



# The Plenary

Volume 02/2020

*A newsletter of the SADC Parliamentary Forum focusing on the Plenary Assembly Session*

## **48th Plenary discusses terrorism, food security**

*...as DRC lands Presidency*



ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE  
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## In This Edition

SADC MPs want end to armed insurgency in Mozambique .....3

MPs call for debt waiver .....5

DRC lands SADC PF Presidency, backs Regional Parliament bid .....6

Women and girls bearing brunt of COVID-19 - RWPC Chairperson.....7

Outgoing SADC PF President upbeat about the Forum .....7

Hon Jeanine Mabunda Lioko pays homage to the women of SADC .....8

New SADC PF President lays out some of her priorities .....9

MPs call for unity against destructive locusts .....11

Mudenda salutes outgoing SADC PF President .....11

Plenary adopts Executive Committee Report .....12

Plenary support for Portugal IPU candidate bears fruit .....14



## From the President of SADC PF

*Honourable Hon. Speaker Esperanca Laurinda Francisco Nhiuane Bias.*

**W**elcome to the second and final edition of *The Plenary* newsletter for the year 2020.

As the curtain draws over the year 2020 – indeed, a year that many of us would rather forget on account of the many unprecedented challenges that the world experienced during it – I take this opportunity to commend all SADC PF Member States and SADC PF – affiliated National Parliaments as well as all Members of Parliament, for resilience and the ability to quickly adapt to trying circumstances.

As the world responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our governments introduced a raft of sometimes socioeconomically painful but necessary responses to stem the spread of the virus. These included staying at home and working from home, teaching and learning using online platforms, mandatory use of masks and social distancing.

Almost immediately, face-to-face interaction was suspended. That presented a challenge for SADC PF, which had hitherto been convening face-to-face meetings that include joint sittings of standing committees of the Forum as well as Plenary Assembly Sessions.

In this regard, permit me to commend our Secretariat – working in close collaboration with National Parliaments – for quickly harnessing the almost limitless potential of Information Communication Technology (ICTs) to enable us to continue working virtually.

As a plenary this year we deliberated on a wide range of issues including the growing specter of terrorism and regional insecurity due to the outbreak of the African Migratory Locusts.

If there is one key lesson that we learned again in the face of COVID-19, it is that our SADC Region is closely interconnected and we need to respond to challenges facing our region as a united front. This calls for harmonization of policies and uniform responses to ensure that no country is left behind.

A major highlight of the 48th Plenary Assembly Session of SADC PF was that of Mozambique concluding two years at the helm of the Forum. On behalf of the National Assembly of Mozambique, which I represent, and indeed on my own behalf, I would like to thank all and sundry for support and cooperation while Mozambique occupied the presidency of SADC PF.

Thank you for supporting me as I served our Forum as President and for supporting our outgoing Executive Committee. We will continue to serve the Forum with commitment and we will do our best to support efforts to transform our Forum into a SADC Regional Parliament.

This newsletter captures highlights of our 48th Plenary Assembly Session.

Merry Christmas and enjoy the reading.



## The Plenary

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# SADC MPs want end to armed insurgency in Mozambique



*The Speaker of the Parliament of Zimbabwe, Advocate Jacob Francis Mudenda.*



*Angolan Member of Parliament Honourable Josefina Diakite.*



*The Speaker of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Eswatini, Honourable Petros Mavimbela.*

Windhoek – The 48th Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum has unanimously adopted a strongly-worded motion calling for urgent regional action to stop armed insurgents that are destabilising northern Mozambique.

The Plenary is the highest decision-making body of the SADC PF. It brings together 15 national parliaments of the SADC Region. It met virtually in December in 2020 with 14 of the Member Parliaments represented.

The Speaker of the Parliament of Zimbabwe, Advocate Jacob Francis Mudenda, moved a motion exhorting the Plenary to condemn “the terrorist attacks in the Republic of Mozambique which are threatening the country’s security and sovereignty and undermining efforts to consolidate the rule of law and democracy.”

He noted that the armed attacks had claimed the lives of unarmed civilians, displaced others and damaged property and public infrastructure in recent years.

He added that the “barbaric attacks” had negatively impacted on the livelihoods of ordinary citizens, especially women, girls and children, many of whom were failing to access health and education services.

The Speaker argued that the Islamic State-linked insurgency constituted “a serious threat to regional peace and stability” as well as to international

peace and security.

He called for immediate collective action by SADC in line with the SADC Mutual Defence Pact, and by the African Union, to counter the terrorist attacks.

Advocate Mudenda called on SADC to help Mozambique “stem the violent insurgency and bring relief to thousands of innocent civilians bearing the brunt of these barbaric attacks”.

Angolan Member of Parliament Honourable Josefina Diakite, seconded the motion.

She noted that Mozambique was dealing with a humanitarian crisis due to the terrorist attacks and urgently needed SADC regional solidarity.

“I underline the need for us to stand in solidarity and to fight what is happening against democracy in Southern Africa and destabilising the peace in Mozambique,” she said.

Diakite said the region could not stand idly by while people were being killed, displaced and rendered vulnerable to food and other insecurities.

The Angolan lawmaker noted that the increasing attacks on defenceless civilians were brutal and said scores of people had been gruesomely decapitated while scores of women and children had been abducted.

