

# SUPPORTING PARLIAMENTS ON SUSTAINABLE AND INNOVATIVE HIV FINANCING



## BULLETIN



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# Zambia upbeat after SADC HIV Sustainable Financing Project

**By Moses Magadza**

The Permanent Secretary, Health Services in the Ministry of Health in Zambia, Dr Jabbin Mulwanda, has praised the two year-long SADC HIV Sustainable Financing Project as it approaches its end, stating that it has achieved its objectives.

Zambia is among seven Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member States that include Tanzania, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, Swaziland and Zimbabwe that have been receiving funding under a joint proposal titled 'Strengthening the capacity of SADC Member States National Parliaments to facilitate the implementation of Regional, continental and international commitments on HIV and AIDS sustainable financing'.



The Permanent Secretary, Health Services in the Ministry of Health in Zambia, Dr Jabbin Mulwanda

The proposal, developed by the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF), is one of 10 approved for funding. SADC Heads of State and Government initiated the Project to promote the use of domestic resources to respond to HIV and AIDS.

Asked how successful and necessary the Project had been for Zambia, the former Director General of the National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council of Zambia was effusive and unrelenting in his praise for the Project.

"To be honest with you - never mind the short time it has been in existence - it's been very successful in that it achieved the main objectives it was meant to achieve: to create awareness among Members of Parliament and to get their buy-in on the various initiatives on sustainable financing of HIV. From where I stand, the Project achieved its objectives."

Dr Mulwanda said there were many positive ripple effects from the Project which he believed would outlive it.

"Obviously, we have Parliaments coming and going; people being voted in and out which can be a challenge. We need a similar project to build the capacity of civil servants that work with Parliamentarians to ensure they carry on the role of imparting knowledge to the new MPs that come to join Parliament. Even when MPs leave, they go with the knowledge acquired and continue to be leaders in their communities even though they may no longer be in Parliament. They can still influence opinions."

He cautioned that putting in place sustainable financing mechanisms takes time.

"It is a process, not an event. The real benefits might take a long time to

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come. We have started and it's a question of time. What we managed to achieve will remain."

He said activities supported through the SADC Parliamentary Forum under the Project were beginning to bear fruits.

"We have had engagements with Members of Parliament to orient them and discuss how the country could sustain financing of the HIV response given that external financing has declined and is now unpredictable," Dr Mulwanda said.

The Permanent Secretary said as proof that Zambian MPs were now engaged, they had begun to ask "tough questions" in Parliament during question time.

"The Parliamentary Committee on Health and Social Services took the issue of HIV sustainable financing and called upon various stakeholders to make submissions on the best way towards HIV sustainable financing mechanisms. As a result they produced a report and recommendations that are really positive for government to implement."

He thanked SADC PF for implementing the HIV Sustainable Financing Fund and said it had enabled Zambia to orient Nation-

To be honest with you - never mind the short time it has been in existence – it's been very successful in that it achieved the main objectives it was meant to achieve: to create awareness among Members of Parliament and to get their buy-in on the various initiatives on sustainable financing of HIV. From where I stand, the Project achieved its objectives.

*- Dr Jabbin Mulwanda*

Through the Project, MPs in Zambia gained a better appreciation of the national HIV response and the declining external financing for HIV.

*- Ms Ellen Mubanga*

al Assembly staff and key civil servants from line ministries that work with Parliamentarians to prepare MPs so that it is easy to engage with Parliament.

He revealed that after a long time of back and forth, social health insurance would be introduced in Parliament during the current sitting because Parliamentarians and Ministers had been sensitised about the importance of sustainable financing of not just HIV but health in general.

"Our engagement with Parliamentarian's has been meaningful."

Zambian Parliamentarians are closely associated with their local councils. Dr Mulwanda said encouraging movement – albeit small-scale - had been noted at constituency level.

"We have seen that some local councils have begun budgeting for HIV activities in their budgets. This never used to happen. We have also seen that because of the awareness created around sustainable financing, people have started to engage contractors of capital projects which have an allocation for HIV in the contracts given. Respective local councils are demanding that contractors carry out or implement the HIV component of their contracts where their projects are taking place. We have seen that good things can come out of engaging with MPs."

Ms Ellen Mubanga, the Public Private Sector Coordinator at NAC Zambia,

said that the awareness raising among MPs under the Project, enabled parliamentarians to understand the IP bills that were introduced to be passed into law so as to make the Zambia compliant to the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) flexibilities

"We have been able to work on those laws this year and Parliament has passed four of the five bills into." Ms Mubanga said.

