

*All official correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary General*

## STATEMENT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD

11<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025

Today, as we commemorate the International Day of the Girl Child, we are enjoined to reflect on the laudable theme of the 2025 United Nations General Assembly, which was unequivocal in its observation that the world is, **'Better Together.'** Cognisant of this entreaty, with which the Forum firmly associates and resonates, we are compelled to recognise that the collective prosperity, peace and progress of the world, and indeed, the SADC region are inextricably linked to the fate of the girl child. It, therefore, becomes trite to reiterate that leaving her behind, will be a profound injustice that fractures societies, impoverishes the envisioned shared future and inadvertently undermines the very foundations peaceful and inclusive societies.

To that extent, it becomes inherently true that the aspiration to be **'Better Together,'** remains an abstraction without the deliberate and systematic empowerment of the girl child. This requires a swift and agile paradigm shift from passive support to active intervention particularly at Member Parliament level. Additionally, it further behoves Member Parliaments to move with resolve to deconstruct the entrenched socio-economic and systemic barriers, defined by discriminatory laws, practices and inadequate access to education, healthcare and technology, all of which impede the full realisation of her rights and potential. Critically, it further becomes an imperative of the highest order for the Member Parliaments to champion the domestication, full implementation and robust resourcing of key regional, continental and international frameworks designed to protect and promote the rights of the girl child. This legislative function is non-negotiable for achieving tangible outcomes.

The Forum itself, continues to champion the development of regional normative frameworks towards the protection of the girl child. Currently, the Forum is developing the Model Law on Prison Oversight. At its core, the framework seeks to establish a robust prison oversight mechanism which, in part also recognises that girls in detention must be shielded from abuse, have access to essential services such as education and healthcare and that the unique needs of infants and children in prison with their mothers are met, preserving their right to a dignified childhood. Here in lies the challenge, to ensure that these aspirations are translated into tangible outcomes. After all, their empowered future is the only sustainable foundation for the collective peace, progress and prosperity of the SADC region. Mindful of this, we must take this commemoration as an opportunity to renew the assurances that our actions and commitments will leave no girl child behind.

**Better Together!**



**Boemo M SEKGOMA (Ms)**  
**SECRETARY GENERAL**

