



## **Joint SADC PF and INTER PARES Workshop**

# **Enhancing Parliaments' Role in Defending and Promoting Human Rights in Southern Africa**

## **CONCEPT NOTE**

### **1.0 Background Summary**

The Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) is mandated “to promote the principles of human rights”<sup>1</sup> and in this regard the institution recognises the central role of Parliaments in the promotion and protection of human rights. Parliaments are responsible for, inter alia, ratification of human rights treaties, adopting enabling legislation to respond to treaties ratified, ensuring that sufficient funds are provided for human rights implementation and exercising their oversight function. Parliaments also have significant potential to support the international human rights system and improve the implementation of internationally recognised standards at the domestic level.

Given the above context, SADC PF has been undertaking various interventions aimed at enhancing the capacity of national Parliaments and parliamentarians to advocate for and safeguard human rights. In this vein, the 45<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly made a significant stride by adopting a landmark motion condemning the widespread violation of the rights of persons with albinism in some countries of the region, including attacks, abductions, killings and discrimination. The motion also called for legislative and other measures to be instituted to ensure the protection of the rights of persons with albinism. This entails actions such as ratifying and domesticating the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa.

SADC PF has additionally developed a diverse range of Model Laws addressing various human rights and related matters. These encompass rights of women and girls, political and electoral rights, and serve as a guiding compass by providing a comprehensive framework for legislation and legal standards. The overarching objective is to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights. These include the following:

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<sup>1</sup> Article 6(c) of the SADC PF Constitution

- Model Law on HIV and AIDS (2008), which provides a legal framework for the review and reform of national legislation related to HIV in conformity with international human rights law standards;
- Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriages and Protecting those in Marriage (2016) which guides legislators and policymakers in developing effective national laws to end child marriage and address inconsistencies in current legal frameworks;
- Model Law on Elections (2018) which is meant to facilitate the domestication of regional and international electoral obligations and best practices into national legislation and guarantee the protection of key electoral rights; and
- Model Law on Gender-Based Violence (2021), which guides Member States in developing effective policies and laws that address the problem of GBV by protecting and promoting the rights of women and girls.

Recently, the SADC PF developed *Principles and Guidelines for Parliaments in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the SADC region*. These Principles and Guidelines were validated and approved in early February 2023, paving the way for their subsequent dissemination and domestication.

The role of Parliaments in promoting and protecting human rights stands as a significant thematic priority for International IDEA within its INTER PARES | Parliaments in Partnership – EU Global Project to Strengthen the Capacity of Parliaments. In September 2022, during a global virtual workshop, International IDEA launched a Toolkit on Effective Human Rights Engagement for Parliamentary Bodies as part of the INTER PARES programme. The Toolkit brings together international best practices on enhancing the role of parliaments in advancing human rights.

## **2.0 Joint Regional Workshop Objectives**

In view of the formal collaboration between SADC PF and International IDEA through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), a Joint Regional Workshop on Enhancing Parliaments' Role in Defending and Promoting Human Rights in Southern Africa is being convened. The Workshop objectives will be to:

- i) Enhance the knowledge of parliaments on innovative developments in human rights protection and promotion, through facilitating mutual learning between the national parliaments of SADC PF and EU Member States. This will include an introduction to the INTER PARES Toolkit on Effective Human Rights Engagement for Parliamentary Bodies and SADC PF's Principles and Guidelines for Parliaments in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the SADC Region.
- ii) Explore ways for effective utilisation of these tools and create a platform for parliamentarians from the SADC region and the European Union to share examples of good practices, fostering a culture of mutual learning and benchmarking.

- iii) Build commitment of parliaments to assume a key role in strengthening human rights globally.
- iv) Enhance the visibility of SADC PF's work in strengthening the role of Parliament in promoting and protecting human rights.

The Joint Workshop is organized by INTER PARES in cooperation with the SADC PF, and hosted by the Parliament of Malawi.

### **3.0 Event Format and Venue**

The Joint Workshop will be a hybrid two-day event hosted in Malawi, a SADC-PF Member Parliament, allowing for both in-person and online participation. There will be presentations by expert resource persons involved in development of the Principles and Guidelines and the Toolkit and deliberations by the Members.

### **4.0 Participants**

The Joint Workshop will bring together the Members of the SADC PF Standing Committee on Democratisation, Governance and Human Rights (DGHR), as well as the members of the European Union national Parliaments' relevant Committees - virtually and/or in-person.

### **5.0 Date**

The Workshop is scheduled for 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023, with 7<sup>th</sup> being the arrival date and 10<sup>th</sup> as the departure date.

# DRAFT AGENDA

Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023

All day

Arrival of Participants

## DAY ONE

Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023

For online engagement, use Zoom Platform:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87059475440?pwd=jHExVR4vWdQn4T5bsq59b0dZciuJPU.1>

Meeting ID: 870 5947 5440

Passcode: 781835

Time in the Agenda is indicated both in Central African Time (CAT) and Central European Time (CET).

