



**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT  
BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL  
OF THE SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM  
MS BOEMO SEKGOMA**

**AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING  
OF THE 57<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY ASSEMBLY SESSION  
OF THE SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM  
ON 2<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2025**

**HOSTED BY THE PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE**

**SALUTATIONS**

## **HOSTING THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY FOR THE 57<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY BY THE PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE**

We are honoured and elated to be here.

I must also add that this is the 6<sup>th</sup> time that the Parliament of Zimbabwe has physically hosted the Plenary Assembly of the Forum, making Zimbabwe one of the most visited countries by SADC-PF delegations.

We are thrilled to be welcomed back to this hospitable country which has given much more to the Forum than we could give back.

Allow me Director of ceremonies to underscore that this Assembly meets at a time when inter-parliamentary cooperation and diplomacy around the world is being upheld as a means for peaceful conflict resolution. With the month of June being the month when the Forum celebrates the International Day of Parliamentarism on the 30<sup>th</sup>, it is opportune that this august Assembly meets in the lead-up to the commemoration in view of activating the necessary momentum through responsive resolutions and decisions.

It is also an honour to be meeting delegates of the Forum in the vicinity of Victoria Falls in the Republic of Zimbabwe, a country which stands as an illustrious example for its diversity and its unique resilience. The country has moved from its traditional economic pillars to embrace innovation and smart governance, examples include climate-smart agriculture with the growing of drought-resistant crops, strategic partnerships to promote the mining industry, as well as the opening of new opportunities for manufacturing businesses. The Government is also clamping down on tax avoidance and erosion which is fundamental to promote sound public financial management in line with the SADC Model Law on PFM.

In the fight against HIV and AIDS, Zimbabwe has pioneered innovative domestic financing through the National AIDS Trust Fund, popularly known as the AIDS Levy, a model that has inspired many across the continent. This homegrown solution has enabled the country to scale up treatment, prevention, and support services. It exemplifies what we in the Forum

advocate for; sustainable, locally led financing for health and social development.

I am informed that this year, the country is expecting a GDP growth of 6% which is much higher than the average for the region.

Furthermore, being a country with one of the highest adult literary rates in the region, Zimbabwe is well-known for its intellectual human resource/workforce which generate unparalleled ingenuity and thought leadership. The visionary leadership of citizens of Zimbabwe has over time, greatly assisted the African continent to prosper.

The Parliament of Zimbabwe is presided by one of the greatest thought leaders of our time, Hon. Speaker Advocate Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo Mudenda, who has for several years been the Chairperson of the Legal Sub-Committee of the Forum as well as represented the SADC-PF as the Head of the Lobby Mission to transform the Forum to a Regional Parliament. Hon. Mudenda is a prominent figure within the Executive Committee of the Forum and, as a thought leader, he has selflessly put his vast wisdom and discernment at the service of the SADC-PF. Earning him the title of Dean.

Moreover, Zimbabwe has provided exemplary leadership through its Members of Parliament. We remember with pride the service of Senator Monica Mutsvangwa, who not only served as Vice President of the Forum, but also as Treasurer, bringing both strategic vision and financial acumen to our institution. Her legacy of diligence, diplomacy, and dedication continues to inspire many.

The Pan African Parliament is currently being chaired by ..... son of the soil, and the Chairperson of SADC is chaired by Zimbabwe....

Having said the above, I now wish to turn to procedural matters.

## INTRODUCTION OF DELEGATES

Director of Ceremonies, in line with established practice of this august Plenary Assembly, allow me to inform our Guest of Honour and Distinguished Delegates, that this 57<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly Session has drawn delegates from the following countries (*I wish to request the delegations to kindly rise as I mention your country, for the benefit of our Guest of Honour,):*

1. The National Assembly of **Angola**, a Delegation of **six (6)** Members, led by Dr. Carolina Cerqueira, Speaker, Speaker of the National Assembly;
2. The Parliament of **the Republic of Botswana**, a Delegation of **four (4)** Members, led by Honourable. Helen P. Manyeneng, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly.
3. The Parliament of the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, a delegation of **six (6)** Members, led Honorable Jean-Claude TSHILUMBAYI MUSAWU, First Vice-President of the National Assembly.
4. The Parliament of the **Kingdom of Eswatini**, a Delegation of **six (6)** Members, led by Honourable Jabulani Mabuza, Speaker of the National Assembly.
5. The Parliament of the **Kingdom of Lesotho**, a Delegation of **six (6)** Members led by Hon. Tlohang Sekhamane, Speaker of the National Assembly;
6. The Parliament of **the Republic of Madagascar**, a Delegation of **six (6)** Members led by Rt Hon. Justin TOKELY, Speaker of the National Assembly and President of the SADC Parliamentary Forum.

