



National Assembly of Seychelles

**WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS
COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT 2017**

OCTOBER, 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Women Parliamentarians Committee for the 6th Assembly is mandated to:

1. Consider questions of equal opportunities for women and men and activities, policies and legislation related thereto both locally and internationally;
2. Follow up on the compliance of the National Assembly and Government, in matters pertaining to equal opportunities for women and men;
3. Establish relations with and participate in meetings of local and international bodies promoting Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and represent the National Assembly in and follow the work of the relevant inter-governmental expert committees that deals with issues pertaining to Women and Parliament, both regionally and internationally.
4. Maintain working relations with the relevant Regional and International Organisations, such as the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the OSCE, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).
5. Encourage and advocate in favour of capacity building for women in government and support the participation of women in politics in particular their contribution to the proliferation of good governance.

From the year 2016 to 2017, there has been some progressive developments for the Committee in the sense that it further re-enforced its relationships with members of the

local community and further expressed pertinent issues on International Platforms such as the South African Development Community (SADC), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Pan African Parliament (PAP).

The list of Members on the Standing Committees for the different Parliamentary Bodies that are on record for the year 2016-2017 can be seen at ANNEX II on page number 12.

2. MEMBERSHIP

The current Committee is chaired by Hon. Chantal Ghislain and it consists of seven Members as follows:

- Hon. Chantal Ghislain – *Chairperson*
- Hon. Regina Esparon – *Vice Chairperson*
- Hon. Sylvanne Lemiel – Member
- Hon. Flory Larue – Member
- Hon. Audrey Vidot – Member
- Hon. Noline Sophola – Member
- Hon. Jany Letourdie – Member

The Committee is also assisted by a Secretary and a Secretary Assistant. During the year 2017, the Clerk, Ms. Jutta Alexis was serving in the role of the Secretary and she was further assisted by Mrs. Ghislaine Thelermont as the Secretary Assistant. The role of Secretary has now been transferred forward to the Public Relations, Communications & Protocol Manager, Ms. Alexandria Faure.

3. MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

During the year 2017, the Women Parliamentarians Committee held numerous meetings of which were followed by local missions under the scope of Gender Equality, Gender Violence, Health & Wellbeing, as well as pertinent issues affecting the life of women in Seychelles. In addition to that, the Committee has also held encounters and exchanges with sectors of Civil Society under the above mentioned scope.

4. 40th PLENARY SADC ASSEMBLY SESSION OF THE SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM & AND WOMEN PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (03rd – 15th November, 2016 Harare, Zimbabwe)

The 40th Plenary Assembly was a success and the delegation of Seychelles which included the Speaker Hon. Patrick Pillay and Hon. Regina Esparon, the Member of the Standing Committee on Gender Equality Women Advancement and Youth actively participated in all debates. Hon. Esparon additionally presented a Motion on the Prevention of Statelessness within the SADC Region.

5. ORIENTATION TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR THE SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH & RIGHTS, HIV AND GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME – SADC (25th November 2016)

All the members of the Committee attended an orientation training and workshop focusing on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights and HIV. The goals of the workshop were the following:

- facilitate and solicit for a mechanism for a structured collaboration of the national Assembly of Seychelles to partner with primary stakeholders in SRHR & HIV ;
- identify areas required for capacity building of **parliamentarians (MPs), at committee level, and those of women caucuses' on SRHR and HIV ;**
- *intervene and advocate* for comprehensive and essential sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS services and endeavour to impact on relevant actions in the area of policy development in Seychelles

6. 41st PLENARY ASSEMBLY SESSION OF THE SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM AND WOMEN PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (7th o 14TH July 2017)

The Seychelles had the honour of hosting the 41st Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum.

The Gender Equality and Empowerment Programme of the SADC Parliamentary Forum aims to promote greater awareness of the policies and practices to advance gender equality and equity and the inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable, minority and special groups in the business of Parliament.

6.1 The Women Parliamentary Forum (5th & 6th July 2017)

All the members of the Women's Parliamentarians Committee participated in the discussions organised by the Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus (RWPC) under the theme of "*Women, the Girl Child & HIV/AIDS*". As a result of the fruitful two day deliberations, a document of all the discussions was recorded and named the **Mahe Declaration**, which was presented and adopted at the 41st Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, laid on the table of the House on Thursday 13th July 2017.

6.2 The 41ST Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum (7th & 14th July 2017)

Two members of the Women Parliamentarians Committee, Hon. Ghislain and Hon. Esparon, of whom are also Members on the SADC Standing Committees participated in the 41st Plenary Assembly under the theme of Gender Equality, Women Advancement and Youth Development "Harnessing Demographic Dividend".

Hon. Esparon presented a Motion condemning all forms of harassment, bullying and abuse of Children in school and their environment in the SADC Region.

Hon. Ghislain addressed the issue of Gender based violence in Seychelles, drawing on personal experiences to highlight the plight of women and children facing family violence and its negative impacts. Hon. Ghislain also expressed support of the motion on the severe increase of the non-communicable diseases as a result of overweightness and obesity, excessive consumption of sugary foods and beverages that has potential risk to the SADC region's full harnessing of its demographic Dividend. Furthermore she presented the worrying statistic that the Seychelles, a 90 thousand strong population is reported to have around 74% of its adult female population classified as overweight and 43% classified as obese, with the highest population of overweight and obese men in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Hon. Esparon further discussed that more needs to be done beyond International Women's Day in ensuring that laws on Gender based violence provide the comprehensive testing, treatment and care for the survivors in the SADC Region.

7. HIV/AIDS COMMITTEE & WOMEN PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WORKSHOP (6th October 2017)

Three Members of the Women Parliamentarians Committee, Hon. Ghislain, Hon. Larue and Hon. Vidot participated in a workshop at Eden Bleu Hotel under the theme of "*Creating a Conducive & Enabling a Legal Environment for Sex Workers in Seychelles*". The members participated in workshops focusing on the decriminalisation of sex work organised by the HIV/AIDS Support Organisation (HASO).

8. NOMINATION OF HON. AUDREY VIDOT ON THE SEYCHELLES NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON HIV AND AIDS STEERING COMMITTEE (2016-2017)

In 2016, the National AIDS Council hosted a two day national Action Planning workshop on removing legal barriers for HIV & AIDS on the Thursday 4th and 5th August at the

Eden Bleu Hotel followed by a validation workshop at Berjaya Beau-Vallon Bay in November. The next several years promise to be exciting ones with many new developments. The National AIDS Council and its partners will continue to have a positive impact on the communities that they serve and the Steering Committee will play a central role in this important work. Meetings will be held at least four times a year but members are expected to be active on an ongoing basis.

In line with the above, Hon. Audrey Vidot and also the youngest woman Parliamentarian in Seychelles has been nominated to represent both the Committee on HIV/AIDS & SRHR and the National Assembly on the Steering Committee for the Seychelles National Action Plan on Removing Legal Barriers to HIV and AIDS.

9. LOCAL MISSIONS

9.1 OFFICIAL VISIT TO STATE HOUSE FOR 'INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY'

- ROUND TABLE MEETING UNDER THE THEME OF "Women in the Changing World of Work" (8th March 2017)

On the occasion of International Women's Day on the 8th March 2017, the Women Parliamentarians delegation, upon the invitation of President Faure, attended a round table meeting that also included the Executive, Judiciary & Civil Society.

Members of the Delegation invited by President Faure were requested to prepare a five minute presentation focusing on the following:

- Issues that women personally face as women in their respective functions and/or important decision-making positions
- Issues faced by women generally in Seychelles, especially in relation to work/employment

All the members of the Women Parliamentarians Committee participated in preparing a five minute presentation that was presented by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, Hon. Ghislain and Hon. Esparon highlighting the following:

Points from Hon. Flory Larue

- Additional Day-care facilities to cater for the long working hour and needs of mothers in employment.
- A more inclusive public transportation system that are safe for children and accessible for women with push chairs.
- Further developments on sexual education and family planning access.
- Considerations for land allocation to an NGO for the construction of a home for battered women and children
- The call for a reconsideration of pardons, as less women inmates are pardoned than the Male inmates of whom have reoffended and are back in prison.

Points from Hon. Jany Letourdie

- More support provided for women whilst they juggle having children and building a career
- More support to be provided for women in the working place facing Health issues relating to Pregnancy & the Menstrual Cycle
- Further developments in raising awareness on Menopause – that it's not a sickness but a life cycle
- Further discussions on unemployment, sexual harassment in the work place and in public, as well as domestic violence
- A call for further research for the Government to have a better understanding of the Status of women in Seychelles.

Points from Hon. Sylvanne Lemiel

- To make provisions so that men who are contributing child support and are not paying to work and pay it to support the women rather than go to prison.
- To reinforce laws and serious implications on Incest & Paedophilia offenders
- The increased need for women to support each other
- Full support by the Women Parliamentarians on the subjects of HIV/AIDS, Autism and Zero Tolerance of Bullying

The recommendations that were made at this meeting were presented to the Cabinet of Ministers for consideration

9.2 OFFICIAL VISIT TO MONTAGNE POSE PRISON – THE WOMENS WING (1st March 2017)

The Women Parliamentarians delegation travelled to the Montagne Pose Prison on Wednesday 1st March 2017 for an official visit.

The delegation spoke to the women and participated in discussions whereby the below concerns were expressed:

- A pertinent complaint was collectively made to highlight that the female inmates are not given enough chances like their male counterparts. The women have proposed IOT or the beautification project at State House. Additionally, they have also expressed the need for more recreational activities and further arrangements for their children to spend more days with them. Possibly that more open days are organised. The Committee has agreed to make this visit annual.

10. COLLABORATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

10.1 PLANS FOR COLLABORATIONS WITH PASTER LANNWIT

The Committee has met with Father Elizabeth and the Paster Lannwit Association.

The Committee plans to meet with the association on Friday 24th November, whereby the members of the Women Parliamentarians Committee will volunteer and attend the one Night Session to get a full scope on the gravity of the issue at hand and lend a helping hand.

11. FUTURE EXCHANGES & ACTIVITIES

11.1 PLANNED EXCHANGE WITH WOMEN'S CAUCUS OF THE MAURITIAN PARLIAMENT

The Committee has been in communications with the Women's Caucus of the Mauritian Parliament for a mutual exchange. This will also coincide with the recommendations from the Pan African Parliament that committees become Caucuses.

The Committee plans to travel to Mauritius for this legislative exchange between Women Parliamentarians and later the same will be offered for the Mauritian Delegation to travel to Seychelles.

11.2 A NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE ISSUES THAT WOMEN FACE IN SEYCHELLES TO COMMEMORATE INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY 2018

The Committee endeavours to host the very 1st National Conference on International Women's Day in 2018, inviting all stakeholders to discuss pertinent issues and challenges of Women and Families in Seychelles.

11.3 MEETINGS WITH DIFFERENT BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

The Committee endeavours to meet with the Minister for Family Affairs, Mrs. Jeanne Simeon, Dr Patrick Herminie, Secretary of State for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Rehabilitation and Secretary of State Responsible for Poverty Alleviation, Mr Dick Esparon to discuss further the issues at hand affecting Families, Women & Children.

12. CONCLUSION

In 2017, the Women Parliamentarians Committee have strengthened its responsibilities by initiating fruitful collaborations with key groups of women experiencing and facing social challenges in the local community. The Committee has also amplified the voice of Women on pertinent subjects such as HIV/AIDS, Gender Violence, Gender Bias and Support for Working Mothers on important international platforms and the Executive here in Seychelles. Going forward the Committee will work further to strengthen these collaborations and continue to bring the issues that affect women and children to the forefront of the legislative platforms.