08:30 – 09:00 CAT

Registration of Participants

### OFFICIAL OPENING

09:00 – 09:30 CAT

08:00 – 08:30 CET

- **Her Excellency Madam Boemo Sekgoma**, Secretary General of the SADC Parliamentary Forum
- **H.E. Ambassador Rune Skinnebach**, Head of the European Union Delegation to the Republic of Malawi (TBC)
- **Dr Jonathan Murphy**, Head of Programme, INTER PARES, International IDEA
- **Dr Roba Sharamo**, Regional Director for Africa and West Asia, International IDEA (*online intervention*)
- **Hon. Tendai Nyabani**, Chairperson of the SADC-PF Standing Committee on Democratisation, Governance and Human Rights, Zimbabwe
- Keynote and Official Opening Address by **Rt. Honourable Catherine Gotani Hara**, Speaker of the Parliament of Malawi

<p><b>09:30 – 09:45 CAT</b> <b>08:30 – 08:45 CET</b></p>	<p>Introductions, Meeting Objectives and Expected Outcomes and Overview of Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Mr Sheuneni Kurasha</b>, SADC PF Programme Manager, Democracy, Governance and Human Rights</li> </ul>
<p><b>09:45 – 10:15 CAT</b></p>	<p>GROUP PHOTOGRAPHY &amp; COFFEE BREAK</p>
<p><b>SESSION I: SETTING THE SCENE</b></p>	
<p><b>10:15 – 11:15 CAT</b> <b>09:15 – 10:15 CET</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>SADC PF’s Trendsetting Role in Parliaments and Human Rights in SADC &amp; Profiling the Principles and Guidelines for Parliaments in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the SADC region</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Mr Sheuneni Kurasha</b>, SADC PF Programme Manager Democracy Governance &amp; Human Rights</li> <li>- <b>Dr Landilani Banda</b>, Legal Practitioner &amp; Drafter of the SADC PF Principles &amp; Guidelines</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Trends and opportunities for parliamentary engagement in human rights in Europe and around the world</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Dr Kirsten Roberts Lyer</b>, Professor, Central European University, human rights practitioner and author INTER PARES Toolkit on Effective Human Rights Engagement for Parliamentary Bodies</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Q &amp; A and Reflections from participants</b></p> <p><i>Moderated by <b>Mr Gram Matenga</b>, Programme Manager, International IDEA</i></p>
<p><b>SESSION II: FROM PRINCIPLES TO ACTION – PUTTING PARLIAMENTS AT THE PULSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS</b></p>	
<p><b>11:15 – 12:15 CAT</b> <b>10:15 – 11:15 CET</b></p>	<p><b>Discussion Panel One: Establishing and Strengthening Parliamentary Human Rights Committees</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Mandate, composition and working methods</u>: the powers of the committee should be clearly established in law, in parliament’s rules and made publicly available. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Hon. Utaara Mootu</b>, SADC PF DGHR Member, Namibia</li> <li>○ <b>Hon. Milorad Pupovac</b>, Chairperson of the Committee on Human and National Minority Rights, Parliament of Croatia (<i>online intervention</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>Responsibilities and functions</u>: a clear mission statement to help ensure effectiveness and legitimacy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Hon. Cláudia Santos</b>, Vice-President of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, Rights,</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>Freedoms and Guarantees, Parliament of Portugal (<i>online intervention</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Ensure human and financial resources and support</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Hon. Jerónima Agostinho</b> SADC PF DGHR Member, Mozambique</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Panel moderated by Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria</i></p>
<p><b>12:15 – 13:30 CAT</b> <b>11:15 – 12:30 CET</b></p>	<p>LUNCH BREAK</p>
<p><b>SESSION II Continues...</b></p>	
<p><b>13:30 – 14:45 CAT</b> <b>12:30 – 13:45 CET</b></p>	<p><b>Discussion Panel Two: Sensitising Parliamentarians on their role to safeguard human rights (law-making)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when preparing national legislation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Mr. Adam Bodnar</b>, Former Polish Ombudsman for Citizens Rights; elected to the Senate of the Parliament of Poland in October 2023 (<i>online intervention</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• when deciding on the national budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Hon. Richard Labrosse</b>, SADC PF DGHR Member, Seychelles</li> </ul> </li> <li>• when ratifying international/regional conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Hon. Darren Bergman</b>, SADC PF DGHR Member, South Africa</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>Panel moderated by Ms Maureen Shonge, Regional Policy Specialist – Women’s Political Participation, UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Region (ESARO)</i></p>
<p><b>14:45 – 15:15 CAT</b> <b>13:45 – 14:15 CET</b></p>	<p>COFFEE BREAK</p>
<p><b>15:15 – 16:30 CAT</b> <b>14:15 – 15:30 CET</b></p>	<p><b>Discussion Panel Three: Sensitising Parliamentarians on their role to safeguard human rights (oversight)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Hon. Leonard Mwalwanda</b>, SADC PF DGHR Member, Malawi</li> <li>○ <b>Hon. Erik Ottoson</b>, Deputy Chairperson of the Committee on the Constitution, Parliament of Sweden (<i>online intervention</i>)</li> <li>○ <b>JUDr. Eduard Csudai, PhD</b>, Head of Secretariat, Committee on Human Rights and National Minorities, National Council of the Slovak Republic (<i>online intervention</i>)</li> </ul>

