

SADC PF

38TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY

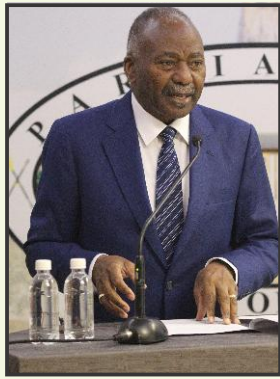
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SADC Region seeks deeper integration

*Hon. Prof. Peter H. Katjavivi,
Speaker: National Assembly
of the Republic of Namibia*



*Hon. Cleophas Mutjavikua,
Governor of Erongo Region*



The Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia, Hon. Prof. Peter H. Katjavivi, welcomed the delegates and acknowledged the fact that SADC Region like all other regional blocs is anxiously seeking to strengthen regional integration. He reiterated the fact that SADC PF is a key platform to facilitate this process. He said, "....our SADC Regional forum is an important platform for advancing unity and coherent action towards the achievement of SDGs".

Hon. Katjavivi thereafter announced the presence of Hon. Cleophas Mutjavikua, Governor of Erongo Region and Hon. Dr. Itah Kandjii-Murangi, Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation. He informed the meeting of the importance of the Walvis Bay Corridor as an important hub within the region and the fact that benchmarking the quality of education in the region was instrumental to regional development.

The Governor of Erongo Region of Namibia, Hon. Cleophas Mutjavikua, welcomed the delegates to his region and highlighted the fact that Swakopmund is a beautiful key tourist destination whereas Walvis Bay is a key logistical harbour within the SADC Region.

The Governor applauded the theme of the 38th SADC PF Plenary Assembly, gave an overview of Namibia's progress and challenges towards the achievement of MDGs and called for deeper stakeholder involvement in the pursuit of SDGs. Furthermore, he informed delegates that Namibia is honoured to serve as home to a number of regional institutions such as the SADC Parliamentary Forum, Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and the Benguela Current Commission. Finally, he reaffirmed Namibia's commitment to the Host Agreement with the SADC Parliamentary Forum and reiterated that the Namibian Government will continue to comply with the region's expectations despite the limited resources at its disposal.

The Governor said, "We all support regional integration and all our governments within the SADC Region are committed to this. However, I must stress that for this to happen; we need viable vehicles to ensure that we concretely promote regional integration. It is in this context that we value the work of SADC PF, as a regional body, dedicated to the common good of the parliaments within the region". The Governor then officially opened the 38th Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC Parliamentary Forum.

MPs have a key role in the attainment of SDGs



*John A. Corrie, Hon. President
ACP/EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly
Consultant in Overseas Development
Specialist in African Affairs*

Staff Reporters

Speakers and Members of National Parliaments from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) converged in Swakopmund to deliberate on how to achieve the newly-adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs were unanimously adopted on the 25th September 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly. They replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) whose end date is 2015.

A symposium to discuss the SADC PF 38TH Plenary Assembly Session theme: "From MDGs to SDGs: Towards a

Greater Parliamentary in the Development Agenda " was organized to sensitize Members on how they can support Development Goals. There is much work to be done and Parliamentarians have a huge part to play," Hon Corrie said.

He added: "Furthermore, strains to peace and security from war, conflict and terrorism are today a major concern in Africa, Europe and worldwide which if not adequately addressed could jeopardize the entire development agenda."

Hon. Corrie said AWEPA's mission is to strengthen African - European Parliamentary dialogue and to keep Africa high on the political

agenda in Europe. Under its MDGs programme, AWEPA's work has concentrated on two key areas: support to the institutional strengthening of Regional Parliaments and support to their active engagements towards achieving development objectives.

Speaking at the same event, Hon. Prof. Peter H Katjavivi, the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia said : "As we all concur, the attainment of MDGS now appears to have been a far-fetched dream; not because they were totally unachievable but because the pathways towards attaining them were not properly articulated at that time."

He emphasized: "All stakeholders need to get deeply positively involved in order to achieve these targets; after all they are for the common good of everybody."

On his part, Neil Boyer, Senior Advisor from the United Nations, RC/UNDP Namibia, said some countries had done well in attaining the MDGs in the areas of education, promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women and in combating of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. However, some countries were still facing challenges on poverty and on maternal health

among others. At the end of symposium, some Members raised concerns over several issues including youth empowerment, some National Parliaments that were still dominated by the Executive, climate change and the issue of Africa not represented on the United Nations' Security Council that has been in existence for the past 70 years.



Delegates partake in the National and AU Anthems

SADC PF set up to be a Regional Parliament

Staff Reporters

SWAKOPMUND, NAMIBIA- The SADC Parliamentary Forum was born in Namibia out of the Windhoek Initiative of 1996 which was formalized by the SADC Heads of State and Government on 8th September 1997, in Blantyre, Malawi.

Hon. Joseph Njobvujalema, Vice-President of SADC PF said this during his welcoming remarks at SADC PF Plenary Assembly Session that is underway in Swakopmund.

The SADC PF was established with the ultimate goal of transforming into a Regional Parliament. "Regrettably, 18 years down the line, this noble dream is yet to be realized," lamented Hon. Njobvujalema.