ANNEXURE

ANNEX I: Terms of Reference of the Women Parliamentarians Committee ***(Attached)***

Tasks and responsibilities

The role and purpose of the Committee for Women's Parliamentarians is to:

1. Consider questions of equal opportunities for women and men and activities, policies and legislation related thereto both locally and internationally;
2. Follow up on the compliance of the National Assembly and Government, in matters pertaining to equal opportunities for women and men;
3. Establish relations with and participate in meetings of local and international bodies promoting Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and represent the National Assembly in and follow the work of the relevant inter-governmental expert committees that deals with issues pertaining to Women and Parliament, both regionally and internationally.
4. Maintain working relations with the relevant Regional and International Organisations, such as the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the OSCE, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).
5. Encourage and advocate in favour of capacity building for women in government and support the participation of women in politics in particular their contribution to the proliferation of good governance.

ANNEX II: List of Standing Committee Membership held in 2016-2017

Hon. Member	Standing Committee & Parliamentary Body
Hon. Chantal Ghislain	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member of the Media Committee 2. Member of the Island Committee 3. Chairperson of the Women Parliamentarians Committee
Hon. Regina Esparon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vice- chairperson of the National Women's Parliamentary committee 2. Member of the SRHR / HIV and AIDS committee 3. Member of Standing order Committee 4. Member of SADC- PF, 5. Member of Gender Equality, Women Advancement and Youth- In SADC 6. Member of Pan African Parliament 7. Member of Health, Labour and Social Commission in PAP 8. Member of Pan African Parliament Women's Caucus.
Hon. Sylvanne Lemiel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member On Government Assurance (COGA) 2. Member on the Women Parliamentarians Committee 3. Member of Pan African Parliament Women's Caucus. 4. Member of the Pan African Parliament Youth Caucus 5. Member of the Pan African Parliament Commission on Gender, Family and People Living with Disabilities
Hon. Noline Sophola	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member of the International Affairs Committee (IAC) 2. Member of the HIV/AIDS Committee 3. Member of the Women Parliamentarians Committee 4. Member of the IPU Group
Hon. Flory Larue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member on the Women Parliamentarians Committee
Hon. Audrey Vidot	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member of the Women Parliamentarians Committee 2. Member of the HIV/AIDS Committee
Hon. Jany Letourdie	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member of Media Committee 2. Member of the Women Parliamentarians Committee

ANNEX III: The Mahe Declaration on Sustained Engagement by SADC Parliaments (Attached)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Committee for Women's Parliamentarians

Role and Purpose

The role and purpose of the Committee for Women's Parliamentarians is to:

1. Consider questions of equal opportunities for women and men and activities, policies and legislation related thereto both locally and internationally;
2. Follow up on the compliance of the National Assembly and Government, in matters pertaining to equal opportunities for women and men;
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4. Maintain working relations with the relevant Regional and International organisations, such as the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the OSCE, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR);
5. Encourage and advocate in favour of capacity building for women in government and support the participation of women in politics in particular their contribution to the proliferation of good governance.



MAHE DECLARATION ON SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT BY SADC PARLIAMENTS TO IMPLEMENT RESOLUTION 60/2 OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN ON "WOMEN, THE GIRL CHILD AND HIV AND AIDS" BY THE OF THE REGIONAL WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS (RWPC) OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (SADC PF) WHICH MET AT EDEN BLEU HOTEL FROM 5 TO 6 JULY 2017 IN MAHÉ, SEYCHELLES

Mr. President, I beg to move that this Plenary Assembly do adopt the Mahé Declaration by the RWPC to the 41st Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, laid on the table of the House on the Thursday 13th July 2017.