	<i>Panel moderated by <b>Hon Prof. Nqosa Leuta Mahao</b>, DGHR Vice Chairperson, Lesotho</i>
<b>18:00 – 19:30 CAT</b> <b>17:00 – 18:30 CET</b>	<b>Reception</b>

## DAY TWO

**Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

For online engagement, use Zoom Platform:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87059475440?pwd=jHExVR4vWdQn4T5bsq59b0dZciuJPU.1>

Meeting ID: 870 5947 5440

Passcode: 781835

### SESSION III: SPECIFIC THEMES IN PARLIAMENTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

**09:30 – 10:00 CAT**

#### **Recap of Previous Day**

**08:30 – 09:00 CET**

- Mr Sheuneni Kurasha, SADC PF & Ms Sophie Guruli, INTER PARES, International IDEA

**10:00 – 10:30 CAT**

#### **Protecting the Human Rights of Parliamentarians**

**09:00 – 09:30 CET**

Every year many MPs around the world face abuse, threats, undue suspension and acts of intimidation. How to build solidarity between parliamentarians around the world to defend parliamentarians' human rights everywhere?

- IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians;  
(*tbc*)

#### **Q & A and Reflections from participants**

### WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS (Parallel Sessions)

**10:30 – 12:00 CAT**

#### ***Group A (Hybrid Session): The role of regional parliamentary bodies and regional governance institutions in fostering and advancing human rights***

**09:30 – 11:00 CET**

- Practical challenges and innovative approaches to the promotion and protection of human rights in the SADC region and the European Union
  - o SADC PF DGHR Member
  - o **Mr Stefan Krauss**, Head of Human Rights Action Unit, European Parliament (*online intervention*)
- How is the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights implemented in the different countries in the region? Sharing best practices between parliaments in the region.
  - o SADC PF DGHR Member (*tbc*)
- Taking part as an MP in regional parliamentary assemblies dealing with human rights: SADC Parliamentary Forum and the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly as two examples of regional parliamentary assemblies dealing with human rights.
  - o SADC PF DGHR Member (*tbc*)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ EU Member State Parliament (tbc)</li> </ul> <p><i>Discussion moderated by Hon. (tbc), Chairperson of the DGHR Standing Committee</i></p> <p><b>Group B (In-person Session): Parliamentary Inclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to parliamentary venues for disabled persons: the parliamentary building is an important symbol as being the house where elected representatives work. Both MPs, staff and visitors, no matter if they have disabilities, should be able to enter that building physically.</li> <li>- People with hearing or visual impairment should also have access to legislative documents and be able to follow political debates in the chamber. Discussion on possible technical and physical ways to handle this.</li> <li>- Representation of women and minorities in the parliament: What actions can be taken to enable women and minorities to work as MPs on the same conditions as male MPs?</li> </ul> <p><i>Discussion moderated by <b>Dr Landilani Banda</b>, Legal Practitioner &amp; Drafter of the SADC PF Principles &amp; Guidelines</i></p>
<p><b>12:00 – 13:30 CAT</b> <b>11:00 – 12:30 CET</b></p>	LUNCH BREAK
<b>REPORTING BACK FROM WORKING GROUPS AND NEXT STEPS</b>	
<p><b>13:30 – 14:30 CAT</b> <b>12:30 – 13:30 CET</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reporting back from working groups</li> <li>- Presentation of the draft Communiqué for the Regional Joint Workshop</li> <li>- Next Steps</li> </ul>
<p><b>14:30 – 15:00 CAT</b> <b>13:30 – 14:00 CET</b></p>	<p><b>Closing Ceremony</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vote of thanks by a representative of the Participants</li> <li>- Closing Remarks by <b>Hon Prof. Nqosa Leuta Mahao</b>, Vice Chairperson of the SADC-PF Standing Committee on Democratisation, Governance and Human Rights &amp; <b>Dr Jonathan Murphy</b>, Head of Programme, INTER PARES, International IDEA</li> <li>- End of Joint Regional Workshop</li> </ul>

## Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2023

<b>All Day</b>	<b>Departures</b>
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**Thank You**  
**for participating in the Joint Regional Workshop on**  
**Enhancing Parliaments' Role in Defending and Promoting**  
**Human Rights in Southern Africa**

We would appreciate if you could share your feedback about the workshop by filling in the Post-Event Evaluation Survey, which you can download from the QR Code below:

