral laws as these are not just symbolic but have influence over party policies, campaign strategies and candidate selection and the Parliamentary Caucus on Women continues to engage Civil Society Organizations and political parties, urging them to form youth wings within political parties as this can encourage greater youth participation and representation in elections and governance.
- **On the call for member states to address Political and Gender-based violence, establish safe workspaces, and protect young leaders from harassment to enable meaningful youth participation and foster leadership development;** Botswana has made efforts to address political and gender-based violence, promote safe spaces and protect young leaders. In April 2021, the Botswana Police Service (BPS) established the Gender and Child Protection (GCP) Branch to ensure rapid responses to GBV and child-related matters. Officers receive training on GBV and human rights to handle such cases effectively. Botswana has also established the National Policy on Gender and Development, adopted in 2015 which aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women.

With respect to providing a safe workplace, the Government has established among others, the Employment Act and which argues against discrimination in the workplace and sexual harassment. There is also a Code of Good Practice on Sexual Harassment which provides guidelines for employers to create harassment free environment.

It is also worth noting that Botswana has established a number of policies which seek to protect young leaders and enable youth participation. These policies include, the Botswana National Youth Policy which aims to create an enabling environment for youth development by addressing various socio-economic, cultural, and health challenges faced by young people aged 15 to 35. The policy emphasizes promoting youth participation in community and civic affairs, politics and governance.

#### **5. RESOLUTION ON STRATEGIES FOR CURBING THE PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS (SALW), THE USE OF EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS, AND THE RISE OF AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEMS**

- In 2017, Botswana endorsed the communiqué from the Maputo Regional Meeting on Protecting Civilians from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. This communiqué highlighted the devastating impact of EWIPA and emphasized the need for African states to work towards avoiding their use, collecting relevant data, supporting the adoption of an international political declaration, and promoting regional cooperation on this matter. Botswana continues to reiterate its commitment to the principles outlined in the Maputo Communiqué, drawing attention to the indiscriminate and long-lasting harm caused by EWIPA to civilians and critical infrastructure. Despite these commitments, as of March 2025, Botswana has not yet endorsed the Political Declaration on the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas.
- The country's historical commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, exemplified by its participation in the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty), suggests a general inclination towards arms control and the prevention of weapons that could cause indiscriminate harm. We continue to engage at National Level on this very important matter.

#### **6. RESOLUTIONS ON ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN ADVANCEMENT AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

- Botswana's national budget has increasingly incorporated gender-sensitive and youth-focused allocations. This includes directing funds toward initiatives that promote digital literacy, access to technology, and skill-building, particularly for marginalized groups. The Ministry of Finance is working with other stakeholders to ensure that these sectors are not overlooked in the national budget. Recognizing the importance of digital inclusion for economic development, education, and social participation, the

Government has made efforts to address barriers to internet access, especially in under-served and rural areas

- Comprehensive sex education is provided in schools, which helps to address the risks of teenage pregnancy, early marriage, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). These programs teach girls about their sexual rights, reproductive health, and the importance of delaying marriage and childbearing until they are ready. Life skills programs are integrated into the school curriculum and community outreach initiatives. These programs focus on personal development, communication skills, decision-making, self-esteem, and financial literacy, all of which empower girls to make informed decisions about their future.
- Economic independence is one of the key factors in reducing early marriage pressures. Botswana has implemented several programs that focus on economic empowerment for girls and women, which in turn reduces the financial pressures that often drive early marriage. Government Grants which include initiatives from entities like the **Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA)** and the **Youth Development Fund (YDF)** prioritize or include women entrepreneurs. These funds provide financial support and mentorship to young people, including women, to help them start their own businesses or engage in income-generating activities.
- Girls and women are encouraged to participate in the workforce and to take leadership roles in their communities, which helps to elevate their social and economic status. Botswana has invested in skills development programs for young girls and women, including technical and vocational training. This includes supporting girls to pursue careers in non-traditional fields like agriculture, technology, and engineering, which promotes gender equality in the workforce.

## **7. RESOLUTIONS ON THE REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SPECIAL PROGRAMMES**

- The Government of Botswana remains committed to achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) despite financial challenges exacerbated by increasing disease burden, national economic challenges and declining donor funding. In view of this and the ever-rising cost of health, the Ministry of Health continues to explore alternative options to sustain the delivery of quality health services desired by Botswana.
- To this end, the Ministry has collaborated with development partners, private sector and other stakeholders to develop the Health Financing Strategy. The major areas of focus of this strategy are improving efficiencies, raising additional resources for health, including establishing a National Health Insurance (NHI), forging public-private partnerships in the financing and provision of health services and ensuring equitable and universal access to a high-quality health care for all residents of Botswana. The Draft Health Financing Strategy has been developed and is being taken through the different approval structures.