We, Members of Parliament from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), with the support of the United Nations Agencies and Development Partners and the Civil Society Organisations met in Mahé, Seychelles from 5 to 6 July 2017 prior to the 41st Plenary Assembly Session of SADC PF, for a Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus devoted to developing a framework for sustained engagement by SADC Parliaments to implement Resolution 60/2 of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) entitled "Women, the Girl Child and HIV and AIDS" as defined in the following Declaration:

Recognising that HIV continues to be a major public health and developmental challenge that has a potential to undermine the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and that the epidemic not only causes ill health among populations but also spawns poverty and inequality both of which are an antithesis for sustainable development:

Noting with deep concern that Eastern and Southern Africa has less than 7% of the global population but it contributes close to 50% of new adult infections globally and it is home to more than 19 million people living with HIV, of which more than half are women:

Also noting that the trend in new infections shows an increase in HIV incidence among young people between the ages of 15 and 24 accounting for more than 30% of all new HIV infections and that the epidemic is also characterized by a gender divide - women and girls are increasingly more affected than men and boys with over 70% of new infections occurring among women and girls:

Welcoming the gains made in the HIV response across SADC over the past decade, including a decrease in AIDS-related deaths by 38% between 2010 and 2016; a reduction in the number of new HIV infections; a threefold decrease in HIV transmission from mothers to infants during pregnancy and breastfeeding as well as a significant increase in access to antiretroviral treatment:

Encouraged by the political will and impetus to address HIV and to protect the rights and vulnerabilities of women and girls, as displayed by SADC Member States through international and regional commitments, including the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDGs 3 and 5, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 2016 United Nations (UN) General Assembly Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other related infectious diseases, the Maseru Declaration on the fight against HIV/AIDS in the SADC region, the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), the Africa Youth Charter, the Continental Policy Framework on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and the East and Southern Africa Commitment on comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents and young people:

Acknowledging that the HIV response in the SADC region has been led by women who selflessly cared for people living with HIV and orphans when treatment was not generally available or affordable, who acted as leaders to mobilise communities to increase HIV literacy and reduce discrimination and stigmatisation, and consistently demanded that governments make prompt access to HIV and AIDS treatment and prevention of mother-to-child transmission services a reality:

Recognizing that while incremental progress has been made in the reduction and containment of the HIV pandemic in the SADC region, significant efforts have still to be mustered by SADC Member States to achieve the UN 90-90-90 treatment target by 2020:

Noting with appreciation that the SADC-sponsored Resolution 60/2 of the CSW calls on Member States to reduce the disproportionate burden of HIV amongst women and girls with a focus on addressing the root causes of vulnerability to HIV such as economic inequality and unequal power relations, discrimination in society and in the workplace, all forms of violence, inhumane and degrading treatment, sexual exploitation, women and child trafficking and harmful practises and norms including cultural practices which disempower women and girls and further exposes them to substantial risks of contracting HIV:

Mindful that HIV further perpetuates existing inequalities and disproportionately affects certain key populations such as sex workers, disabled, and migrants, girls living in poverty and transgender persons:

Encouraged by scientific developments such as Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PREP), which provide cost-effective options for most at risk women and girls to control the risk of HIV infection and calling for further sustained investment in research for female-controlled prevention options such as microbicides, as well as a vaccine for HIV and essential drugs for enhanced HIV treatment:

Deeply disturbed that in all SADC countries, HIV prevalence among female sex workers is significantly higher than it is among the general adult population and recognizing that women living with HIV, female sex workers, disabled women, migrant women, young girls living in poverty and transgender persons are routinely denied their rights to dignity, health and education and face violence, stigma and discrimination at the hands of family members, in communities, at the workplace and in health-care settings:

Gravely concerned about the persistence of structural barriers such as harmful social and cultural norms and practices as well as male chauvinism and patriarchy, which work to reinforce women's unequal status in society and fuel HIV vulnerability among women and girls, whilst harmful social and cultural norms and practices continually deny women and girls the opportunity to attend schools, to establish economic independence and thus reinforces vulnerability to violence and HIV:

Further concerned that the lack of an enabling legal and policy environment in SADC Member States prevents women and girls from consistently and durably exercising their rights and protecting themselves from HIV, and the requirement of parental and other-party consent to access to HIV and sexual and reproductive health services and information child

marriage, marital rape and property grabbing from widows remain legal and common practice in several countries:

Recognising that where protective legal frameworks do exist for women and girls, there are persistent obstacles, administrative, bureaucratic or otherwise, to their enforcement and implementation, which further discourage women and girls to seek redress for the violation of their rights:

Further alarmed that while violence against women and girls, including intimate partner violence and sexual violence, limit the ability of women and girls to negotiate for safer sex and claim their bodily autonomy, female sex workers are helplessly subjected to high levels of violence at the hands of their clients and law enforcement officers, and recognising that gender-based violence, trauma and even the fear of violence increases women's reluctance or inability to negotiate condoms, use contraceptives, adhere to treatment or take up prevention of mother-to-child transmission, HIV testing and counselling services:

Further concerned that inadequate health-care infrastructure, lack of adolescent and youth friendly health services, poor linkages between HIV and sexual and reproductive health and rights, lack of birth control, family planning facilities including safe medically supervised abortion, and quality maternal and child health services leave too many women and girls in the SADC region in a vulnerable and disempowered situation:

Acknowledging that the role of men in addressing gender inequality and HIV in women and girls is essential and signals solidarity in the elimination of the HIV pandemic and in transforming inadequate social norms causing gender inequalities:

Convinced that SADC Parliaments have a constitutional obligation to enact enabling laws for the order and good governance of their countries:

Also convinced that it is imperative that Parliamentarians take the lead and enact laws that are compliant with human rights standards that can promote, rather than impede access to HIV and sexual and reproductive health and rights services:

Noting that SADC PF exists to, among others, support the implementation capacity of SADC with respect to protocols, treaties and other instruments through the active involvement of Parliamentarians in the SADC region:

Recognising the pivotal role that the Champions are playing in advocating for the prevention of HIV and AIDS and the promotion of SRHR in the region:

Also encouraged by the efforts of SADC PF to work with and strengthen the capacity of Parliaments in SADC to exercise their legislative and oversight functions as well as their function of approving budgets, to advocate for, and influence governance in the context of the promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive health rights, and national responses to HIV by fast-tracking the HIV response with a view to ending the AIDS epidemic among women and girls:

Noting that Women Parliamentarians need to unite against factors that continue to increase the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV and have an essential role in advocating for the protection of sexual and reproductive health rights of women and girls in the SADC region as well as their universal and equitable access to quality HIV and sexual and reproductive health rights related services and commodities:

WE NOW THEREFORE DECLARE TO:

Commit to the following principles to guide our work in advocating for the implementation of Resolution 60/2:

- i. Address the structural determinants:** Root causes of HIV prevalence among women and girls must be addressed, including actions to reduce poverty, ensure access to quality integrated and adolescents and youth friendly health services, information and education opportunities with a special focus on comprehensive sexuality education for in- and out-of-school youth, and eradicate child marriage as defined in the SADC Model law on eradicating child marriage and protecting those already in marriage:
- ii. Focus on human rights and gender:** Efforts must be garnered to ensure that continentally and internationally recognized human rights inform and drive the HIV response and to establish or strengthen a gender sensitive legislative and policy framework:
- iii. Promote a coordinated, coherent and holistic response:** It is important to ensure integration of SRHR and HIV efforts at national level as part of a multi-sectoral response to women and girls specific needs:
- iv. Involve adolescents, young people and people living with HIV:** It is important to ensure inclusion of adolescents, young people and people living with HIV at all levels including conceptualization, monitoring and implementation of programmes designed to benefit them:
- v. Foster community participation:** Community participation is key to turning the tide against AIDS and promote social accountability:
- vi. Reduce stigma and discrimination:** new and innovative ways need to be found to end stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV , including through specific legal and policy reform: and
- vii. Recognize the centrality of sexuality:** It is paramount to recognize the centrality of sexuality to human life and in individual, family, and community well-being.

