



COMMUNIQUE

SECOND SESSION 2002 BI-ANNUAL SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM PLENARY ASSEMBLY

GRAND GAUBE, REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

1. The second session of the 2002 bi-annual Plenary Assembly of the SADC Parliamentary Forum met in Grand Gaube, Mauritius from 10 to 15 November 2003 under the Chairperson of Speaker of the National Assembly of Malawi, the Honourable Sam Mpasu.
2. The Assembly was held under that theme, the Role of Parliaments in Poverty Reduction and was attended by Presiding Officers and Members of Parliament¹ from the twelve SADC Member Parliaments as follows:
 - Republic of Angola
 - Republic of Botswana
 - Kingdom of Lesotho
 - Republic of Malawi
 - Republic of Mauritius
 - Republic of Mozambique
 - Republic of Namibia
 - Kingdom of Swaziland
 - Republic of South Africa
 - United Republic of Tanzania
 - Republic of Zambia
 - Republic of Zimbabwe
3. The Plenary Assembly was officially opened by the Prime Minister of Mauritius, the Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth. In his address at the opening session at Sir Harilal Vaghjee Hall in Port Louis, Mauritius, Prime Minister Jugnauth identified poverty as one of the greatest hindrances to development and a serious threat to peace, security and social harmony. Noting that parliamentarians are key to the policy-making process, Right Honourable Jugnauth underscored that strategic position of Parliamentarians in identifying the priority needs of the poor and the vulnerable. He added that Parliament is a watchdog against possible abuse of power by the Executive and the ultimate hope for the common people.

¹ Attendance list is attached

4. The Prime Minister observed that it was a paradox that while the continent of Africa was endowed with enormous ecological, natural and human resources, the peoples of the continent in general and the Southern African region in particular still suffer from hunger, famine and poverty. Noting that for the first time in the history of Africa, Africans, by themselves had developed a Plan of Action - the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Prime Minister Jugnauth urged Parliamentarians to play their part in pushing the NEPAD process forward.
5. In welcoming delegates, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Mauritius, Honourable Premnath Ramnath lamented that in spite of the efforts of both governments and international agencies in reducing poverty in the region, the problem remains a major development challenge for the region. The Speaker observed that it was not acceptable that in this day and age of high technological advancement, for anyone, let alone vast populations to remain poor or starve to death. He called on Parliamentarians, as representatives of the peoples of SADC to stay engaged in and lend their full support to poverty eradication measures. The Speaker also noted that in the fight against poverty, high standards of economic and political governance are indispensable.
6. Speaker Ramnath called delegates' attention to the goal set out in the Constitution of the Parliamentary Forum in which the Forum's goal is to become a Regional Parliamentary Assembly of SADC. Speaker Ramnath advised that the time had come for the Forum to transform itself into a Regional Parliament so that Parliamentarians can take their rightful place in the regional development process.
7. In his opening remarks, the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Forum and Speaker of the National Assembly of Malawi, the Honourable Sam Mpasu, urged Parliamentarians to constantly seek and find practical solutions to the problems affecting the peoples of the region. He noted that the Assembly was meeting at a time when a number of Southern African countries were suffering from famine, hunger and starvation. While acknowledging that one of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is reducing poverty by half by the year 2015 and that the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) were noble indeed, the Speaker expressed concern at the level of indebtedness among SADC Member States. He lamented that the scarce resources that would otherwise be used to alleviate poverty and facilitate economic and political development in Member countries are currently being used to service huge international debts. Noting that the peoples of the SADC region could not be expected to live side by side with poverty any longer, Speaker Mpasu called for total debt cancellation.
8. On the theme of poverty eradication in the region, the Assembly received presentations from regional and international institutions working on poverty issues. These were, the United Nations Development Programme based on its 2002 Human Development Report. The Cape Town based Afro Barometer, SADC Secretariat, the Southern African Regional Poverty

Network, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), World Bank Institute, the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), and the Canadian Parliamentary Centre.