She explained that in Zambia, Bills become laws after the President has assented to them, paving the way the development of policies and regulations to enable the country to use the TRIPS flexibilities to have access to essential medicines, especially under HIV where the accessibility of ARVs is a huge cost.

Under the World Trade Organisation (WTO), multinational companies have rights in terms of patents of medicines, trademarks and access to genetic resources that include plants and raw materials used in the development of medicines. The WTO has since entered an agreement with multinational companies to allow for flexibilities for a period.

TRIPS flexibilities allow low and middle income countries to access essential medicines by putting in place certain laws to allow investment in a particular area. India has benefitted mightily from TRIPS and

today produces much of the drugs used in the HIV response.

Observers see the development of TRIPS-related laws in Zambia as a huge step in the right direction given that few countries in the low and middle income bracket have such laws.

Given that the SADC HIV Sustainable Financing Project seeks to support HIV sustainable financing, countries are encouraged to ensure that TRIPS-related laws are in place.

Ms Mubanga said that once the law on patents has been signed, patenting would not affect production as people can have access to production of essential medicines and nobody can claim ownership.

“Benefits will accrue to the larger community. Through the Project, MPs in Zambia gained a better apprecia-



**UPBEAT:** Ms Ellen Mubanga, the Public Private Sector Coordinator at NAC Zambia.

tion of the national HIV response and the declining external financing for HIV.”

She said the project had opened up discussions, especially with MPs.

“It has brought to shore that some of the commitments made outside the country are not adequately disseminated to Parliament.

In short, it has increased awareness.”

Dr Mulwanda attributed the successful passing of some of the TRIPS-related Bills to sensitisation done to the Members of Parliament with the support of SADC PF as this had been a major concern of the SADC HIV Sustainable Financing Project, focusing on how to enable low and middle income countries access essential medicines at reduced costs.

Going forward, the NAC plans to intensify its engagement with MPs over the new targets around HIV to ensure that the MPs are brought up to speed.

Said Ms Mubanga: “We need to ensure that no MP is left behind. This is important given that we have a new Parliament in place with almost 80 percent of MPs being new. We, therefore, need to ensure that the new developments at global level affecting our country are brought to the attention of all MPs.

We need to build their capacity to provide oversight and networking among themselves and develop champions.”

On his part, Dr Mulwanda said he would like to see the various stakeholders sit and share lessons drawn from implementing the Project and figuring out what else could have been done better.

“We need to see how we can take the things we have started under this Project all the way to fruition. For instance, we have passed the TRIPS Bills, how do we actually benefit from them? That’s another issue altogether.”

He said there were many countries that had passed TRIPS-related laws but had not used them.

“How can we create demand for them to benefit from the enactment of those Bills? We need to move beyond having laws to actually benefiting from them.”



**FLASHBACK:** Staff of the National Assembly of Zambia and those from line ministries attend a capacity building workshop at Legacy Lodge in Chongwe, Zambia from 1 to 2 September, 2016.

# President Lungu assents to Zambia's TRIPS-related Bills

## Staff Writer

In what is being seen as a major outcome of the SADC HIV Sustainable Financing Project and a huge step forward towards greater access to essential medicines, the Parliament of Zambia has passed four of five Bills that will enable the country to benefit from Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) flexibilities.

TRIPS flexibilities allow low and middle income countries to access essential medicines by putting in place certain laws to allow investment in a particular area.

Below is a brief on what these Bills are, what they seek to achieve and how far they have gone towards becoming laws, which would enable Zambia to develop relevant policies. In a show of bold political leadership and commitment, Zambian President Edgar Lungu has already assented to some of the five Bills:

1. The Lay-out Design of Integrated Circuits Bill, 2016,

To provide for the pro-



**LEADERSHIP:** Zambian President Edgar has assented to some of the TRIPS-related Bills in his country.

tection of layout designs (topographies) of integrated circuits and matters incidental thereto and also give effect to the provisions of the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and any other relevant international Treaty or Convention to which Zambia is party. The Bill has been signed into law following the assent by the President.

2. The Protection of Traditional Knowledge, Genetic Resources and Expressions of Folklore Bill, 2016

To provide for a legal

regime for the protection of traditional knowledge, genetic resources and expressions of folklore and also confer rights on holders and promote conservation and sustainable utilization of country's biodiversity resources. Furthermore, this would also prevent the granting of patents based on traditional knowledge, genetic resources and expressions of folklore without the prior informed consent of relevant traditional communities.

