



Southern Africa Development Community-Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF): Sign up event for UN Women's HeForShe Campaign

Venue: Royal Swazi Sun

Date: Thursday 2 June 2016 (15:00-17:00Hrs)

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY DR. ESAU CHIVIYA, SADC-PF SECRETARY GENERAL

- Hon. Vice President of the SADC-PF Hon Joseph Njobvuyalema
- Hon. Speakers and Deputy Speakers of the SADC Parliaments,
- -Hon. Leaders of Delegations,
- Hon. Members of Parliament from the various SADC Parliaments,
- Hon. Ministers here present,
- Ms. Anne Githuku-Shongwe, UN Women Representative for South Africa
Multi-Country Office,
- Invited Observers and Resource Persons,
- Staff from the SADC National Parliaments,
- SADC PF Secretariat Staff,
- Ladies and Gentlemen

We are delighted to have you here today to participate and sign up as gender champions, as part of the UN Women's global –**HeForShe Solidarity Campaign**.

This event came about, following an agreement between UN Women and SADC-PF to partner together in areas of mutual concern to enhance our development efforts in the SADC Region. This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which was signed on 29 January 2016 provides a framework of collaboration in order to enhance SADC-PF's initiatives on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in political and socio-economic sectors in the SADC Countries, collaborating with SADC National Parliaments, as law-makers, oversight bodies and representatives of citizens.

At SADC level, we are on track on gender equality and the empowerment of women, even though, none of the SADC-Member Countries has acquired the agreed upon 50/50 gender parity goal by end of 2015. I must say, I am happy that the UN 59th Commission on the Status Women and SADC Protocol on Gender and Development have extended the expiry date on gender inequalities to 2030. In the same vain, it is heartening to see the increase in female representation in decision-making bodies such as at the SADC Parliaments. Our task is to make the planet 50/50 by 2030 dream come true.

Honorable Members of Parliaments, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Having transitioned from the MDGs to SDGs, with a stand-alone goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls- and over 40 gender-related targets across all the other goals- we are optimistic that, that we will make substantive progress with your support as Parliamentarians. If any development process is to be effective and sustainable, it has to be owned by national stakeholders, and we urge all countries within our region and beyond to integrate the SDGs, especially goal 5, into national and regional development plans.



Recognizing that the equal representation of women and men in political and decision making processes is a democratic imperative, the SADC Parliamentary Forum continues to champion initiatives of the RWPC, in its efforts to ensure more women are visibly active, side by side with men, in political and decision-making processes

As we move towards our ultimate goal of being transformed into the Regional Parliament, it is expected that Member Parliaments and parliamentarians will play their part to see that the processes and gender equality commitments are kept on track. As an organization, our commitment to gender equality and women empowerment, cannot be overemphasized, for example, stated in our current Strategic plan, SADC-PF will continue to strive to ensure greater awareness of the policies and practices to advance gender equality and equity and the inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable, minority and special groups in the business of Parliament.

Honorable Members of Parliaments, Ladies and Gentlemen,

So far, the HeForShe Movement has been launched in various African Countries. Some of the Heads of States and Governments from our region who have signed up as champions, include: **H.E. Arthur Peter Mutharika (Malawi) and H.E. Edgar Lungu (Zambia).**

In this regard, we are honored to have Ms. Anne Githuku-Shongwe, UN Women Representative for South Africa Multi-Country Office with us today, with whom we hope to make this aspirations a reality. Prepare yourself to be challenged, excited and inspired.

Honorable members of parliaments, Ladies and Gentlemen,



And before I handover to Ms. Nomkhitha Gysman, SADC-PF Gender Programme Manager, who will outline the afternoon's programme, I want to say once more on behalf of the SADC Parliamentary Forum Secretariat, we are delighted that you are here and we look forward to many of our Parliamentarians signing up to be champions of this campaign. We also hope to see them make this campaign a reality in our national parliaments.

Thank you, obrigado, merci, siyabonga.