7. The Parliament of **the Republic of Malawi**, a Delegation of **four (4)** Members, led by Rt. Hon. Catherine Gotani Hara, Speaker of Parliament **(the delegation is in transit to Vic Falls)**;
8. The Parliament of **the Republic of Mozambique**, a Delegation of **six (6)** Members, led by Hon. Helder Ernesto Injojo, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly.
9. The Parliament of **the Republic of Namibia**, a Delegation of **six (6)** Members, led by Hon. Speaker Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Speaker of the National Assembly.
10. The National Assembly of **the Republic of Seychelles**, a Delegation of **three (3)** Members, led by Hon. Roger Mancienne, Speaker of the National Assembly.
11. The Parliament of **the Republic of South Africa**, a Delegation of **seven (7)** Members, of which **one (1)** is an observer, led by Hon. Thoko Didiza, Speaker of the National Assembly. South Africa.
12. The National Assembly of **the Republic of Zambia**, a Delegation of **six (6)** Members, led by Hon. Nelly B.K Mutti, Speaker of the National Assembly;
13. The Parliament of **the Republic of Zimbabwe**, a Delegation **of twenty-eight (28)** Members, of which **22 are observers**, led by Hon. Adv. Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo Mudenda, Speaker of the National Assembly, our Host;
  - a) **Clerks and Secretaries General** of Member Parliaments;
  - b) **The SADC Parliamentary Forum Secretariat**, a delegation of **fourteen (14)** staff Members, led by myself, the Secretary General.

- c) Last but not least, all the staff from Member Parliaments and the Parliament of the Republic of Zimbabwe, our host;
- d) The Parliaments of **Mauritius** and **the United Republic of Tanzania** sent apologies of absence;

## **INVITED GUESTS REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

We have representatives from partner organisations in attendance.

- 1. Pan African Parliament, *Hon. Senator Chief Fortune Charumbira, President of PAP;*
- 2. SADC Secretariat, *Dr. Judith Kateera, Deputy Executive Secretary for Corporate Affairs;*
- 3. Southern Africa Youth Parliament, *Ms Angela Dube (Reigning Miss Albinism Zimbabwe)* and Misheck Gondo;
- 4. Southern Africa Development Community Organisation of Public Accounts Committees (SADCOPAC), *Hon. Alice Nomvula Ponco, Vice Chairperson.*
- 5. Forum of Parliaments of Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR), *Dr. Deo Mwapinga, Secretary General*
- 6. Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, *Chairperson, Dr. Christopher Kalila, MP;*
- 7. The Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries (ECF-SADC), *Commissioner Glen Mashinini* from the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa;

**All in all:**

- (i) 13 of the 15 Parliaments are in attendance.
- (ii) Out of 13 delegations: 10 are led by Speakers and 3 by Deputy Speakers, and of these, 6 Parliaments are led by female Presiding Officers (46%), 7 are led by male Presiding Officers (54%).
- (iii) Regarding political diversity, 35 Substantive Members are from ruling parties, 14 are from opposition parties, and 9 are not affiliated with any political party. These include independent Members, traditional leaders (chiefs), or representatives from systems without political parties, such as Eswatini.

Director of Ceremonies, Your Excellency, and Distinguished Delegates, permit me to conclude by thanking the Government and the Parliament of the Republic of Zimbabwe through Hon. Adv. Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo Mudenda, our Host, for their meticulous preparations that have set the stage for a successful, impactful session. Zimbabwe's hospitality is legendary, and this Assembly bears testimony to that proud tradition.

I wish all Distinguished Delegates fruitful deliberations.

I THANK YOU.