The Bill has been signed into law following the assent by the President. Regulations to facili-

tate Operationalisation have been drafted.

3. Industrial Designs Bill, 2016

To encourage the creation of designs and development of creative industries through enhanced protection and utilization of designs, to provide for the registration and protection of designs, to provide for the rights of proprietors of registered designs, to provide for the restriction, publication and communication of registered designs, to provide for contractual and compulsory licenses, to repeal and replace the Designs Act 1958, to provide for the use and acquisition of registered designs by the Government among others.

The Bill has been signed into law following the assent by the President.

4. The Patents Bill, 2016

To provide for the protection and administration of patents, for the process for obtaining a patent for an invention; for the restriction, publication and communication of patents,

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to promote the use of patented information and technological knowledge, to provide for contractual and compulsory licenses, to repeal and replace the Patents Act 1958 and to provide for the use and acquisition of inventions by the Government among others. By Press time, the Bill had passed through third reading by Parliament and was awaiting Presidential Assent.

#### 5. Trade Marks Bill, 2016

To provide for registration and protection of trademarks, service marks, collective marks, certification marks, well-known marks and geographical indications; to provide for the procedure for the registration and duration of trademarks; to provide for the scope of rights protected by registered trademarks; to provide for the effects of registration of trademarks and action for infringement of trademarks; to provide for producers and operators to maintain the reputation of their trademarks and guarantee the quality of goods and services. At the time of going to press, the draft bill was being reviewed by Ministry of Justice before submission to Parliament.



**UNITED:** These members of the National Assembly of Swaziland have managed to mainstream HIV sustainable financing into their national HIV and AIDS Strategic framework.

## SADC HIV Financing Project has galvanised Swaziland MPs

### Staff Writer

The National Executive Director of the National Emergency Response Council on HIV and AIDS (NERCHA) in Swaziland, Mr Khanya Mabuza, says the SADC HIV Financing Project has galvanized the country's lawmakers into supporting the national response to HIV and AIDS.

Now in its second and final year, the SADC HIV Financing project sought to strengthen and facilitate the alignment of National Parliaments' priorities to the SADC Regional, continental and global priorities and commitments on HIV and AIDS.

The overall objective was to enhance the technical capacity of relevant Parliamentary Portfolio Committees to enable them to mobilize political leadership for accelerat-



### LEADING FROM THE FRONT:

Speaker of the National Assembly of Swaziland, Hon Themba Msibi, is happy with the active involvement of MPs.

ed action and scale up of national responses to foster strengthened accountability, advocacy and oversight in the implementation of commitments on HIV/AIDS.

Hon Themba Msibi, Speaker of the National Assembly of Swaziland, has expressed gratitude to the National Emergency Response Council

on HIV and AIDS (NERCHA) for technical and financial support in developing the strategy.

In a brief statement, the Speaker said both houses of Parliament were engaged in this exercise, while the HIV and AIDS sessional Committees from both houses were tirelessly engaged in the crafting of the strategy.

"Parliament is indebted to SADC PF for all finances which helped towards the development of the strategic framework.

As the Parliament of Swaziland, we are grateful to the support from the Prime Minister's office, for the leadership and support for the AIDS response that enabled Par-

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liament to produce such a document," the Speaker said.

Speaking by telephone from Swaziland, Mr Mabuza said the Project had made a difference.

"The Project has opened up a wider scope of understanding and the importance of not to lose sight of the importance of HIV and AIDS in the national agenda. Different ideas on HIV were synchronised into a national framework, the Swaziland Parliament HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (2016 – 2019), before they were taken further to Parliamentarians. It was important that they (MPs) understood the global picture of HIV and the relationship between legislation and financing of HIV and AIDS responses. It was also important to align the budget to the national core function," he said.

Going forward, Mr Mabuza said there was need to review how the national HIV AIDS response is coordinated, to expand the national or domestic funding base and ensure that HIV and AIDS were mainstreamed.

The Manager in charge of Policy and Planning at NERCHA, Ms Allen



Ms Allen Waligo  
Manager in  
charge of Policy  
and Planning at  
NERCHA

Waligo, concurred and said the Parliament of Swaziland had taken a different but prudent approach towards implementing the SADC HIV Financing Project.

Ms Waligo explained that the Project was introduced at a time when the country's HIV and AIDS strategy was about to lapse and a new one was being developed. The country, she said, elected to review the lapsing national HIV and AIDS strategy and include the HIV financing component within the new strategy.