The Vice-President reminded delegates that the delay in establishing the SADC Regional Parliament was a missing link to the envisaged SADC deeper integration. This, he said, was because Parliaments form the link between the people and their governments.

"Parliaments are the indispensable institutions of representative democracies. Despite country specific

same everywhere, and that is to represent the people and ensure that public policy is informed by the citizens on whose lives it impacts. The SADC PF's role is to ensure and articulate the needs and aspirations of the SADC citizens and to ensure their involvement in all domains and levels of governance, particularly the Legislature. Indeed, Political, Judicial and Executive nerves of a country end in Parliament and this is where the Representation, Lawmaking, Financial and Oversight functions are exercised," he emphasized.

Hon. Njobvujalema recognized Southern Africa's notable progress in the areas of primary education, gender equality, the fight against HIV and Aids as well in the health sector.

Although SADC countries did not achieve uniform progress during the MDGs, countries which opted to enhance gender equality and realize the objectives of women empowerment through legislative interventions seemed to have achieved greater results in this area. "Unfortunately, developed countries are not fulfilling their development aid pledges made in Gleneagles and this has negatively affected the achievement of MDGs," he pointed out.

He reminded the delegates that development aid would not be there forever, and therefore, SADC should prioritize domestic resource mobilization for its development needs.

In line with SADC PF consultative mandate of being a parliamentary consultative forum on matters of regional importance, the SADC PF Vice-President noted with delight that the 38th Plenary Assembly Session was scheduled to deliberate and resolve on important matters which include, Draft Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriages and Protecting Children already in Marriages; Women Empowerment and Gender Equality as well as addressing the Energy shortage in the SADC Region, amongst others.

He expressed profound gratitude to the Governor of Erongo Region, Hon. Cleophas Mutjavikua, for gracing the occasion. He thanked the Government and the Parliament of Namibia for the continued support each time the SADC PF Plenary is held in Namibia. He extended gratitude to Hon. Prof. Peter H. Katjavivi for his keen interest and commitment in the work of the SADC Parliamentary Forum.



The Choir, entertaining delegates.



An array of delegates at the Assembly.

National Assembly hailed for co-hosting Plenary Assembly



Hon. Themba Msibi, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

The Speaker of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Swaziland, Hon. Themba Msibi on behalf of SADC PF expressed his profound gratitude to the Guest of Honour, Hon. Cleophas Mutjavikua, Governor of Erongo Region, who despite his busy schedule made time to grace the occasion.

“This gesture of hospitality and support by the Namibian Government is highly appreciated. We appreciate the fact that the Namibian Government through successive Heads of State including His Excellency, Dr. Hage Geingob is supportive of the SADC PF. In memory of the Founding Chairperson of the Forum, the late Dr. Mose Tjitendero, we urge the Government of Namibia to continue championing the course of advocating for the ultimate transformation of the Forum into a SADC Regional Parliament as was originally intended”, Hon. Msibi said.

He further said this is the third time for the Forum to hold its Plenary Assembly Session in the beautiful tourist town of Swakopmund. “We therefore feel at home. Namibia and in particular, Swakopmund is a perfect venue for the 38th Plenary Assembly Session. We are thankful for the support and facilitation we receive from the Government and Parliament of Namibia each time we hold our Plenary Assembly sessions in Namibia”, he stressed.

Hon. Msibi further pointed out that as a gesture of hospitality and support the Parliament of Namibia has provided vehicles for leaders of delegations, protocol and security services, dinner reception, an excursion, conference bags and gifts. “The role and hard work of Dr. Esau Chiviya and the entire SADC PF Secretariat cannot go unnoticed. We also appreciate the facilitative and supportive role played by the staff of other SADC Parliaments in ensuring the success of this Plenary Assembly Session”, he added.

He similarly thanked the Namibian Government for being the host of the Headquarters of the Forum since its establishment in 1997. He also thanked the Government and Parliament of Namibia for the renovations and expansion of the Forum Headquarters which are currently underway and the hosting of its Secretariat in the alternative splendid office space in the city centre.

“It is duly acknowledged that over and above the Parliament’s faithful compliance with its annual membership obligations to the Forum, we note with great appreciation that Hon. Prof. Peter Katjivivi, the Speaker of the National Assembly is ably following the footsteps of his predecessors”, Speaker stated.

He informed the delegates that had it not been for the financial and technical support of the Swedish and Norwegian Embassies in Lusaka, it would not have been possible to hold the joint Session of our Standing Committees outside the Plenary Assembly. The support afforded the Committees an opportunity to extensively consider the Draft Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Those in Marriage which will be considered by the Plenary Assembly. Hon. Msibi also acknowledged the presence of observers, representatives of different organisations, and various resource persons who will make presentations on different topics at the Plenary Assembly Sessions.

“Finally, allow me to once more profoundly thank the Parliament, the Government and the People of Namibia for facilitating the hosting of a successful 38th Plenary Assembly. On this high note, we wish Namibia and her people successful Regional Councils and Local Authority Elections come Friday, the 27th November 2015”, Hon. Msibi concluded.

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