

Wednesday, 8 July 2026]

No 118—2026] THIRD SESSION, SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

PARLIAMENT
OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**ANNOUNCEMENTS,
TABLINGS AND
COMMITTEE REPORTS**

WEDNESDAY, 8 JULY 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLINGS

National Assembly and National Council of Provinces

1. Speaker and Chairperson	1
----------------------------------	---

TABLINGS

National Assembly and National Council of Provinces

1. The Speaker and the Chairperson

DELEGATION REPORTS ADOPTED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (PGIR) ON 12 JUNE 2026:

- (a) Report of the 2nd P20 Women Parliamentarians Meeting Cape Town 29 – 30
September 2025.



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PROTOCOL DIVISION

PO Box 15 Cape Town 8000 Republic of South Africa

Tel: 27 (21) 403 2911

www.parliament.gov.za

REPORT OF THE 2nd P20 WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS MEETING

Cape Town, South Africa

29 – 30 September 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2nd P20 Women Parliamentarians Meeting convened 36 delegates, including 16 delegation leaders, to advance the critical agenda of gender equality in climate governance and sustainable development. This historic gathering resulted in the adoption of a Joint Declaration that establishes clear, actionable objectives for women's empowerment and their full, equal, and meaningful participation in sustainable development, directly aligned with the 2030 Agenda.

The Joint Declaration commits parliaments to transformative action across four strategic pillars:

- Gender-Responsive Budgeting Integration: Embedding gender-responsive budgeting frameworks into national budgets, ensuring fiscal allocations reflect and advance gender equality priorities.
- Strengthened Parliamentary Oversight: Enhancing oversight mechanisms to monitor implementation of gender commitments and hold governments accountable for progress.
- Evidence-Based Policy Development: Developing data-driven policies that address systemic barriers in women's health, education, and economic opportunities.
- Women-Led Development: Ensuring women's leadership and meaningful participation in all key governance agendas, particularly climate action and sustainable development.

Key Recommendations and Innovative Mechanisms

Madam Speaker proposed the establishment of 'Friendship Committees' among women's caucuses across countries. A groundbreaking mechanism for structured international collaboration that will enable:

- Systematic peer learning and knowledge exchange
- Sharing of best practices in gender-responsive legislation
- Coordinated action on gender, climate, and community issues
- Sustained momentum beyond annual gatherings

Institutional Memory and Mentorship

Madam Speaker noted that women's parliamentary expertise should not be lost with electoral cycles, she urged women-led caucuses and legislatures to create formal mechanisms that retain and repurpose the knowledge of former women parliamentarians, ensuring they continue contributing to national development and mentoring emerging leaders.

Agricultural and Food Systems Expertise

Hon. Mananiso proposed that Multi-Party Women Caucus commit to redesigning consultation mechanisms to systematically engage women experts in agriculture and food systems. This collaboration will identify and dismantle barriers to women's economic emancipation in sectors where women constitute the majority of workers yet remain excluded from decision-making.

Implementation Pathway

To translate commitment into action, the report recommends that:

- The Parliamentary Group on International Relations (PGIR) refer the Joint Declaration to the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and People with Disabilities for legislative action.
- The Multi-Party Women Caucus will serve as the coordination mechanism for implementation oversight with the other relevant committees including Select Committee on Social Services and the Portfolio Committee on Forestry, Fisheries and Environment.
- Reporting on progress will ensure accountability and sustained momentum.

The 2nd P20 Women Parliamentarians Meeting represents more than dialogue but a commitment of action. Through the Joint Declaration, the South African Parliament committed itself to systemic change that places women's leadership and gender equality at the center of climate resilience and sustainable development. The establishment of Friendship Committees and institutional memory mechanisms may signal a new era of sustained, structured collaboration that surpasses borders and electoral cycles. The path forward is clear: Women parliamentarians are not merely participating in shaping the future, they are shaping and leading it.

1. OPENING SESSION

Dr. A Lotriet, National Assembly Deputy Speaker, opened the meeting with a compelling call to action: gender, climate change, and resilience are not separate issues but deeply interwoven threads of one of humanity's most urgent challenges.