"This entailed adopting and aligning the SADC HIV Financing Project; integrating it within that broad strategy of Parliament. That ensured that the SADC HIV Financing Project was not a parallel initiative, but was integrated within Swaziland's strategy," she explained.



Mr Khanya  
Mabuza  
National Executive  
Director of  
NERCHA

According to Ms Waligo, this approach had built a sense of ownership with respect to the Project.

"The Parliamentarians of Swaziland did not want to regard the Financing Project as a SADC Project. They wanted to adopt it, own it and be accountable."

She said the process of developing the Swaziland Parliament HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (2016 – 2019) was long, thorough and highly consultative.

"It involved several stakeholders that included Civil Society Organisations, development partners and Parliament itself: the two Houses of Assembly. It was a long process that began in 2015."

She revealed that several workshops were held as well as a desk review of regional and international documents. A SWOT

analysis of the role of Parliament in the national HIV and AIDS response was also undertaken.

Tapping into the HIV Financing funds, Swaziland held validation and consensus-building workshops over the Parliament HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (2016 – 2019).

"We had to take the strategic plan to stakeholders for validation. This happened in October, 2016. Members of Parliament of both Houses were present when we presented the strategic plan."

Ms Waligo revealed that the Parliament has already presented the strategy to the Prime Minister for endorsement. The Office of the PM oversees Swaziland's response to HIV and AIDS.

The new strategic plan provides a legal and policy environment for an AIDS-free Swaziland by 2022.

In terms of HIV financing, the strategic areas of the strategic plan are aligned to the mandate of Parliament that include law making (Area 1) oversight (Area 2), representation (Area 3) and the well-being of Members of Parliament.

Under HIV financing, MPs are expected to provide oversight and ensure that resources are

made available in good time and in sufficient quantities.

Expectations are that Swaziland will soon hold workshops during which MPs will be taught to analyse and influence the national budget.

“It will be a process. We hope to give MPs tools to provide oversight and ensure that sector plans have mainstreamed HIV. It will be a painful but worthwhile process,” Ms Waligo said.

She revealed that NERCHA had planned to hold the first session with MPs in 2016 but failed due to competing priorities.

“We are ready. We have an agenda, resource persons and venues. We hope to be able to start early next year (2017),” she said, adding that such capacity building activities could only take place when Parliament is in session.

NERCHA coordinates and facilitates the National Multisectoral HIV and AIDS response and oversees the implementation of the national strategic plans and frameworks in Swaziland.

It has been supporting the Parliament of Swaziland to implement the SADC HIV Financing Project under the guidance of the SADC Parliamentary Forum.

# Mauritius moves to put HIV on national agenda

## Staff Writer

The beautiful island country of Mauritius has begun taking concrete steps to put HIV and AIDS top of the national agenda, thanks to support from the SADC HIV Sustainable financing Project.

Apart from hiring an HIV & AIDS researcher using funds from Sweden and Norway to support Members of Parliament as they support the national AIDS response, Mauritius has drawn on the SADC HIV Sustainable Financing Project funds and hired a consultant to write a position paper with a view to setting up an HIV & AIDS Committee in Parliament. The researcher has resumed work under the supervision of the Office of the Clerk of the National Assembly.

The consultant is none other than Dr Amita Pathack. She was the National AIDS Coordinator and head of the National AIDS Authority in Mauritius for nine years. Additionally, she once chaired Mauritius’ Country Coordination Mechanism. Now retired, she is very familiar with the HIV and AIDS



Consultant Dr Amita Pathack is writing a position paper with a view to setting up an HIV & AIDS Committee in the Parliament of Mauritius.

situation in her country and knows what needs to be done to bolster the national response to the epidemic.

In August 2016 Mauritius held a workshop for Civil Society Organisations and MPs. During that workshop, several thematic working groups examined the HIV and AIDS situation in Mauritius, after which recommendations were made. A

major objective of the workshop was to collect ideas on how to better organise of the national HIV & AIDS response.

According to Dr Pathack, who facilitated the workshop, there was a very strong commitment towards the national response to HIV

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## & AIDS.

"It emerged that almost 80 percent of the response to HIV was financed by the Government. Eighteen percent was being funded by the Global fund, while other funding sources supported the rest," Dr Pathack said by telephone from Mauritius.

She said there were strong indications that the Government of Mauritius was keen to support much of the national response to HIV & AIDS given that external funding was dwindling as a result of the prevailing global financial crisis.