THEREFORE, WE:

Commit to using the framework for sustained engagement by SADC Parliaments to implement the CSW Resolution 60/2 entitled "Women, the Girl Child and HIV and AIDS" to advocate for the implementation of Resolution 60/2 in an effort to address the root causes of the disproportionate burden of HIV among women and girls in the SADC region, and further advocate for the mobilisation of the requisite resources to implement the Resolution at the national level:

Request SADC PF and its partners to support Parliaments to advocate for the implementation of Resolution 60/2 through various activities including the dissemination of

information, training, sensitization workshops and if considered necessary, the development of Model Laws relating to the various issues of HIV and SRHR, and thereby assist parliaments enact national laws based on international human rights norms as set out in the major international and regional instruments:

Recommend greater parliamentary involvement in the ratification and domestication of relevant international and continental instruments relating to women, girls, HIV and sexual and reproductive health rights:

Promise to acquaint ourselves with the legal and policy environment in our countries with regards to HIV and sexual and reproductive health rights and assess the effectiveness thereof with the intent to enact laws aiming at protecting the sexual and reproductive health rights of all, with a specific focus on the most vulnerable:

Identify key governance and policy issues which would gradually be incorporated into domestic law regarding HIV and SRHR and explore avenues for enactment of legislation including amendment of different pieces of legislation directly dealing with HIV and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights:

Commit to review, revise, amend or repeal all laws and regulations, abolish policies and prohibit practices and customs including cultural and religious practises that have a discriminatory impact on youth especially girls and young women, without distinction of any kind, and ensure that the provisions of domestic legislation comply with international human rights laws and include protection from all harmful practices such as, but not limited to, child marriage, sexual and gender-based violence, and female genital mutilation:

Undertake to harmonise within the region and within the national laws the provisions of legislation dealing with SRHR to ensure the effective implementation of the Resolution 60/2:

Pledge to enact laws aimed at improving inclusive access to education at all levels and provide for viable alternatives for the many young people, particularly adolescent girls, who drop out of the formal education system, by facilitating re-entry, revamping informal education and training through standardized certification within and between African countries:

Promise to ensure that in the exercise of the function of approving national budgets adequate allocations are made for SRHR and HIV and AIDS programmes as well as to implement gender responsive budgeting:

Commit ourselves, individually and collectively, to continue to enhance our knowledge on HIV, sexual and reproductive health rights and issues affecting women and girls, and further engage relevant stakeholders (including traditional leaders, faith based organisations civil society organisations, development partners and other actors), legislate and exercise oversight on related issues affecting women and girls within our national jurisdictions and act on identified loopholes to ensure universal access to integrated HIV and sexual and reproductive health services and information:

Support institutionalization of age-appropriate and culturally sensitive comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education for in and out of school young people and youth friendly health services in order to avert complications and challenges associated with unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and its consequential impact thereof on the development and wellbeing of young people:

Create an enabling environment by empowering constituencies and strengthening the role of men in improving access to youth friendly sexual reproductive health and reproductive rights services:

Commit to enact laws and advocate for policies that improve access to credit facilities for women and provide legislation for establishing and institutionalising national Women Funds to increase their access to business capital and thus ensure their social and economic integration and enhance their quality of life and that of their children:

Urge that this Declaration be tabled at the 41st Plenary of the SADC PF for its deliberation to enhance the implementation of the UN Resolution 60/2 of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Girl Child and HIV and AIDS within the SADC Region.


Mahé, Seychelles
6 July 2017

Mr President,
I beg to move

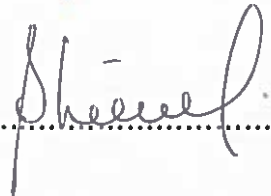
Membership of the Women Parliamentarians Committee of the 6th Assembly

Hon. Chantal Ghislain 
Chairperson

Hon. Regina Esparon 
Vice-Chairperson

Hon. Jany Letourdie 
Member

Hon. Noline Sophola 
Member

Hon. Sylvanne Lemiel 
Member

Hon. Flory Larue 
Member

Hon. Audrey Vidot 
Member