Statistics reveal a troubling paradox. Women and girls especially those in rural areas and living with disabilities bear the heaviest burden of climate-related disasters, accounting for 80% of those displaced by climate events. Yet they remain conspicuously absent from the decision-making tables. At COP28, only 15 of 133 delegation heads were women. Across the G20, despite its vast global influence, few member nations have meaningfully integrated gender perspectives into their climate strategies.

This gap is not merely a matter of fairness; it is a strategic failure. Climate solutions that exclude women's voices and leadership are incomplete solutions. Dr. Lotriet emphasised that parliaments hold unique power to bridge this divide. Through gender-responsive climate legislation, inclusive budgeting that supports women-led initiatives, and deliberate promotion of women's leadership in disaster response and clean economy sectors, parliaments can transform policy frameworks from gender-blind to gender-smart. Parliaments possess both the legislative authority and the community connections to drive climate action that is truly inclusive and equitable action that leaves no one behind.

Ambassador Anda Filip, the Director for External Relations and for Member Parliaments at the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU); Hon. L. Dunjwa, Chairperson of the Multi-Party Women's Caucus; Hon. S Mananiso, Chairperson of the Select Committee on Security and Justice; Hon. L. van der Merwe, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities made their respective statements during the opening session. The following emerged from the statements.

- Women are vital agents of change. Across every continent and every community, women are dismantling barriers, advancing climate justice, building peace, and shaping a more inclusive world.
- When women work together, remarkable change is not only possible, but also inevitable. Solidarity is not a state of mind; it is a state of action. It is the foundation upon which countries' build resilience, equity, and hope.
- The P20 must be a catalyst for change. It is a platform that not only amplifies voices but holds governments accountable when they fall short. Therefore, parliaments must demand safe nets for women during emergencies and armed conflicts and insist on the presence of women negotiators in climate talks. Because when women are at the table, economies thrive, communities stabilise, and solutions deepen.
- Women at the grassroots are already leading climate solutions. Their knowledge, courage, and innovation must be recognised and resourced.
- Democratic nations are leading by example, embedding women in every decision-making process not as a gesture, but as a necessity.

- Countries must redesign systems that have long excluded women. Financial inclusion is not just economic policy, it is a matter of dignity, autonomy, and power.
- Climate change, conflict, economic exclusion, gender-based violence are deeply interconnected. Parliamentary diplomacy offers a powerful solution: through laws, oversight, and collaboration, countries can streamline women's advancement across these domains. Legislative power must be used to align national priorities with global commitments, ensuring that women are not left behind in any sector.
- Sustainable peace cannot be achieved while women remain underrepresented in peace processes and parliaments. Their exclusion undermines the legitimacy and durability of peace. Women must be present not only as participants but as architects of peace, security, and governance. Inclusion is not optional; it is the cornerstone of lasting stability.

1.1. Keynote Address: Women's Leadership in Climate and Energy Justice

Hon. Sindisiwe Chikunga, Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth, Persons with Disability. Hon. Minister, amongst others, noted that climate change is a lived reality for many South Africans, particularly women. Recurrent floods and extreme weather events continue to devastate communities, with women especially those heading households, bearing a disproportionate share of the burden. These impacts are compounded by persistent structural inequalities that limit access to resources, decision-making, and recovery support.

Also, that climate vulnerability remains a pressing challenge, and gender plays a critical role in shaping both exposure and resilience. Despite global and national commitments, progress on Sustainable Development Goals 5 (Gender Equality), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), and 13 (Climate Action) remains slow.

South Africa's prioritisation of the Just Energy Transition (JET) reflects its commitment to addressing these intersecting challenges. The theme of this engagement underscores the country's intent to align climate action with inclusive development, ensuring that women and other vulnerable groups are not left behind in the transition to a sustainable and equitable future.

2. PARTICIPATION

The 2nd P20 Women Parliamentarians Meeting brought together 36 delegates including 16 delegation leaders. South African Parliament was represented by:

- Hon. A.T Didiza, MP, Speaker of the National Assembly.
- Hon. R Mtshweni-Tsipane, MP, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces.
- Hon. Dr. A Lotriet, MP, National Assembly Deputy Speaker.
- Hon. M. Dunjwa, MP, Chairperson of the Multi Party Women's Caucus.
- Hon. L van der Merwe, MP, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.
- Hon. H Boshoff, MP, Chairperson of the Select Committee on Economic Development and Trade
- Hon. D Fienies, MP, Chairperson of the Select Committee on Social Services.