She said the position paper seeks to enable the National Assembly to put in place a Parliamentary Committee on HIV & AIDS financing to bring about political leadership at the highest level.

"It targets Parliamentarians to convince them about the importance of having such a committee so that the financing of the national response to HIV & AIDS can become completely owned by the country."

A final draft copy of

the position paper has since been presented to SADC PF. Once finalised it will be submitted to the Clerk of the National Assembly.

Thereafter a workshop will be held to popularise the position paper early 2017.

"The paper will be shared with MPs and CSOs after which the Speaker will decide on whether such a Parliamentary Committee would be set up."

On what difference such a committee would make, Dr Pathack was optimistic.

"It would bring about a huge difference not just for HIV financing, but it would give HIV a new dimension in the sense that in the past few years, HIV response has suffered a few set-

backs because the National AIDS Committee fell under the Ministry of Health. It has lost its effectiveness and it is not enjoying the stewardship at the highest level of Government. A Parliamentary committee would bring back the high level stewardship and momentum that is needed."

On how much of a priority HIV was in Mauritius, Dr Pathack said: "HIV is still a matter of great concern. The fact that the rate of transmission has gone down visibly has given rise to a tendency towards complacency with some people thinking the war has been won."

She explained that there were competing priorities that include non-communicable diseases that include cancers, heart diseas-

es and diabetes which had taken centre stage.

"HIV is not regarded as Priority Number One."

She cautioned: "If we give in to complacency we might lose the gains we have achieved. We need to keep the momentum as we strive towards the noble goal of ending HIV by 2030."

She said a desk review of relevant documents including the Hansard revealed that HIV was not being frequently debated.

"When mentioned focus tends to be on harm reduction."

In focus group discussions MPS called for renewed efforts to address HIV and AIDS while strengthening a multi-sectoral approach.



**BACKING:** Representatives of Civil Society Organisations in Mauritius actively support the SADC HIV Financing project.



**TOGETHER AS ONE:** Malawi Members of Parliament pose for a group photograph during a workshop to discuss sustainable financing of their country's response to HIV and AIDS.

# Malawi MPs meet on HIV sustainable financing

## Staff Writer

After months of planning, the National Assembly of Malawi collaborated with the country's National AIDS Commission and the Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS to organise a workshop for Members for Parliament to discuss sustainable financing of the national HIV and AIDS response.

The workshop, which took place from 26 to 28 September, 2016, drew participants from the Parliamentary Committees of Budget, Finance and Nutrition, HIV and AIDS.

The objective of the workshop was to build the capacity of the se-

lected lawmakers to advocate for the use of domestic resources to support Malawi's national response to HIV and AIDS.

It provided an opportunity for Malawi lawmakers to candidly discuss issues that they said were negatively impacted on the national response to HIV and AIDS and thwarting efforts aimed at raising domestic resources.

Top among these issues were the lack of prioritization of HIV and AIDS financing; delays in the enactment of the country's HIV and AIDS Bill; misleading information on HIV and AIDS allegedly by faith and traditional healers;

high incidence of theft of essential drugs; the high cost of ARVs; and the perceived misuse of scarce resources for HIV and AIDS interventions by Grant Recipient Organisations (GROs).

The Speaker of the National Assembly of Malawi, the Right Honourable Richard Msoyo, officially opened the workshop.

He stressed the need for the active participation of Members of Parliament in the HIV and AIDS response given that a cure for HIV had not been found.

The Speaker challenged Members of Parliament to rally behind global 90:90:90 targets to

end new HIV infections by 2020 and AIDS by 2030.

Additionally, he implored the lawmakers to use their privileged positions to help the country raise adequate and local financial resources to halt and reverse the HIV and AIDS epidemic.

Technocrats from the National AIDS Commission, the Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance were on

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hand to throw light on issues related to HIV and AIDS financing in Malawi.

Mr Mahara Longwe is the Partnerships and Liaison Officer at the NAC. He told participants that as of 2015, the global prevalence of HIV was estimated at 36.7 million with approximately 17 million people accessing antiretroviral treatment.

He said Malawi was making steady progress in responding to HIV and AIDS, with the national prevalence of HIV having gone down from 10.6 percent in 2012 to 9.1 percent. New infections were down from 32 000 in 2012 to 27 000, while ART coverage was estimated to be at 61 percent for adults and 62 percent for children, respectively.

Still, challenges remained. They included high levels of unprotected sex; low access to ART for people living with HIV; low and inconsistent use of condoms; and low socio-economic status of women and gender inequalities, stigma and discrimination.

