



**57<sup>th</sup> PLENARY REPORT -ESWATINI**

**(progress on 56<sup>th</sup> Plenary Resolutions)**

**SALUTATIONS**

- SADC PF PRESIDENT
- COLLEAGUES AND SPEAKERS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES
- Our Host Hon.Advocate Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo Mudenda, Speaker of Parliament of Zimbabwe
- Hon. Parliamentarians FROM RESPECTIVE MEMBER STATES
- Madam Secretary General SADC PF Ms. Boema Sekgoma
- Clerk of Parliaments
- DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS
- SADC PF SECRETARIAT
- Member States Secretariat
- Members of the fourth Estate
- Security Detail Here Present
- Our Host Secretariat from Parliament of Zimbabwe

**!!!!!!! I GREET YOU ALL!!!!!!!**

## **1.0 Introduction**

Country report of the Kingdom of Eswatini to be presented during the 57<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly Session to be held in the Parliament of the Republic of Zimbabwe in Victoria Falls.

## **2.0 Transformation of SADC PF into A Regional Parliament**

As per the Council Decision of August 2024 the Protocol which was shared with Member States for National Consultations, Eswatini as a member state declares that we are in support of the transformation of SADC PF into a SADC Parliament and has signed the agreement.

The Parliament of the Kingdom of Eswatini is to further engage in the consultation process on the draft protocol, and procedural reporting on the Phase two of this matter is in the pipeline. Eswatini will then make submissions in due course.

## **3.0 Secondment of senior official Parliamentary staff to the Forum**

The Parliament of the Kingdom of Eswatini is willing to leverage on seconding staff to SADC PF, as soon as the restructuring exercise has been finalised.

## **4.0 Support of SADC PF Election Observer Missions**

The Parliament of the Kingdom of Eswatini, is noting the plea to contribute towards Election Observation Missions under the request of SADC PF delegation as resolved. The item of USD 6000 per election.

## **5.0 Implementation of 2023-2026 SRHHIV/AIDS GOVERNANCE PROJECT**

The SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) has been at the forefront of promoting engagement of Parliamentarians in tackling climate change and coming up with mitigation initiatives to address the impact of climate change across the SADC region, including the occurrence of extreme weather patterns, natural hazards, low rainfalls, severe droughts, flooding, tropical storms and cyclones. Over the years the Members of Parliament have had the opportunity, during Standing Committee Meetings and in Plenary Sessions, to engage on how best to address climate change issues, including by promoting resilient development on all fronts.

Eswatini as a country has ratified international conventions on climate change. There is a standalone ministry of tourism and environmental affairs which coordinates all risks through the Climate change unit. Given its constitutional mandate. Eswatini domesticates the SADC Protocols and implement the provisions of the Model Laws as well as related instruments such as the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction. Thus there is the National Disaster Management Agency, which mitigates impact on marginalised populace especially the youth and the old ones.

Thus the case, a loud call was made on the need to integrate the execution of the SRHR HIV/AIDS governance Programme with climate change. This call came at the prime time for the Parliament of the Kingdom of Eswatini with the newly established climate change portfolio committee.

The committee has had an induction session with UNDP, on the execution of its mandate on the call for climate responsive legislation, climate action champions as well as well as climate responsive budgeting.

More collaboration has taken place with UNESCO in a call for inclusivity on SRHR service provision for people with disabilities and the championing of indigenous trees by our marginalised society. This initiative was supported by Bible Society.

More spinoffs on climate change impact, were appreciated during the Youth HIV awareness campaign which was held at Mhlume Constituency, a bid of taking Parliament to people and decentralized in all the regions.

#### **6.0 Appointment of Focal Persons on Model Law**

Ms. Thoko Gumede-Legal Clerk, has been designated by the Parliament of the Kingdom of Eswatini to assist the Committee in the monitoring of the domestication of Model Laws adopted by the Forum.

#### **7.0 Legislative effort to domesticate SADC Model Laws as instruments**

Eswatini as a country unpacked prospects on how the country has fared in the domestication of Eswatini legislative framework with respect to HIV/AIDS Model law, Gender Based model law, SADC PF Model Law, Model Law on Elections, and Public Finance Management Model Law.

Eswatini as a country has executed the following;

##### **7.1 Gender Based Model Law-**

- Sensitization of Parliamentarians on SADC PF GBV Model law and sexual assault cases
- Mainstreaming of Gender based activities through all Parliamentary/Sessional committees (Children's, Gender, Climate, DPMS, and more)
- Increase in the tabling of SRHR motions characterized by evidence-based debates with respect to GBV
- Redressing of gaps on delayed trials of GBV cases, there is now high reporting and speedy trial of cases with hefty fines or at times life sentencing.
- Workshops have been conducted for both houses of Parliament on GBV,
- Staging of virtual meetings with SRHR champions, and Parliamentary staff with respective portfolio committees,