- Hon. N Gantsho, MP, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Forestry, Fisheries and Environment.
- Hon. J Mananiso, MP, Chairperson of the Select Committee on Security and Justice.
- Hon. D Pule, MP, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture.
- Hon. S Ndlovu, MP, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Finance.
- Hon. M Dhlamini, MP, Committee Whip: Select Committee on Economic Development and Trade.

3. JOINT DECLARATION OF THE 2ND P20 WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS MEETING

The meeting concluded with the adoption of the Declaration. The Declaration establishes clear objectives to advance women's empowerment and their full, equal, and meaningful participation in sustainable development, aligned with the 2030 Agenda. It outlines objectives across seven strategic priority areas, drawn from the 42 provisions.

- First, creating an enabling environment for women's rights by aligning national legislation with international human rights standards, particularly CEDAW, eliminating discrimination against women, and achieving gender parity at all decision-making levels.
- Second, making governance and budgeting gender-responsive through integrating gender-responsive budgeting frameworks into national budgets, strengthening parliamentary oversight mechanisms, developing evidence-based policies for women's health, education, and economic opportunities, and ensuring women-led development in key governance agendas.
- Third, establishing care as a pillar of sustainable development by promoting comprehensive care policies that recognise, distribute, and value unpaid care and domestic work performed by women and girls.
- Fourth, ensuring women's leadership in crisis management by institutionalising women's participation in climate adaptation and disaster risk management, combating gender-based violence during disasters and armed conflict, fully implementing UN Security Council resolution 1325, and guaranteeing access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive healthcare services.
- Fifth, making energy transition financing gender-inclusive by ensuring women's participation in energy sector decision-making, eliminating bureaucratic barriers for women-owned energy businesses, and developing specialised financial instruments for women entrepreneurs.
- Sixth, empowering women economically through agricultural development by guaranteeing women's equal land ownership and inheritance rights, establishing gender-responsive financial services including collateral-free loans, expanding digital banking infrastructure in rural areas, and promoting Indigenous women's economic empowerment while valuing their traditional knowledge.
- Seventh, accelerating women's climate leadership by calling on the G20 to implement ambitious gender-responsive climate policies with clear timelines, dedicated budgets, and accountability mechanisms, promoting just transitions with decent employment

opportunities in clean energy sectors, and establishing transparent mechanisms for tracking climate finance to women-led agricultural initiatives.

These objectives represent a comprehensive commitment to legislative action, resource allocation, and accountability that will transform the lives of women and girls globally. It calls upon all G20 member parliaments to implement these objectives with urgency and determination.

4. AN OVERVIEW OF SESSIONS

4. 1. SESSION ON THE THEME: WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR GLOBAL SOLIDARITY, EQUALITY SUSTAINABILITY

Several delegates delivered statements on the theme:

India reaffirmed its commitment to leaving no one behind, emphasising women's full and equal participation under its G20 presidency. A dedicated working group on women's empowerment has been established, with strong focus on economic inclusion and integrating gender perspectives into environmental policies. India is equipping women with green technology and AI to drive economic empowerment, and since 2023, one-third of parliamentary seats have been reserved for women marking a significant step toward inclusive governance.

Hon. D Fienies delivered South Africa's statement and highlighted that climate is not gender-neutral, recognising it as a driver of displacement and a multiplier of gender-based violence. Women face heightened risks in shelters, including three times higher rates of sexual violence and inadequate privacy. The KZN floods underscored limited access to early warning systems and information. Economically, women are more likely to work in vulnerable sectors such as agriculture, fishing, and domestic work. Climate change exacerbates water scarcity, increasing the burden on women. Despite being underrepresented in climate decision-making, their participation in environmental governance leads to better outcomes. Parliamentarians must ensure that women from all backgrounds have a stronger voice in shaping climate solutions.

Turkey emphasised the role of parliamentary diplomacy in forging a just and sustainable future. Women's perspectives and leadership are essential to dismantling global inequalities. Through disaster risk reduction, transition planning, and sustainable development, Turkey aims to inspire legislation that drives meaningful social change. The country called for confronting the realities of social inequality, displacement, and poverty, while safeguarding human rights. Turkey encouraged the exchange of best practices and deeper cooperation among parliaments, recognising the critical voices of women parliamentarians in responding to global crises.