Dr D Nkhoma, who head the Policy Unit in

“ Malawi was making steady progress in responding to HIV and AIDS, with the national prevalence of HIV having gone down from 10.6 percent in 2012 to 9.1 percent. New infections were down from 32 000 in 2012 to 27 000, while ART coverage was estimated to be at 61 percent for adults and 62 percent for children, respectively.

- Mr Mahara Longwe

the Ministry of Health said the health financing gap in Malawi was widening in the face of over-reliance on external donor support. He too stressed the need for domestic resources to fund the National HIV and AIDS response.

In discussions led by Mr Gawamadzi, the Deputy Director of Planning, Research and Evaluation in the Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS, participants discussed financing options for HIV and AIDS.

These included increasing public sector integration and private sector contributions. Other options were to introduce airline, airtime, alcohol and tobacco levies as well as hiking general taxation.

Noting that resources needed to effectively respond to the HIV and AIDS epidemic in Malawi were dwindling, participants recommended that the Ministry of Health hasten the development of a proposed Health Fund. It was suggested that the Health Fund should have clear HIV and AIDS-related budget lines to ring-fence HIV and AIDS resources.

To increase accountability and transparency in the use of HIV and AIDS resources, it was suggested that the Na-

tional Assembly hold regular quarterly meetings involving relevant Parliamentary Committees, the National AIDS Council and other stakeholders.

Participants expressed concern over apparent low disbursement of funds by Global Fund Principal Recipients (PRs). To remedy the situation, it was resolved that the National AIDS Council, the Ministry of Health and others build the capacity of Principal Recipients to disburse funds given to them.

A call was made, also, for the capacity of local councils to provide oversight and accountability to ensure prudent use of financial and other resources at local level to be built.

The workshop was a highly interactive one, characterized by presentations, the sharing of experiences of other countries that had innovatively raised domestic resources to respond to HIV and AIDS. It involved, also, plenary discussions.

Going forward, participants proposed that a position paper on domestic financing be developed to provide the best options applicable to Malawi drawing from best practices elsewhere.

# Zim puts domestic funding under spotlight

## Staff Writer

Zimbabwean Members of Parliament met in Kadoma in December 2016 to identify opportunities for them to mobilise and track resources to finance the national response to HIV and AIDS.

The National AIDS Commission (NAC) collaborated with the Parliament of Zimbabwe to convene the workshop, which took place on 3 and 4 December 2016. Participants were drawn from the Portfolio Committee on Health and Child Care as well as the Thematic Committee on HIV and AIDS.

In all 43 MPs attended the workshop which sought, inter alia, to provide an update on the national HIV and AIDS response, point out gaps in HIV and AIDS funding, and review the efforts of MPs towards the mobilisation of domestic resources for HIV and AIDS.

Speaking at the start of the workshop, Dr Tapuwa Magure, the Chief Executive officer of the National AIDS Council (NAC), told the lawmakers that global resources for HIV and



**FOLLOWING:** Participants follow proceedings during a workshop on HIV financing in Kadoma, Zimbabwe in 2016.

AIDS were dwindling. He called on MPs to support efforts in raising domestic resources.

He stressed that although progress had been made in the SADC region in responding to HIV and AIDS, the war was still far from being won.

He said that Members of Parliament played a central role in the allocation of resources and monitoring their utilisation.

During the workshop, various issues were raised for noting and

discussion.

It emerged that the Global Fund had disbursed \$1,043,888 million to Zimbabwe for HIV and AIDS, TB and malaria between 2009 and 2016, representing 81 percent of the signed grant amount.

It emerged, also, that 70 percent of ARVs in the public sector were being funded by the Global Fund, 11 percent by the United States Government, 10 percent by Zimbabwe's AIDS Levy, while 9 percent was funded by 'other' sources.

MPs were encouraged to take advantage of the mid-term review of the Zimbabwe National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan to identify priority and high impact programmes and ensure mobilisation of enough resources for TB and HIV responses.

