



SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM



PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE

**SPEECH BY  
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PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE  
&  
CHAIRPERSON OF THE SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM**

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**ON THE OCCASION OF THE SIXTH ORDINARY  
SESSION OF THE SECOND PARLIAMENT OF THE  
PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT**

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**“TRANSFORMATION OF THE PAN-AFRICAN  
PARLIAMENT INTO A LEGISLATIVE ORGAN”**

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16 to 20 January 2012  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

## SALUTATIONS

May I begin by extending my sincere gratitude to the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) for extending an invitation to me, in my capacity as the Chairperson of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, to come and make a statement at the opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Second Parliament.

Allow me, Hon. President, on behalf of the SADC Parliamentary Forum and indeed on my own behalf, to place on record our appreciation for the warm welcome extended to us by the Government and people of Ethiopia since our arrival and for all the arrangements put in place by the ~~Parliament of Ethiopia~~ and the Pan-African Parliament towards the hosting of this 6<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session.

Hon. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

The transformation of Pan-African Parliament into a body with legislative powers is anchored on the successful establishment of Regional Parliaments with legislative powers in the five regions of the African continent. The East African Community set the tone by establishing the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) in 2001 with full

legislative authority, followed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) which established the ECOWAS Regional Parliament in 2002 as a forum for dialogue and consultation in order to promote regional integration. Therefore we encourage the other three regions of southern, central, and northern Africa to formalize the establishment of their own Regional Parliaments. I hereby call upon the Governments in these said regions to support the establishment of Regional Parliaments with legislative powers.

Hon. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

In Southern Africa, the Southern Development Community (SADC) Summit of Heads of State and Government met in Malawi on 8 September 1997 and approved the establishment of the SADC Parliamentary Forum as an institution of SADC, in accordance with Article 9(2) of the SADC Treaty. In approving the establishment of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, the Summit further noted that the main objective of the Forum was *“to constitute a Parliamentary Consultative Assembly, the ultimate goal being the establishment of a Regional Parliamentary Framework for dialogue on issues of regional interest and concern”*.

It is now 14 years since this resolution was made, yet SADC is still to establish a Regional Parliamentary Framework in line with this decision. I do not wish to hide my disappointment over the slow pace in transforming the SADC Parliamentary Forum into a SADC Regional Parliament. Under the leadership of Speakers from SADC National Parliaments together with SADC Parliamentarians, we have over the years embarked on numerous lobbying missions to Governments in the Region to expedite the realisation of this objective. I am happy to note, Hon. President, that our case for a Regional Parliament has received support from several Heads of State and Government. Also, our National Parliaments have in the past introduced and adopted motions supporting the establishment of a Regional Parliament. What remains is to transform these positive indicators into reality. We remain open to advice from our national Governments and other stakeholders and we shall continue to engage our Governments on this matter.

Hon. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The fore-fathers of the African continent, such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, envisaged Africans coming together to create a United (States) of Africa with one voice. Since their time, Africans have tremendously moved closer to each other through the creation of continental bodies such as the African Union and its Organs, including the Pan-African Parliament. Indeed, Hon. President, I am certain that it was also the dream of these distinguished African leaders to see the Parliamentarians of Africa coming together to form an African legislative authority. Therefore, African leaders of today have an obligation to ensure the realisation of the dreams of yesteryear's eminent leaders by transforming the Pan-African Parliament into a legislative Organ to complement the work of the other Organs of the African Union.

Article 2 (3) of the Protocol establishing the Pan-African Parliament indicates that the ultimate aim of the Pan-African Parliament shall be to evolve into an institution with legislative powers whose members are elected by universal adult suffrage. The main objective of this transformation is to enable the Pan-African Parliament to harmonise the laws of Member States at continental level. Although the matter of

electing PAP members by direct universal adult suffrage might be too costly, it is the view of the SADC Parliamentary Forum that this must not cripple the endowment of the Pan-African Parliament with legislative authority.

Hon. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

The Regional Parliaments of Africa must assist the Pan-African Parliament to define its autonomy as it relates to the other Organs of the African Union. Because autonomy is an elusive concept, especially where the Organs depend on one another in the execution of their duties, we must take care in defining the scope of autonomy of the Pan-African Parliament as it can be easily misunderstood. It is our view at the SADC Parliamentary Forum that the legislative powers of the Pan-African Parliament must be incremental, starting from a point of regulating immediate concerns of the African people such as benchmarks for democratic elections, or the subsequent peaceful transfer of power from one political party to another, to more broader issues such as trade or the free movement of people. Eventually, due to its close relationship with other Organs of the African Union, the Pan-African Parliament will be able to collate the status of ratifications and domestications of treaties and protocols

emanating from the African Union, and urge its members to act swiftly in domesticating outstanding treaties and protocols. To this end, I commend the work that was done in the production of the Compendium of Treaties, Protocols and Agreements of the AU. This staggered approach is sure to receive the support of not only Regional Parliaments, but also our National Governments, that must ultimately ratify the amendment of the Protocol establishing the Pan-African Parliament thus giving it legislative authority.

Hon. President,

Distinguished Members,

We at the SADC Parliamentary Forum strongly support the transformation of the Pan-African Parliament into a Legislative Organ. We share the same experiences in the quest for transformation, and we can only hope that our Governments expedite these processes. Africa is in dire need of one legislative voice led by the Pan-African Parliament.

With these remarks, I wish the Sixth Ordinary Session of the Second Parliament of the Pan-African Parliament fruitful deliberations.

**Asante Sana, Ameseğenallô, Shukran, Obrigado, Merci,  
Thank you**