Noting that acts of terrorism were increasing all over the world, Honourable Diakite said SADC MPs had a role to “safeguard peace and prevent these hideous crimes.”

She reminded the Plenary of Resolution 2395 of the Security Council of the United Nations on counterterrorism, and the UN General Assembly on International Cooperation and Information Sharing. She advised Member states to be vigilant in the face of spreading terrorism and human trafficking. She advocated for group action against terrorism, saying peace and security in the region were of paramount importance.

The Speaker of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Eswatini, Honourable Petrus Mavimbela, said his country was gravely concerned by the “indiscriminate” terrorist attacks which also affected areas visited by foreigners and investors.

“Such acts are impacting on the economy, education, health, politics and social welfare of the Mozambique populace,” he said.

He noted that the Islamic extremists had been attacking civilians since 2017 in several parts of Mozambique, using explosives and other devices to attack buildings and vehicles while kidnapping other people.

● *see Mozambique p.4*



**South African MP Honourable Darren Bergman.**

*Photo: Parliament of South Africa.*



**Botswana MP Polson Majaga.**

*Photo: Parliament of Botswana*



**Zimbabwean lawmaker Goodlucky Kwaramba.**

*Photo: Contributed*

● **Mozambique from p.3**

“Europeans and everyone else are viewed as legitimate targets, including those engaged in tourism, humanitarian aid workers, journalists or business people,” the Eswatini Speaker said.

He said in one incident the Jihadists beheaded scores of men who were participating in an initiation ceremony.

“As a country we are praying for a regional coordinated response to curb these terrorist acts which will soon spiral in other provinces of Mozambique and will definitely impact on the economies of neighbouring counties and the region at large. We plead for Troika (SADC Troika of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation) intervention,” he said.

South African MP Honourable Darren Bergman said what was happening in Mozambique was objectionable but not new.

“The bells were rung in 2014 for us for the first time. It’s a topic that I’m passionate about and I strongly support the motion put before us,” he said.

He suggested setting up of a task team to explore various response options to the phenomenon. He said the region had people who could offer “great guidance” on responding to the terrorist attacks and held out the Speaker of the Parliament of South Africa, Honourable Thandi Modise – a respected former combatant – as an example of people the SADC Region could turn to for advice.

Honourable Bergman said the SADC Region need not reinvent the wheel in counterterrorism and could draw lessons from regions with experience in that regard.

He stressed that time was of the essence.

“SADC is already vulnerable. Terrorism takes a lot from our economy in the sense that we have to build on defence, spend on policing and the military. This takes away from social development,” he said.

He urged Member States to be vigilant and ensure that “fundraising and recruitment into terrorism are being policed”.

Botswana MP Polson Majaga called for “swift” action to “dismantle” terrorist networks in the SADC Region.

“This thing will end up in all SADC countries if we take our time or concentrate on COVID-19. It’s time we talk to our Ministers of Defence for them to hold a meeting and (share) strategies to



**The Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia, Professor Peter Katjavivi.**

*Photo: George Sanzila.*

combat this terrorism,” Majaga said.

The Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia, Professor Peter Katjavivi, also supported the motion and pledged Namibia’s full support to Mozambique.

“I want to take this opportunity to reassure our brothers and sisters in Mozambique of Namibia’s support and solidarity. We welcome this motion, which is an expression of our collective wish,” he said.

Zimbabwean lawmaker Goodlucky Kwaramba said Islamic extremists had “declared an unjust war” on the people of Mozambique and must be stopped.

“They are killing women, girls and little children, thus turning Mozambique into a war zone. Mozambique is our neighbour. We can’t sit and watch terrorists attack our neighbour. We should lend a hand as SADC,” she said.

Advocate Mudenda said he had been “encouraged” by the “passion and enthusiasm” with which the motion had been responded to. He reiterated the need for “decisive” action.

“There is need to take proactive action against this terrorist scourge with the urgency it deserves. Terrorism in whatever stature and nature should be nipped in the bud. It is counterproductive, retards progress and hinders the citizenry from focusing on peaceful development,” he argued.

He urged all the organs at SADC Summit level as well as the AU to put in place “concrete measures” to root out the terrorists.

The motion followed a plea in May this year by Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi for regional help in responding to the terrorist attacks.



# MPs call for debt waiver

WINDHOEK – The 48th Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum has adopted a motion exhorting the regional body to support an initiative by Speakers and heads of African national parliaments to call for total cancellation of the continent's foreign debt.

Many African countries are heavily indebted to industrialised countries and financial bodies that include the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Consequently, some countries have been failing to meet the human needs of their citizens.

Against this backdrop, the Speaker of the Parliament of South Africa, Honourable Thandi Modise, tabled the motion through South African Member of Parliament Honourable Desmond Lawrence Moela when the Plenary met virtually in December, 2020.

Modise cited COVID-19 which has had “a destabilising and potentially devastating effect on our societies and our collective economies in Africa” and was projected to worsen and pose “further threats to livelihoods and security in the region”.

She said: “Well before the outbreak of COVID-19, most African countries were heavily indebted, with statistics showing that more than half of African countries spend more on debt servicing than they do on education or healthcare – sectors crucial to Africa and our region's socio-economic development.”

She noted that globally, many people including the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, were advocating for the cancellation of Africa's debt “in light of these extenuating circumstances.”

Modise emphasized the fact that as elected representatives of their people and as lawmakers and custodians of democracy, lawmakers had



*The Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia, Professor Peter Katjavivi.  
Photo: George Sanzila.*

the responsibility “to join these global efforts in canvassing for the cancellation of Africa's debt, especially during the ongoing COVID -19 pandemic”.

She called for “a more cohesive Pan-African Parliamentary voice to support the global campaign for Africa's debt cancellation” and welcomed the establishment of the Conference of Speakers and Heads of African Parliaments (CoSAP), officially launched in October 2020, by the Speakers of the parliaments of Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, and South Africa.

She explained that CoSAP's overall goal was to foster collaboration between Speakers and Presiding Officers across Africa to jointly tackle challenges impacting the continent and build on opportunities for collective growth towards advancing the continent's developmental agenda.



*Speaker of the Parliament of South Africa, Honourable Thandi Modise.  
Photo: Parliament of South Africa.*

Additionally, she said the CoSAP's African Speakers Debt Cancellation Campaign Initiative (DCCI) seeks to advocate for the cancellation of African Debts to provide fiscal space for economic recovery and development on the continent.

“Our various SADC Parliaments have a role to play in promoting transparency and accountability, tackling corruption, and improving oversight over loan approvals and the judicious utilization of the same in our respective countries,” she said.

The Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia, Professor Peter Katjavivi, seconded the motion.

He said measures introduced to curb the spread of COVID-19, such as lockdowns implemented across nations, had led to a shutdown of economies around the world, and as a result many countries had started recording negative Gross Domestic Product growth.



*The Speaker of the Parliament of Eswatini, Honourable Petros Mavimbela.  
Photo: Contributed.*

“The ripple effects of these lockdowns in various nations and by extension the slowdown of regional, continental and global economic activity, has placed an enormous strain on the livelihoods of our people. This Motion is indeed a timely initiative,” Honourable Katjavivi said.

He said debt cancellation would enable governments to stimulate and boost social spending, ease pressure on debt servicing obligations and reallocate funding to enhance public debt management “to acceptable debt indicators levels, thus helping countries to achieve their long term development goals”.

The Speaker of the Parliament of Eswatini, Honourable Petros Mavimbela, also called for debt cancellation.

He said: “For impoverished nations struggling to meet the human needs of their people, 100 per cent multilateral debt cancellation is the only option. We plead for the world to heed to our campaign for debt cancellation as a continent.”

Other MPs who supported the motion were from Madagascar and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

There is mounting evidence that debt servicing is taking a huge fraction of the GDP of many countries, making it difficult for them to do what they want to do for their people with what remains after they have serviced domestic and foreign debts.

In some cases, what remains is so paltry that some governments struggle to pay salaries of civil servants.

In some parts of Africa domestic borrowing is said to be drowning the private sector that also needs domestic credit to finance their investment plans.

# DRC lands SADC PF Presidency, backs SADC Parliament bid



*Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Professor Sylvestre Ilunga Ilunkamba.*



*Speaker of the National Assembly of the DRC, Jeanine Mabunda Lioko and newly elected President of SADC PF.*



*Dr Hon. Lovanirina Célestin Fiarovana, new Vice President of SADC PF.*  
*Photos: Contributed*

The Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Professor Sylvestre Ilunga Ilunkamba, has pronounced his country's support to efforts to transform the SADC Parliamentary Forum into a SADC Regional Parliament as his country assumed the presidency of the Forum.

The PM spoke about the need for a SADC Parliament when he officially opened the 48th Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum in December, 2020. The DRC virtually hosted the Plenary, which brought together over 120 Members of Parliament and other delegates from 14 of the SADC PF Member States over two days.

He recalled that in September 1997, in Blantyre, Malawi, the Summit of Heads of State and Government established the SADC Parliamentary Forum with the ultimate goal of transforming it into a SADC Regional Parliament to ensure a strong representation of the region's citizens.

He reaffirmed the DRC's support to the transformation process and encouraged other Member States to be relentless in pursuit of this long-cherished dream.

"It is up to us to work hard. The creation of this parliament would allow our people to be directly represented and to see their concerns brought by elected representatives. The SADC Parliament will also facilitate the harmonisation of our legislations for better integration. As a pillar of its diplomatic agenda, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo recognises its driving role in the area of regional cooperation and integration," he said.

PM Ilunkamba said DRC and SADC had a close

and long-running relationship. He seized the opportunity to express gratitude to countries that had stood by DRC in her times of need.

He said: "In the aftermath of the aggression war in 1998, SADC troops, made up of Angolan, Namibian and Zimbabwean contingents, supported our troops to put an end to the foreign invasion. Currently, the International Brigade made up of South African, Tanzanian and Malawian soldiers, is the spearhead of the UN force against negative forces in the eastern part of my country. The DRC will forever be grateful to our sub-regional organization and to the troops that fell in the battlefield to defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty."

Additionally, the PM said SADC played a pivotal role in the promotion of peace during the Inter-Congolese dialogue which led to the establishment, from 2003 to 2006, of a 1+4 transitional government – one President and four Vice-Presidents – and the adoption by referendum in 2006, of the country's Constitution.

"It is all thanks to this Constitution that the Democratic Republic of the Congo was able to organize the 2006, 2011 and 2018 elections. The latter gave rise to a civilized and peaceful transfer of power. This is an achievement that we must, at all costs, preserve despite the internal divisions within the coalition in power in our country," he said.

The Prime Minister told the Plenary that while the world was focused on the Covid-19 pandemic, his country was also fighting the Ebola outbreak.

While this was a double blow for the DRC, he invited SADC Member States to learn from

the DRC's response to Ebola and apply those lessons against COVID-19. He commended swift measures taken by some countries to stem the spread of COVID-19 and to revive their economies.

Speaker of the Parliament of Botswana Honourable Phandu Tombola Chaha Skelemani, proposed a vote of thanks after the PM officially opened the Plenary. He said it was unacceptable that SADC is the only region in Africa without a regional Parliament.

Honourable Skelemani said when established, the Regional Parliament would not only contribute towards the region's economic and political integration, but would also serve as a representative institution for the SADC citizenry. He was convinced that a SADC Parliament would become the legislative arm of SADC and would complement the role of the SADC Summit and the Council of Ministers through its oversight role and model law-making powers.

He thanked the PM for his poignant acknowledgement of SADC's role in supporting the peace process in the DRC over the years. He reiterated the fact that this role by SADC attests to the interconnectedness of the SADC Region and "is recognition of the mutual dependence among Member States of our region and that is the essence of regional integration."

The Plenary has unanimously elected the Speaker of the National Assembly of the DRC, Jeanine Mabunda, President of the SADC PF for the next two years. An MP from Madagascar, Dr Honourable Lovanirina Célestin Fiarovana, was elected Vice President of SADC PF unopposed.



# Women and girls bearing brunt of COVID-19 - RWPC Chairperson

The Chairperson of the SADC PF Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus (RWPC), Honourable Anne Marie Mbilambangu said while COVID-19 has manifestly taken a heavy toll on the economies of SADC Member States and rendered scores of people jobless, the pandemic's disproportional impact on women and girls is worth noting.

This on its own, she argued, "calls for increased political commitment towards gender equality."

She was speaking during the official opening of the 48th Plenary Virtual Assembly of SADC PF on 4 December, 2020.

She said as a result of this, the RWPC had already pledged to endeavour to ensure that SADC PF Member States post-COVID-19 recovery and developmental trajectory has to encompass women's development and gender equality.

Honourable Mbilambangu, however, commended the progress that SADC PF is making towards the development of the SADC Model Law on Gender-Based Violence.



*The Chairperson of the SADC PF Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus (RWPC), Hon Anne Marie Mbilambangu addressed the 48th Plenary Session of the SADC PF.*

She said that this milestone intervention would, no doubt, go a long way in breaking the barriers towards gender equality by addressing legislative and policy gaps that exist within Member States.

However, she called for talk that ends in real action to correct long-standing inequalities that women face and pay equal attention to the building of resilient communities that are sensitive to the difficulties women and girls are facing in the region.

Most passionately, she commended SADC PF and National Parliaments for "the sterling work that they are doing to facilitate access to comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for all without discrimination in Member States through the Sexual, Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Programme."

She said it was crucial for all in SADC PF to envision a post-COVID-19 SADC region where women and girls enjoy peace, sexual and reproductive health rights and having access to services, education and information, and are guaranteed of the full menu of rights, in line with various regional and international instruments.

## Outgoing SADC PF President upbeat about the Forum



*Outgoing SADC PF President and Speaker of the National Assembly of Mozambique, Honourable Esperanca Laurinda Fransisco Nhiuane Bias.*

Outgoing SADC PF President and Speaker of the National Assembly of Mozambique, Honourable Esperanca Laurinda Fransisco Nhiuane Bias, has acknowledged the general commitment in SADC PF to the procedures, principles and values of the Assembly.

This to her was a signal that the Assembly was on a good path. She noted that despite the various challenges which included securing virtual online platforms, the majority of Member Parliaments continued to cheerfully serve under the Forum and actively participate in its programmes.

She praised all present for ensuring that the Plenary Assembly of the Forum was not only a meeting of SADC Member Parliaments but was the embodiment of the celebration of parliamentary

● see *Outgoing* p.8

# Hon Jeanine Mabunda Lioko pays homage to the women of SADC

The Speaker of the Parliament of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Honourable Jeanine Mabunda Lioko who was also the gracious host of the 48th Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, has saluted the gallant women of the SADC region for standing firm in the face of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The Speaker who was elected President of SADC PF at the end of the Plenary, said the region's women were bearing the brunt of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic constituted "the most vulnerable section of the population and who are already in a precarious situation."

The 48th Plenary Assembly was held in virtual mode due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Honourable Mabunda noted that the same pandemic has had "the absolute negative impact not only on our discussions, agendas and programmes, but above all on the daily lives of our populations."

She said in order to cope with this, SADC needs active solidarity and innovative solutions.

Nevertheless, she was upbeat about the Third legislature of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of the Congo which is the result of the historic general elections held in December 2018.

In that election, she said, DRC experienced "the first peaceful transfer of power since



*The Speaker of the Parliament of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Honourable Jeanine Mabunda Lioko speaks during the 48th Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum.*

our independence," between the President of the Republic, His Excellency Felix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo and former President of the

Republic, Joseph Kabila Kabange.