Noting that a lot of money was being used to procure ARVs in external markets, partic-

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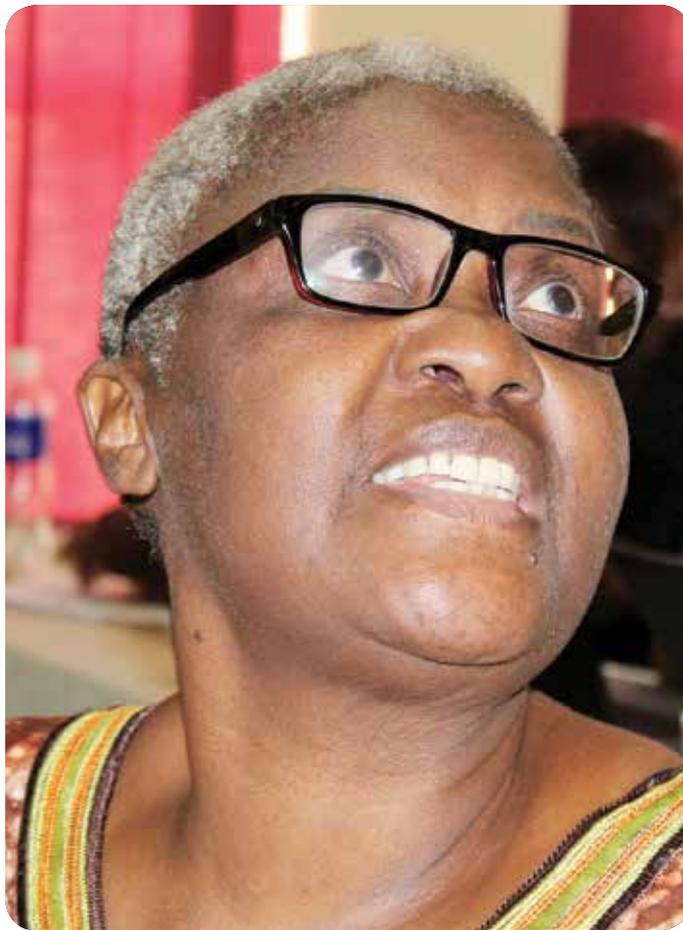
Participants recommended that the country's pharmaceutical industry be strengthened to produce such drugs locally.

The workshop noted that 65 percent of money allocated by the government through the national budget was going towards salaries of health workers.

It emerged that the country's health budget had lately been estimated to be between six and eight percent of the total national budget, way below the Abuja Declaration threshold of 15 percent.

Zimbabwe's national daily, *The Herald*, recently reported that the country was considering a National Insurance Scheme to cater for the welfare of the most vulnerable members of society.

"It is our view as a ministry that a national health company imperative, especially at this juncture when we need to protect our citizens who cannot afford high medical bills," *The Herald* quoted Health and Child Care Minister, Dr David Parirenyatwa, as saying in July 2015. It is estimated that near-



**OUTSPOKEN:** Zimbabwean lawmaker Dr Ruth Labode speaks during a workshop on sustainable HIV financing in Zimbabwe in 2016.

ly 90 percent of Zimbabweans are not on medical aid.

Participants recommended that the proposed NHI be managed by the NAC given its good track record in managing Zimbabwe's AIDS Levy. The NAC is credited for putting in place good systems and practices to manage the fund.

Participants were informed that although Zimbabwe had done remarkably well in responding to HIV and AIDS, the country had

done so largely thanks to external donor support, which had been fluctuating.

For example, it was noted that external funding for HIV and AIDS-related interventions declined from \$154 million in 2009 to \$88 million in 2011 before rising to \$511 million in 2015. To prevent disruption to the HIV and AIDS responses in the period 2015-2017, there was need to double domestic funding, the participants agreed.

Going forward, the MPs who attended the workshop committed to, among others, lobbying for an increase in the national health budget in line with the Abuja Declaration, lobbying for allocations for HIV and AIDS, cancer and TB, monitoring budget disbursements through the gathering of oral evidence.

The MPs pledged, also, to monitor AIDS Levy contribution by mining companies as well as to keep an eye on Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) to NAC.

Meetings were proposed with officials from the Ministry of Health and Child Care and Ministry of Finance to discuss modalities in introducing tax on airtime and other commodities.

Members of Parliament played a central role in the allocation of resources and monitoring their utilisation.

*Dr Tapuwa Magure*

# Seychelles technical working group meets

## Staff Writer

A technical working group (TWG) set up to provide technical backstopping to the National Assembly of Seychelles as it works around Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights as well as sustainable HIV financing, held its meeting in November 2016.

The TWG met on 29 November in Seychelles. The meeting sought to ensure strong cooperation and interface of national stakeholders and the institutions of the National Assembly.

Additionally, it sought to enhance the technical capacity of Parliamentary Committees on SRHR and HIV and AIDS, and to provide a platform for in-depth learning and transfer of knowledge on existing collaborations with the National Assembly to strengthen delivery. Another key objective of the meeting was the development of strategies for the implementation of HIV financing-related interventions.