- Primary healthcare remains the main pathway to achieving our envisioned universal health coverage and to that end, Botswana is undergoing a transition wherein primary healthcare services will be relocated, during financial year 2025/26, to the Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs. The development of the National Primary Healthcare (PHC) strategy is ongoing and expected to be completed during the 2025/26 financial year.
- Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), particularly cardiovascular disease, cancers, diabetes and chronic respiratory disease, are rising at an unprecedented rate in Botswana and they affect each and every one. They account for 46% of deaths in Botswana which is the same proportion of deaths as communicable, maternal, perinatal and nutritional conditions combined.
- The growing incidence of cancer is particularly problematic as many who succumb to it are relatively young leaving families and communities devastated. The ministry is, therefore, developing the National Cancer Control Plan, aligned to international benchmarks and the local context. The plan will guide the national cancer response, from prevention to survivorship.
- Parliament of Botswana just recently launched the Parliamentary Caucus on TB in April 2025. In establishing the Botswana TB Caucus, it is worth noting that the aim is to enhance political commitment towards fighting TB, mobilize resources for the fight against TB, strengthen programmatic structures and raise public awareness and stigma reduction by publicly testing for TB and HIV/AIDS. The role of Members of Parliament will be to raise awareness of TB within their constituencies, media engagement, budgetary advocacy and advocacy for support to TB friendly policies across all sectors.
- To improve the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights of people living in Botswana, Government is committed to ending preventable maternal deaths in order to realize the Sustainable Development Goal target of less than 70 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030. Government has increased the number of youth friendly health clinics from twenty-eight (28) to forty-five (45) within the eight (8) districts implementing the Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, Safe (DREAMS) programme. The DREAMS Initiative is a comprehensive, evidence-based program designed to reduce HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women.
- Botswana successfully surpassed the 95-95-95 HIV targets, achieving 95-98-98 in 2021, as reported by the Botswana AIDS Impact Survey (BAIS V). The country's current focus is on addressing the remaining gaps of 5-2-2. The first "95" continues to be the major challenge, as undiagnosed individuals living with HIV remain the hardest to reach. These individuals often exhibit challenging health-seeking behaviours, making it more difficult to identify and engage them in care.
- The HIV Prevention Roadmap will be affected by the USG funding cessation because the USAID/FHI have been important players in the community HIV prevention

activities. They have been able to facilitate the community health workers to do community work such as community testing, follow-up of ARV treatment defaulters and adherence counselling and follow-up. Most of the Key population programming has been through the USAID supported NGOs like Tebelopele such as their ARV treatment, PrEP and PEP.

- Botswana made a pledge of USD1 million as the country's contribution towards the WHO Investment Round initiative seeking to mobilize resources for WHO's core work for the next 4 years (2025-2028) at the WHA 77 in May 2024.

## **8. RESOLUTION ON THE MOTION ON ENHANCING EFFORTS TO INTEGRATE COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION (CSE) INTO NATIONAL SCHOOL CURRICULA IN SADC MEMBER STATES**

- In Botswana, comprehensive sexual education has gained attention as part of the broader efforts to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic, teenage pregnancies, and other sexual and reproductive health challenges. The country has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world, which has prompted the Government to take a proactive approach to sexual education in schools.
- Botswana has made strides in integrating Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) through initiatives like the 2021 East Southern Africa (ESA) Commitment, focusing on both in- and out-of-school settings and strengthening partnerships with regional organizations like the African Union. These efforts aim to empower young people with knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. Botswana has also forged partnerships with the African Union, East African Community, and SADC to influence policies and legislation at the continental, regional, and national levels.
- Members of Parliament (MP's) have contributed to discussions on national strategies and policies related to sexual and reproductive health. Their advocacy has helped emphasize the need for a structured and comprehensive approach to sexual education, focusing on both HIV prevention and broader reproductive health issues. Some MP's have strongly advocated for CSE programs that address gender equality, empowering young people, especially girls, to make informed decisions about their health and well-being. These efforts have aligned with Botswana's broader goals to reduce gender-based violence and promote women's rights.
- Although there is significant advocacy from parliamentarians for comprehensive sexual education, there has been resistance from some sectors, particularly conservative groups, religious organizations, and even some members of parliament. They argue that certain topics, such as sexual orientation, contraception, and HIV/AIDS prevention, are sensitive and should be handled cautiously in schools. Some parliamentarians advocate for more consultations with communities, parents, and religious leaders to ensure that CSE is delivered in a culturally sensitive manner. This process, however, can slow down the implementation of comprehensive education programs.

**9. RESOLUTIONS ON THE ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE REGIONAL PARLIAMENTARY MODEL LAWS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

- On the call for Parliaments to seriously consider setting up Parliamentary Budget Offices to assist the parliaments to achieve excellence in budget oversight and for Parliaments to appoint Focal Persons to be resident in the Member Parliaments, to establish linkages with the country reporting mechanisms under SADC, the AU and the UN in order to ensure that work done in the Member States is duly recorded and acknowledged at SADC Parliament level; Parliament of Botswana is in the process of establishing a new operational structure. This development will take into account these ideals and where possible, incorporate such for the better efficiency of the legislation.