- Compiling of shared watsup packaged alertness on GBV messages.
- Foster care regulations are in place to leverage abuse of orphanages and establishment of shelter homes for survivors
- **Reviewed legislative frame** work with reference to
  - i SODV Act Of 2018, amendment of contentious clauses in the **SODV Act of 2018**,
  - ii. **the Amendment of the Marriage Act and Matrimonial /Property entitlement Act** to curb on Human rights issue on women is ongoing,
  - iii. **Launch of the National Gender Policy**, National Strategy to end Violence in Eswatini, as well as Positive Parenting Strategy Policy.
- **Gender responsive reporting** has been advocated for, through capacity building initiatives, and this has prompted such strong political will in the fight against GBV whilst demystifying certain SRHR myths, especially in the execution of the SRHR project
- **Population policy Framework reviewed** which was dating back 2002, to rightfully redress complexities of the demographic dividend in terms of marriage age consent
- **Reviewed legislative framework on Human Rights**, this includes the establishment of the **law reform unit**, to review femicide and SRHR obsolete bills
- The people trafficking and smuggling (Prohibition Act, 2009) which spearhead the fight against people trafficking and smuggling while ensuring compliance with Regional and International five pillars which are; National coordination, International coordination, Prosecution, Protection, and Prevention
- The Education Retention Policy have been pivotal in mitigating all ills of Early and Unintended Pregnancies
- A loud call in the country to declare GBV as a National disaster

## 7.2 In Eswatini, the SADC PF Model law on elections has prompted the following;

With respect to oversight and legislation Parliament has prioritized the enactment of comprehensive electoral laws that incorporate international best practices and address emerging challenges such as digital manipulation and disinformation.

### 7.2.1 Under Capacity Building and Training

- Eswatini has affected capacity and training on electoral processes and related legal frameworks, and capacity-building programs tailored to parliamentarians to enhance understanding of electoral laws, voter education strategies, and the role of technology in elections.
- Furthermore, the country has achieved best practices and innovations in electoral management.

### 7.2.2 With respect to Promotion of Inclusive Participation

There has been Inclusive dialogue and representation of diverse voices within society that has been conducted to mitigate electoral risks, where civil society organizations, political parties, and marginalized groups have been involved.

### **7.2.3 With heightening and Strengthening of Electoral Institutions**

The country has done this through sufficient funding, transparent appointment processes for electoral commissioners, and legal frameworks that guarantee autonomy.

Additionally, parliament has conducted regular assessments of electoral institution performance and accountability to identify areas for improvement and address gaps in their mandate. (EBC is affiliated to Ministry of Justice Constitutional Affairs -through annual performance audits.

### **7.2.4 Under Public Awareness and Civic Education**

The country has conducted robust public awareness and civic education to build resilience against electoral risks and promoting informed participation in the electoral process has been conducted by partnering with educational institutions, media outlets, and civil society organizations, in supporting initiatives that promote civic education, voter registration, and awareness campaigns on electoral rights and responsibilities.

**On women elections**, the country has considered **electoral reform measures** that reduce barriers for women and minority candidates, by eliminating discriminatory, voter registration requirements and enhancing access to voting even for the marginalised groups and the physically disabled.

Worth highlighting is that their Majesties made a call for more women support during election to endorse the **SADC** Gender and Development Protocol, Eswatini has indeed more women representatives as high twenty-nine Parliamentarians.

- **Senate members -14 members**
- **House of Assembly –15 Hon. members**

This is a milestone in the history of the country (Compared to previous term which had a representation as low as 14 female members.

**The women and Elections Act** has prompted such strong political will to vote for women, also, civic education on women elections has also been a positive indicator as it has been conducted in all constituencies by elections and boundary commission, where civil society were equally engaged.

### **7.2.5 Women Elections Funding**

The country support women need in business through financial inclusion measures by engaging various financial institutions and cooperatives on the business side, and this will equip them with all forms of empowerment.

**7.2.6 On youth parliamentarians, the** country has initiated a Youth Fund, dedicated for empowerment of the youth, where they can start businesses, and there is also the Regional Development Fund, where they start businesses in groups and they are awarded with grants.

Also, climatic Change unit, has collaborated with Parliament in the execution of high advocacy for youth Parliament

**7.3 On Public Finance Management Model Law, the country has done the following initiatives and enactments;**

- the review of Public and Procurement Act of 2012 which speaks to compliance to procurement measures and more,
- Establishment of the Eswatini Procurement Regulation Authority (ESPRA)
- Eswatini Revenue Authority - enhanced tax base system of the country
- FSRA -Financial Services Regulatory Authority this is a regulatory body in the country
- Redress on money laundering.
- Implementation of an Integrated Financial Management Information System;
- wage bill monitoring and management;
- there has been a roll out of a government-wide Performance Management System;
- there is more allocation of resources within the Anti-Corruption Commission and strengthening of the justice system.
- The efficiency of the Public Accounts Committee in the execution of public funds from respective Ministries
- There is the Ministry of Finance Portfolio committee and the Finance Sessional Committee in place to redress the Budget cycle and more
- There are robust debates of annual performance reports from respective Ministerial Portfolio Committees.

**7.4 HIV/AIDS model law**

Eswatini has robustly reviewed and enacted all relevant legislative framework which speaks to treatment and preventative measures against HIV/AIDS. The annual commemoration of the International World AIDS day has attributed to **Eswatini globally attaining the '95-95-95'** global HIV target. This means that 95% of people living with HIV in this know their status; the other 95% of people who know their HIV-positive status are accessing treatment and the final 95% of people on treatment have suppressed viral load. The '95-95-95' deadline is 2030, but Eswatini reached the target 2020. Which is a milestone.

The HIV/AIDS Sessional committee and other portfolio committees which includes (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Training, Deputy Prime Ministers, Prime Ministers) also execute this mandate with due diligence.

The above highlighted interventions by Eswatini in the domestication of specified Model laws are with respect to the countries constitutional mandate.