Participants – 14 in all – were drawn from line Government Ministries and Civil Society Or-



**GEARED:** SADC PF Secretary General Dr Esau Chiviya (back row, second from right) with Members of the National Assembly of Seychelles and delegates from SADC PF during a working visit in 2016.

ganisations.

They also included HIV and AIDS activists.

They were briefed on the four-year long SADC PF SRHR, HIV and AIDS Governance Project funded by Sweden as well as well as the SADC-led HIV Sustainable Financing Project. The latter began on 1 November, 2014, and was scheduled to end on 31 December 2016.

The two projects have had mixed fortunes and faced challenges in Seychelles. Notably, when SADC PF HIV and AIDS Governance Project began, Seychelles did not have a committee on HIV and AIDS in its parliament.

A parliamentary Portfolio on HIV and AIDS has since been set up and 35 MPs reached. However, the committee had not been active due to internal national processes that include the ushering in of an entirely new Parliament.

Going forward, the TWG called for the development of a position paper to be used in advocating for the establishment of a Parliamentary Portfolio Committee dealing with issues of HIV and AIDS and Innovative financing. The ultimate aim would be to assist Parliamentary Committees to incorporate HIV and AIDS financing issues in their work programmes in relation to oversight, legislation and budget-

ary mandates in line with national priorities.

Once the position paper has been developed, a dissemination workshop would be held to ensure that all stakeholders are on the same page with respect to sustainable financing of responses to HIV and AIDS.

With respect to SRHR HIV and AIDS Project, the TWG committed to fostering Women's Parliamentary Caucuses to build capacity of MPs and share knowledge, connect to the latest evidence related to HIV and AIDS as well as SRHR.

# Tanzania embraces sustainable HIV and Aids domestic financing project

By Renutus Kihongo

Domestic financing has become one of the important source of HIV financing in many African country especially SADC Member States located in Southern Sub – Saharan Africa with highest burden of HIV and AIDS in the World.

This is due to many factors including global priorities AIDS being no longer, competing needs while the global economy declining in many donor countries etc.

Tanzania worked together with other SADC member countries to ensure that strategies towards improved domestic financing is no longer a second alternative but is mandatory by country laws. Among these initiatives is joining effort with the SADC Parliamentary Forum to implement the Project aiming at building the capacity of Parliament to appreciate inclusion of HIV and AIDS allocation in National budgets and establishment of laws



Members of Parliamentary Committees of HIV/AIDS, Drug use and social services during the workshop organised and funded through SADC HIV fund on domestic sustainable financing in Tanzania Capital City Dodoma 2015

in favour of expanding domestic financing for HIV and AIDS.

The SADC HIV financing project contributed towards building the capacity of Parliamentarians to increase advocacy for establishment of an AIDS Trust Fund (ATF) and hence enact the amendment of a

law which established the National AIDS Authority, Tanzania Commission for AIDS. This was done in order to accommodate the AIDS Trust Fund for sustainable domestic resource for HIV and AIDS National response.

Moreover, the allocation of Tanzania Shil-

lings 6 Billion (approx. USD 3 Million) was allocated by the Government for the fiscal year 2016/2017 to initiate operationalisation of the fund. While this shows how the Government of Tanzania is committed towards ending HIV and AIDS, it also indicates how the Members Parliament

Dr Fatma Mrisho the former Executive Director for TACAIDS addressing the MP Members of the HIV and AIDS committee during the workshop on domestic sustainable financing on HIV funded by SADC HIV fund through SADC PF in Tanzania Capital City Dodoma 2015. From the left is the Hon. Diana Chilolo Vice Chairman of the HIV Parliamentary committee followed by the Hon. Anna Makinda Speaker of The National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania. While to the right is an official from SADC PF.



Dr Aggrey Kihombo from Mzumbe University addressing the same workshop



Hon. Anna Makinda The Speaker exchanging some issues with the SADF expert during the same workshop

have gained capacity to advocate for domestic financing in HIV and AIDS funding. The following have been registered as direct project benefits for Tanzania;

- Increase in the ca-

capacity of the Parliamentarians to advocate for HIV/AIDS;

- Better and improved legislations to combat HIV/AIDS to be developed;
- Increased budget for

HIV/AIDS in Tanzania;

- Improved HIV/AIDS services delivery, research, policy, legislation, advocacy, impact mitigation, treatment of opportunistic diseases, etc.; and

- Less stress on government resources on health.