She hailed the trust and confidence displayed by the SADC Parliaments in the DRC and its institutions to virtually host the 48th Plenary Assembly of the SADC Parliamentary Forum in the context of these political changes.

The virtual Plenary, she argued, provided a unique incentive to the people of the DRC and their leaders to preserve and consolidate by all means the achievements of the peaceful political changeover.

She indicated that by virtually hosting the 48th Plenary Assembly, SADC PF demonstrated the capacity to innovate and, at the same time, invest in new information and communication technologies.

"This is an opportunity that we must seize and deepen," she said.

Hon Mabunda Lioko finally introduced the Guest of Honour to the 48th Assembly of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, His Excellency Sylvestre Ilunga Ilunkamba, the Prime Minister and Head of Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

She hailed him as "a university professor who has held, from 1980 to 1990, the positions of Minister and Deputy Minister several times, notably in the Portfolio, Economy, Industry and Foreign Trade, Planning and Finance Ministries".

## ● *Outgoing from p.7*

democracy.

For her, the Forum was an illustrious example of participatory parliamentary democracy which survived the test of time and multiple challenges.

The President of SADC PF was also happy and impressed that the resilience of the Forum even in the midst of COVID-19. She was optimistic that future generations would appreciate that SADC Parliaments bravely pursued the developmental agenda of the SADC-PF by meeting despite difficulties, and choosing not to shirk away from responsibility.

Additionally, she indicated that the 48th Plenary Assembly was the very first one where the Oath of Adherence of SADC MPs, as adopted by the 47th Plenary Assembly, would be administered

for all representatives of the Forum as a way of reinforcing the SADC identity and ensure that Members support the core values and guiding principles of the Forum which include honesty, transparency and respect for human rights.

Honourable Bias praised, among others, the SADC identity which unites SADC PF as one parliamentary grouping and in turn, which allows MPs at Forum level to deliberate on issues from a regional perspective, rather from a purely national context.

This positive move, she said, "has often fascinated the international community."

She was happy that the 48th Plenary Assembly would be a landmark meeting as the Clerk or Secretary General of the Assembly would administer the Oath of Adherence, that would further promote fiduciary control within Forum

organs and thus promote the genuineness of deliberations.

Finally, she said that the agenda of the 48th Plenary Assembly was mainly an administrative and financial issues and that it was also a moment to note that it was at the Plenary Assembly level where the Presidency of the Forum rotates to another Member Parliament.

As the outgoing President of the SADC-PF, Honourable Bias wished the incoming President all the very best. She expressed optimism that the Forum was poised to continue making phenomenal progress.

After all, she argued, with the rotation principle, and additionally the election cycles at national level, there is a constantly evolving Membership to the Forum which she considered a healthy culture.



# New SADC PF President lays out some of her priorities



*The newly elected President of SADC PF Honourable Jeanine Mabunda who is also te Speaker of the DRC National Assembly.*

The newly elected President of SADC PF Honourable Jeanine Mabunda, has pledged to keep the Forum focused on and supportive of the SADC Region's regional integration and development agenda, as well as strengthening all national parliaments as legitimate representatives of the "people of our beloved communities."

Honourable Mabunda said this while laying out her priorities shortly after she was elected President of the SADC PF at the end of the 48th Plenary Assembly Session which her Parliament hosted virtually.

"Efforts will be mobilized and momentum maintained towards the transformation of the SADC Parliamentary Forum into a SADC Regional Parliament in accordance with the

commitment expressed by the Summit of Heads of State and Governments in 1997 in Malawi," she said.

She pledged a "multi-pronged strategy" to realize this long-cherished goal.

The new SADC PF President noted that while the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic had made face-to-face interaction impossible, as soon as restrictions on face-to-face meetings were lifted, she and her team would personally lobby decision makers in the region to accelerate the Forum's transformation.

Noting that the SADC Region was home to over 340 million people, she reiterated her personal commitment and that of her country to deliver a well-functioning Regional Parliament that would

serve as the "receptacle of the aspirations" of the region's citizens.

On the representation of women in positions of decision-making, the President acknowledged gains and progress made in this regard but said there was still room for more to be done.

She said the representation of women in positions of power and decision making was "modest" and well below desired levels given that most governments were led by men.

"Our organization (the Forum) can commend itself for having made a difference by voting for women who have been the pride of SADC and

● *see Priorities p.10*



*TRAILBLAZERS: Honourable Thandi Modise of South Africa; Honourable Catherine Gotani Hara of Malawi; Honourable Christine Razanamahasoa of Madagascar; Honourable Esperança Bias Nheuane of Mozambique; Honourable Matšepo Ramakoae of Lesotho; and Ms Boemo Sekgoma, SG of SADC PF are some of the women who have shattered the proverbial glass ceiling to show remarkable leadership.*

● *Priorities from p.9*

that can give hope to our people when it comes to equality, inclusivity and equity in our society,” she said.

She deplored sexism, gender-based violence – physically or on social media – and barriers to social integration that affect countless women and girls.

She said the Forum had women who had shattered the proverbial glass ceiling and who can be mentioned to inspire the region to do more towards gender equality and equity.

“We have Honourable Thandi Modise (Speaker of the Parliament of South Africa); Honourable Catherine Gotani Hara of Malawi; Honourable Christine Razanamahasoa of Madagascar; Honourable Esperança Bias Nhiuane of Mozambique; Honourable Matshepo Ramakoae of Lesotho; your humble servant yours truly who is speaking to you; and Ms. Boemo Sekgoma, our SG.”