9. At the end of comprehensive debate on the role of parliaments in poverty reduction and alarmed that more than 40% of the peoples of Southern Africa live in abject poverty and that six SADC Member States are currently suffering from serious hunger and famine, the Second Session of the 2002 Plenary Assembly issues the following Declaration:

Whereas:

- The greater majority of the peoples of Southern Africa currently live in devastating poverty and many SADC countries face a range of challenges to their development including HIV/AIDS, food insecurity, famine, post-conflict reconstructions, and indebtedness;
- The governments of the SADC region are pursuing poverty reduction plans, either independently or as part of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund's poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) process;
- It is evident that PRSPs are no panacea to poverty reduction;
- The parliaments of the SADC region have a central role to play with respect to these poverty reduction processes in helping set national priorities of poverty reduction, enacting the laws and budgets needed to implement successful poverty reduction strategies, and in overseeing government implementation of these poverty reduction strategies;
- The objectives of the Parliamentary Forum include providing a forum for discussion on matters of common interest to SADC, accelerating economic cooperation and development integration, and encouraging good governance, transparency, human rights, gender equality and equity; accountability in the region;

The Plenary Assembly:

- Commits itself to accord the highest priority to poverty reduction on the agendas of SADC, the Parliamentary Forum, national parliaments and Member States in general;
- Undertakes to heighten parliaments' role in monitoring budgets and poverty reduction programmes;
- Commends the Parliamentary Forum Secretariat for initiating capacity building and information exchange workshops for Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff on poverty eradication. Where

possible these capacity building efforts should be integrated into the proposed Regional Leadership Training Centre;

- Recommends the development of a regional database of information on best practices and training modules on poverty reduction for Parliamentarians;
 - Recommends the convening of a conference in early 2003 to develop a Plan of Action on poverty reduction based on exchange of information among parliamentarians and other stakeholders. This should be followed by regular consultations for relevant national parliamentary committees; and
 - Recognised fully that poverty in the SADC Region has been aggravated by the scourge of HIV/AIDS, famine and hunger, particularly among the most vulnerable groups especially women and orphans. In order to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS, the Assembly recommended that SADC as a Region should negotiate for cheaper AIDS drugs.
10. One of the major highlights of the meeting of the Assembly was the election of the 2002 – 2004 Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Forum. The new leadership of the Parliamentary Forum is as follows;

Office Bearers

Hon. Speaker Ntlhoi Motsamai*	Chairperson (Lesotho)
Hon. Mathew Mulanda	Vice Chairperson (Zambia)
Hon. Musa Ndzimandze	Treasurer (Swaziland)

Members

Hon. Alfredo Junior	Angola
Hon. Speaker M.R. Molomo	Botswana
Hon. Elvey Kalonga-Mtafu*	Malawi
Hon. Vedasingam Baloomoody	Mauritius
Hon. Speaker J. Mulembwe	Mozambique
Hon. Speaker Dr. M. Tjitendero	Namibia
Hon. Teopolina Mushelenga*	Namibia
Hon. Speaker Dr. Frene Ginwala*	South Africa
Hon. Speaker Pius Msekwa	Tanzania
Hon. Speaker E.D. Mnangagwa	Zimbabwe

11. The Plenary Assembly noted with satisfaction the increase in the number of women on the Executive Committee of the SADC Parliamentary Forum from one in the 2000 – 2002 Executive Committee to four or 33% of the membership of the newly elected 2002 – 2004 Executive Committee.
12. In his valedictory remarks, the outgoing Chairperson of the Parliamentary Forum, Honourable Speaker Sam Mpasu thanked all his colleagues on the Executive Committee, members of the Plenary Assembly in general and the Secretariat for the unqualified support rendered during his term of

office. He expressed the hope that the incoming Executive Committee would receive the same support to enable it to take the Parliamentary Forum to greater heights. He challenged the new Executive Committee, to bring to fruition, the Parliamentary Forum's objective of becoming a SADC Regional Parliament. He applauded the Secretary General and his staff for their efficiency and commitment to the work of the Forum. Finally, he thanked all the cooperative partners for their financial, material and technical support to the Forum, and expressed the hope that this would continue well into the future.

13. In her acceptance speech, the incoming Chairperson, Speaker Motsamai expressed gratitude to her colleagues on the Executive Committee for electing her Chairperson and committed herself to ensuring that the objectives of the Parliamentary spelt out in the Constitution are realised. She appealed to members of the Plenary Assembly to always strive for consensus when making decisions in order to ensure that the unity of the organization is maintained. The Chairperson thanked the Government, people as well as the National Assembly of Mauritius, in particular, the Speaker Honourable Ramnah for the hospitality extended to delegates during the Plenary Assembly. She also thanked the Secretary General and his staff for their commitment and dedicated service to the organization.
14. The first session of the 2003 bi-annual Plenary Assembly will be hosted by the National Assembly of Zambia in Livingstone, Zambia from 28 April to 3 May 2003, while the National Assembly of Lesotho will host the second session in November 2003.

Done at Grand Gaube, Republic of Mauritius

15 November 2002

*The * denotes female*

ATTENDANCE LIST

Angola

1. Hon. Speaker Roberto de Almeida, MP
2. Hon. Ms Exalgina R.V.O. Gamboa, MP
3. Hon. Aniceto Jose Manuel Hamukwaya, MP
4. Hon. Alfredo de Azevedo Junior, MP

Botswana

1. Hon. Speaker Matlapeng Ray Molomo, MP

2. Hon. Gobopang Duke Lefhoko, MP
3. Hon. Ms. Lesego Ethel Motsumi, MP
4. Hon. Robert K. Molefhabangwe, MP

Lesotho

1. Hon. Speaker Ms Ntlhoi Motsamai, MP
2. Hon. O.H. Motaung, MP
3. Hon. Dr. K. Raditapole, MP

Malawi

1. Hon. Speaker Sam Mpasu, MP
2. Hon. Ms. Elvey Maureen K. Mtafu, MP
3. Hon. Louis Joseph Chimango, MP
4. Hon. Khwauli Msiska, MP

Mauritius

1. ***Hon. Speaker Premnath Ramnah, MP***
2. Hon. Veda Baloomoody, MP
3. Hon. Dr. James B. David, MP
4. Hon. P. Roopun, MP
5. Hon. L. Dookun-Luchoomun, MP
6. Hon. M. Allet, MP
7. Hon. F. Labelle, MP
8. Hon. A. Nancy, MP
9. Hon. D. Perrier, MP
10. Hon. J. Von Mally, MP

Mozambique

1. Hon. Mariano Matsinha, MP

2. Hon. Ms. Maria Matilde Alves Lampeao, MP
3. Hon. Lutero Chimbirombiro Simango, MP

Namibia

1. Hon. Speaker Mosé Penaani Tjitendero, MP
2. Hon. Ms. Teopolina Ndeapo Mushelenga, MP
3. Hon. Dr. Kaire Mbuende, MP
4. Hon. Katuutire Kaura, MP

South Africa

1. Hon. Dr. Pallo Jordan, MP
2. Hon. Ms. Senorita N. Ntlabati, MP
3. Hon. Collins Wells Eglin, MP

Swaziland

1. Hon. Speaker Nicholas S. Matsebula, MP
2. Hon. Marwick T. Khumalo, MP
3. Hon. Musa P. Ndzimandze, MP
4. Hon. Thandi Maziya, MP

Tanzania

1. Hon. Ms. Anne Semamba Makinda, MP
2. Hon. Dr. Willbrod Peter Slaa, MP
3. Hon. Dr. Hassy H.B. Kitine, MP

Zambia

1. Hon. Speaker Amusaa K. Mwanamwambwa, MP
2. Hon. M.S. Mulanda, MP
3. Hon. S.T. Masebo, MP
4. Hon. F.Z. Simenda

Zimbabwe

1. Hon. Deputy Speaker Edna Madzongwe, MP
2. Hon. Charles Majange, MP
3. Hon. Ms. Esther Nyauchi, MP
4. Hon. Gabriel Chaibva, MP

Resource persons

1. Mr. Kristinn Helgeson UNDP, Zimbabwe
2. **Mr. Kingston Kajese Afro Barometer, USA**
3. Mr. Robert Mattes Afro Barometer, USA
4. Ms. Petronilla Ndebele SADC Secretariat, Botswana
5. Mr. Richard Humphries Southern African Regional Poverty Network (SARPN)
6. Ms. Praitie Yip Parliamentary Centre, Canada
7. Mr. Shun Govender Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), South Africa
8. Mr. James Atema DFID – Lesotho
9. Mr. Theodore Dreger World Bank Institute, USA
10. Mr. Kenneth Scott Hubli National Democratic Institute, USA