She said by increasing the number of women in parliament, democracies can be improved and strengthened while at the same time enhancing representation.

“During our mandate we will advocate for changes in the various political commitments as well as national legal and policy frameworks within our countries,” she said.

She pledged to work closely with the leadership of SADC PF to promote the Forum’s ideals that include the promotion of human rights, gender equality, good governance, democracy, transparency, and the promotion of peace security and stability.

“I would like to seize this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Head of State, His Excellency Félix Tshisekedi for the support he has bestowed on us when we went into the SADC PF,” she said.

She also thanked Honourable Nhiuane for the



*Efforts will be mobilized and momentum maintained towards the transformation of the SADC Parliamentary Forum into a SADC Regional Parliament in accordance with the commitment expressed by the Summit of Heads of State and Governments in 1997 in Malawi.*

*Honourable Jeanine Mabunda.*

extraordinary leadership shown under difficult times. The incoming President noted that her predecessor had presided over the affairs of the Plenary in particular and the SADC PF in general with “wisdom and skill” which had been widely acknowledged.

“Her valuable experience in leadership will be required at all times to assist us in this task,” the SADC PF President said.

Honourable Mabunda, who is also the first woman ever to be elected speaker of the Parliament of the DRC, noted that she was also the first woman from the DRC to be elected President of the SADC PF.

“This for me is a tremendous source of pride. This is a great responsibility that the SADC PF has

entrusted to my country.”

She presented herself as a listening President. “Everyone’s expectations and views will be equally important in our overall management approach,” she said.

On finance issues, the President said her leadership team would work very closely with the Treasurer of SADC PF to promote best practices to ensure fiduciary integrity. She acknowledged that SADC PF already had a strategic plan for the period 2019-2023.

She advocated for collaboration and building partnerships between SADC PF and like-minded entities within the region and beyond.

“Beyond our countries and beyond this Forum, collaborating, networking and working in partnership with other regional or other international partners will amplify our voice and will enable us to be heard and understood.”

She ended with a quote by the late South African Founding President Nelson Mandela who famously said: “Vision without action is just a dream. Action without vision just passes the time but vision with action can change the world.”

She enjoined SADC MPs to own Mandela’s wise words to make the SADC Region “stronger, more powerful and more collaborative. Let our actions change the lives of our citizens.”

The Honourable Lovanirina Célestin Fiarovana from Madagascar was elected Vice President of the SADC PF unopposed.

He described the SADC PF as “a dear space to work for the integration of our region.” He pledged to advocate for peace and solidarity.

“I will try my best from my country to fast-track the transformation process of the Forum into a regional parliament. I will also work with other Members of Parliament to achieve the objectives and visions of SADC PF.”



*Delegates follow proceedings during the 48th Plenary Assembly Session which was held virtually in December 2020.*



# MPs call for unity against destructive locusts

Windhoek – Members of Parliament from southern Africa who represent their national parliaments on the SADC Parliamentary Forum are urging SADC Member States to unite against African Migratory Locusts (AML) that have been reported in several countries.

Meteorologists have forecasted normal to above normal rainfall in much of the SADC Region during the 2020-2021 crop growing season. The predictions have raised hopes of bumper harvests in a region in which more than 44 million people are officially recognised as food insecure due to droughts and outbreaks of pests and crop diseases.

From May 2020, the remarkably destructive AML, which can wipe out crops and pasture, has been recorded in eight SADC Member States. These are Botswana; Eswatini; Malawi; Mozambique; Namibia; South Africa; the United Republic of Tanzania; and Zambia.

During the virtual 48th Plenary Assembly of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, South African Member of Parliament Honourable Tshitereke Baldwin Matibe, moved a motion calling for a coordinated regional response to the infestation.

He said: “The AML poses a threat to agriculture and food security in southern Africa and if not controlled, it is likely to exacerbate the food crisis, pose a danger to crop production and livestock grazing during the 2020/2021 farming season



*South African Member of Parliament  
Honourable Tshitereke Baldwin Matibe.*

and beyond.”

Honourable Matibe acknowledged “the prompt and coordinated interventions by SADC”, which he said had been working in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and International Locust Control Organization for Central and Southern Africa (IRLCO-CSA).

He told the Plenary that Climate change was

believed to be a major driver of a new wave of pests and diseases. He stressed that the AML were in addition to other devastating threats to regional food security. He cited fruit flies, fall armyworm, tomato leaf miner, banana fusarium wilt, banana bunchy top virus, cassava brown streak and wheat blasts disease as some of the other threats.

“The AML exacerbates the economic challenges Member States are already facing, including resource constraints posed by COVID-19 response mechanisms,” he said.

He cautioned that some pesticides used to kill the locusts “have the potential to pause adverse environmental effects on human health and ecosystems” and called for the use of similar chemicals in all SADC Member States to the extent possible.

The motion calls for, *inter alia*, close collaboration between SADC Member states and SADC and its partners to control AML; governments providing adequate financial, human and other resources to contain AML outbreaks; integrated pest management systems; sharing of best practices in the AML control; responsible use of chemical control methods against AML; and addressing climate change.

Zimbabwean Legislator Senator Tambudzani Mohadi seconded the motion, which Plenary adopted.

## Mudenda salutes outgoing SADC PF President

WINDHOEK - The Speaker of the Parliament of Zimbabwe, Advocate Jacob Francis Mudenda, has commended the outgoing SADC PF President, Honourable Esperança Laurinda Francisco Nheuane Bias who is also the Speaker of the National Assembly of Mozambique, for her “resilient leadership”.

Advocate Mudenda spoke immediately after Honourable Bias delivered her valedictory remarks as she completed Mozambique’s two-year tenure at the helm of the 15 Member-State SADC PF during the virtual 48th Plenary Assembly Session.

He noted that Honourable Bias took over the Presidency of the Forum towards the tail-end of Mozambique’s tenure, following the elevation of

her compatriot, Honourable Verónica Macamo Dlhovo, to Cabinet as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Regardless, Advocate Mudenda noted, Honourable Bias hit the ground running and took little time to “demonstrate the greatest degree of impartiality couched in independence in decision-making after several Members had debated on a topic.”

Advocate Mudenda said: “Your decisions have been very incisive, fair and credible. We are also pleased to note that you were able to appreciate the procedural intricacies of the SADC PF as an organ, in terms of how the debates have been

● see Mudenda p.12



*Outgoing SADC PF President,  
Honourable Esperança Laurinda  
Francisco Nheuane Bias.*

# Plenary adopts the Treasurer's Report



*Honourable Samuel Dalitso Kawale, Treasurer of the SADC Parliamentary Forum.*

The 48th virtual Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC PF has considered and adopted the Executive Committee Report on Financial Matters (Treasurer's Report) presented by outgoing Treasurer, Malawian MP Honourable Sam Kawale which touched on a wide range of critical issues.

The Plenary considered the audited financial statements for the year ending 31st March 2020. It then considered and approved the budget for the following financial year. Additionally, it noted and appreciated financial support, from Sweden, rendered to the SADC PF's SRHR, HIV and AIDS Governance Programme whose second phase had begun. Support from various other donors such as GIZ and the UN Family was also appreciated.

"The Audited Financial Statements as at 31st March 2020, record total Income of N\$30,994,377. Out of this amount, N\$18,798,052 (60%) was from Mandatory Annual Member Contributions, while N\$11,610,822 (37%) was grants received from co-operating partners. The balance of N\$585,503 (3%) was realised from Administration and Consultancy Income, and investment Income." Honourable Kawale said.

The Audited Financial Statements, which are deemed public documents, would be posted on the SADC PF's website.

It was noted that the SADC PF had increased mandatory annual contributions by Member Parliaments with effect from April 2020 and that the number of SADC PF Member States had increased to 15 with the coming on board of Madagascar.

● *see Report p.13*

## ● *Mudenda from p.11*

conducted."

He said Honourable Bias tactfully handled the issues that were before the Forum – particularly debates preceding long-standing discussions on the purchasing of the Secretary General's house. The SG, Ms Boemo Sekgoma, has since moved into the property.

Advocate Mudenda noted that Mozambique had hosted the SADC Plenary Assembly Session three times consecutively, when no other country expressed willingness to do so.

"You did that using your country's resources. We want you, Madam President, to express our gratitude to the Government and Parliament of

the Republic of Mozambique for that generosity," he said.

Additionally, Advocate Mudenda stated, President Filipe Nyusi of Mozambique had distinguished himself as one of the few - if not the only - Head of State and Government to officiate, graciously, on the three occasions that the Parliament of Mozambique hosted SADC PF.

He implored Honourable Bias to convey the Forum's gratitude for "that unprecedented magnanimity" to President Nyusi.

The Zimbabwean Speaker said the Forum was grateful that Honourable Bias would continue to serve the Forum under an arrangement that seeks to preserve institutional memory.

He was optimistic that with Honourable Bias'

close contact with her predecessor and now Foreign Affairs Minister, and President Nyusi being the current Chairperson of SADC, the next Summit of Heads of State and Government scheduled for March 2021 "will score victory for the transformation of SADC PF into a Regional Parliament."

On a lighter note and in conclusion, Advocate Mudenda quipped that Honourable Bias had earned a reputation for sometimes coming across as a "very threatening".

"It is a bit necessary as a leader to give that sort of impression in order to create some sort of discipline within the leadership of the organization," he said, prompting some delegates to the Plenary Assembly, to unmute their microphones and clap hands in appreciation.



● *Report from p.12*

“The total revenue from Annual Mandatory Contributions for the financial year 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 is therefore N\$21,148,050. This includes Madagascar, which became a Member of the SADC PF in December 2019,” the Treasurer explained.

It was noted that the Forum had made some savings on its operations because at the time of reporting, the nature of conducting business had changed in the wake of Covid-19.

On the enhancement of sound Corporate Governance in SADC PF, the Treasurer advised the Plenary Assembly that over the past two years, steps had been taken to enhance accountability, efficiency and effectiveness at the level of the Secretariat.

To this end, the Executive Committee had spearheaded the development and implementation of various administrative policies that included, among many, the Risk Management Framework, the Performance Management System, the Whistleblowing Policy and The Sexual Harassment Policy.

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*The Audited Financial Statements as at 31st March 2020, record total Income of N\$30,994,377. Out of this amount, N\$18,798,052 (60%) was from Mandatory Annual Member Contributions, while N\$11,610,822 (37%) was grants received from co-operating partners.*

*- Honourable Samuel Dalitso Kawale*

It was noted that the Executive Committee had achieved remarkable success not only in retaining its traditional partners but also in forging new mutually beneficial partnerships with organisations such as the African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC) and Amnesty International.

On the issue of the secondment of staff to the Forum, Hon Kawale recalled that the 47th Plenary Assembly endorsed the proposal for national Parliaments to second staff to the Forum in order to plug the glaring human resource gaps while awaiting the conclusion of a job evaluation.

Nine (9) officers had been seconded by national Parliaments to the Forum to assist various committees. The Plenary Assembly registered its appreciation to Member Parliaments on this matter.

Hon Kawale commended the National Parliaments for adhering to the Rotational Roster for the hosting of the Plenary Assembly Sessions. In that regard, Botswana had committed to hosting the 49th Plenary Assembly which will be held virtually. The 50th Plenary Assembly/ Golden Jubilee celebration would be hosted by either Madagascar or Lesotho.



*Members of Parliament from the Democratic Republic of Congo stand at attention while the anthem is played at the start of the 48th Plenary Assembly Session which the DRC hosted virtually in December 2020.*

# Plenary support for Portugal IPU candidate bears fruit

The 48th Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum has noted and appreciated the outcome of elections of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) which saw its preferred candidate, Honourable Duarte Pacheco of Portugal being elected President.

During the 47th Plenary Assembly Session, the Speaker of the Parliament of Zimbabwe, Advocate Jacob Francis Mudenda, successfully moved a motion imploring the Plenary to back Honourable Pacheco's candidature.

During the 48th Plenary Assembly Session, Advocate Mudenda returned to Plenary with another motion, but this time to inform the Plenary that support for Honourable Pacheco had not been in vain.

He invited the Plenary to congratulate Honourable Pacheco following his election as the new IPU President. Advocate Mudenda reminded the Plenary that on 11th October 2020, he had moved a motion in accordance with Rule 26 (4) of the Rules of Procedure regarding the tabling of motions on matters of urgency and regional importance to support the candidature of Honourable Pacheco.

He reported that Honourable Pacheco was overwhelmingly elected as the 30th President of the IPU, after an unprecedented online election held during the Extraordinary Virtual Session of the IPU's Governing Council on 2 November 2020.

Honourable Mudenda said that the sweeping victory for Honourable Pacheco was clear testimony of the trust the IPU membership had in his "incontrovertible leadership qualities as exhibited in the manner in which he executed his mandate in the various positions he held within the IPU, especially when the Governing Council elected him four times to be the IPU Internal Auditor."

He added: "Undoubtedly, Hon. Pacheco will steer the IPU to greater heights, including financial prudence of the IPU."

Hon. Mudenda said that he found Hon. Pacheco's election impactful and referred to four related instances in which he had acquitted himself well.

Firstly, Hon. Mudenda argued that since SADC and the whole African region are faced with unprecedented challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and existing challenges including climate change and natural disasters, it



*Newly-elected SADC PF-backed IPU President, Honourable Duarte Pacheco of Portugal.*

was hoped that Hon. Pacheco would ensure that Parliaments play their critical roles in finding collective responses to these global challenges.

Hon. Mudenda identified the Doha 140th IPU Assembly which adopted a motion proposed by the Netherlands delegation calling for an urgent international action to support Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe which had been ravaged by Cyclone Idai. Consequently, Hon. Mudenda said, humanitarian aid was actually accelerated to the three countries.

"Accordingly, SADC should welcome Hon. Pacheco's commitment to multilateralism and Parliamentary diplomacy in resolving such similar global challenges among IPU member countries," he said.

Secondly, Hon. Mudenda said that since Africa is faced with unprecedented hot spots of conflict in the SADC region and continentally, through Hon. Pacheco's IPU leadership, it will be crucial for Africa to internationalize all forms of extremism now emerging in Cabo Delgado Province of Mozambique.

"All democratic forces must condemn it in support of the vulnerable and innocent people of that region in Mozambique and the Eastern part of the DRC. Mozambique must be allowed to fully benefit from the economic benefits of gas

deposits in that Province," Hon. Mudenda said. He also cited the in-fighting in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia and said that it was of grave concern to SADC PF and the IPU Member Parliaments.

"Without peace and security, no country can develop equitably," he said.

Hon. Mudenda said the third crucial point for celebrating IPU President Pacheco's victory is that the latter "has envisioned the need to strengthen the IPU by building bridges between countries, peoples and continents to address the problems currently facing the world. We stand by this IPU presidential vision as Member Parliaments of the SADC PF."

Hon. Mudenda said that Parliaments need to be heard no matter from whichever corner of the globe they hail. "In the global construct, there are neither small nor big legislatures," he argued.

Hon. Mudenda said that his own personal presence in the Governing Council as one of the Vice Presidents to Hon. Pacheco, alongside Hon. Speaker Catherine Gotani Hara of Malawi into the Preparatory Committee of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in a meeting scheduled for July 2021 in Vienna, Austria, "should add the necessary gravitas for the SADC regional voice to be loudly heard within the IPU corridors of interface."



# Plenary through the camera





# Plenary through the camera