United Arab Emirates (UAE) underscored equality as a foundation for social equity and a precondition for women's empowerment. National strategies are being implemented to ensure women's integral participation in science and AI. The UAE leads the Arab region in promoting women's equality, with women serving as ministers, magistrates, and diplomats. The National

Council has adopted laws to guarantee equal pay and protect women's rights. The UAE reaffirmed its commitment to advancing women's empowerment across all sectors.

United Kingdom (UK) celebrated the appointment of its second female Deputy Speaker and emphasised the P20's role in shaping the global agenda for equality and sustainable development. With women comprising 35% of Parliament and having held the office of Prime Minister twice, the UK acknowledged progress while recognizing ongoing underrepresentation in powerful positions. Equality is a journey requiring resilience and commitment. Parliamentarians must ensure the voices of marginalized women are heard and hold governments accountable when they fall short. Gender must be embedded in global financing frameworks. The UK remains committed to advancing the rights of women, girls, LGBTQ+ individuals, and persons with disabilities.

Spain has enacted a progressive law mandating minimum representation of women in decision-making roles, reinforcing the country's commitment to gender equality. This legislative move recognizes that diversity in leadership leads to more successful and inclusive outcomes. Despite, these advancements, women in Spain continue to face systemic discrimination:

- 28 women have been killed by their partners or ex-partners, highlighting the urgent need to address gender-based violence.
- A gender pay gap persists, underscoring economic inequality that must be urgently tackled.
- Women's caregiving responsibilities remain unquantified and undervalued, placing a disproportionate burden on them.

The government emphasises that mainstreaming gender equality is a human rights imperative. Moreover, women are expected to be disproportionately affected by climate change, due to existing social and economic inequalities. Spain's approach positions women's participation in leadership not just as a right, but as a strategic asset for sustainable development and inclusive governance.

4.2. SESSION: GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN DISASTER RESILIENCE

The discussion was led by Adv. Mikateko Maluleke, Director-General: Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. Adv. Maluleke emphasised the following:

- Women, especially those with disabilities, bear a disproportionate brunt of disasters, as seen in the devastating floods across South Africa and the world.
- A recent departmental study confirms that people with disabilities face heightened risks during disasters, not only due to their physical vulnerabilities, but also because of inaccessible infrastructure, such as roads and emergency shelters.
- Yet, amid these challenges, they are resilient and have coping mechanisms. Women with disabilities are not passive victims they are resourceful survivors. Policies must reflect this dual reality: vulnerability and strength.
- Gender mainstreaming is the process of integrating the distinct needs of women, men, and people living with disabilities into all phases of disaster planning and response.

Social and cultural norms often compound inequalities, but through inclusive efforts, we can make disaster resilience more equitable and ensure no one is left behind.

- Disaggregated data is essential. Without it, countries cannot design targeted interventions to protect vulnerable groups. Countries must collect and analyse data that reflects the lived experiences of women, youth, and persons with disabilities especially during emergencies.
- South Africa attends international conferences to learn best practices on how best to adapt national efforts to align with international commitments, including those made at global forums such as COP.
- Despite women comprising a large proportion of those impacted by climate change, they represented only 26% of the COP26 delegation. This imbalance must be corrected, not just in representation, but in influence.
- The Department established frameworks for gender-responsive budgeting and evaluation, but they must be strengthened. Budgets must mainstream women's needs, and monitoring frameworks must include indicators for vulnerable groups. This requires working across departments, advocating for women and youth, and embedding gender equity into every policy and program.
- No country is immune to climate change. But every country has the power to build resilience through inclusive governance.
- Capacity building is essential. Countries must invest in women's leadership, especially at the grassroots level. Their knowledge and innovation are critical to building resilient communities. Inclusivity is not just a principle, it shows intention

4.3. SESSION: WOMEN AND FINANCE FOR A JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

The discussion was led by Dr Yazini April, Executive Director of Global South North Centre. Dr April emphasised the following:

- Gendered Realities Must Shape Policy: Social inclusion and agency have advanced, but policies must be grounded in the lived realities of women, especially those underrepresented in energy and climate decision-making.
- Energy Transition as a Social Transformation: The global shift to renewable energy is not just technical, it is a profound social and economic transformation. It must be inclusive, equitable, and just.
- Women Face Disproportionate Energy Poverty: As primary household energy managers, women, particularly in rural areas, face higher rates of energy poverty and limited access to clean energy solutions and finance.
- Underrepresentation in Leadership and Research: Women are often excluded from leadership roles in energy governance and from targeted research. Most studies on the Just Energy Transition (JET) lack a gender lens, treating women as a general outcome rather than central stakeholders.
- Need for Gender-Specific Financing Models: Women face significant barriers in accessing energy finance. Innovative, gender-responsive financing models are needed to unlock their potential as entrepreneurs and agents of change.
- South Africa's Role in JET: As the 7th largest coal producer globally, South Africa plays a pivotal role in transitioning from coal to renewables, including hydrogen. The country

was the first to sign the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP), signaling its commitment to inclusive climate action.

- South Africa is doing well in terms of research and development relating to the impact of coal and the well-being of miners.
- Parliament's Role in Driving Change: Legislators must ensure that women's voices are central in shaping energy policy. Parliamentary oversight and advocacy are critical to embedding gender equity in the transition.
- Infrastructure and Local Participation: Rural women face challenges due to inadequate infrastructure and limited participation in energy value chains. Support for small-scale enterprises and community-based solutions is essential.
- Call to Action: The session emphasised moving from conversation to concrete action ensuring that women are not just beneficiaries but leaders in the energy transition. This includes integrating gender into research, policy, budgeting, and implementation frameworks.

Inclusive Financial Architecture for a Just Energy Transition

Current financial architectures remain highly exclusionary, primarily designed to serve the formal economy, large companies and industrial players, while systematically sidelining informal workers and small-scale entrepreneurs. This structure places rigid rules and eligibility criteria that inadvertently exclude women, especially those operating in informal sectors who are vital to local economies and community resilience. To ensure a truly just and inclusive energy transition, financial systems must be reimaged to empower women at all levels. This includes:

- Redesigning financing models to accommodate informal enterprises and community-based initiatives.
- Removing structural barriers that prevent women from accessing climate and energy funds.
- Creating targeted instruments that support women-led innovation, particularly in underserved and rural areas.
- Empowering women, especially those in informal work, is not just a matter of equity; it is essential for unlocking the full potential of the energy transition and ensuring no one is left behind.

4.3. 1 CLOSING REMARKS

In conclusion, delegates explored the urgent intersection of gender, climate change, and inclusive governance. Women, particularly those in rural areas, informal sectors, and living with disabilities face disproportionate impacts from climate disasters, energy poverty, and exclusion from decision-making. Despite their central role in caregiving, community resilience, and household energy management, they remain underrepresented in climate negotiations and energy leadership. Countries like South Africa, India, Spain, and Brazil shared national experiences, highlighting both progress and persistent gaps in integrating gender into climate and energy strategies.

A recurring theme was the need to redesign financial systems and policy frameworks to empower women meaningfully. Current financial architecture favours large industries and formal employment, leaving out women-led enterprises and informal workers. Legislators were called to champion gender-responsive climate policies, inclusive budgeting, and innovative financing models that support women's leadership in the Just Energy Transition.

4.4 SESSION ON GENDER-SENSITIVE PROGRAMS FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH

The discussion was led by Prof. Narnia Bohler-Muller, Chair and Head of Delegation: Women20 South Africa. Prof. Bohler-Muller emphasised the following:

The central role of women in building climate resilience and ensuring global food security. The importance of achieving 50% female participation in energy value chains by 2030 and expanding women's access to carbon markets and land rights. Parliamentarians were urged to:

- Legislate for female participation
- Reform climate finance
- Secure land tenure for women

Discussions promoted gender-responsive solutions, including nature-based and technological innovations to support a sustainable blue economy. A strong call to action was made to empower rural women, recognising their contribution to national prosperity and community development. Delegates affirmed that real gender equality strengthens democracy and inclusive governance.

4.4.1 Madam Speaker T Didiza key message on the session

Madam Speaker's message focused on the continuity of women's leadership across sectors and the structural barriers that hinder gender equality in both public and private spheres.

- **Public Sector Progress vs. Corporate Gaps:** While there has been a noticeable increase in women's representation in the public sector, corporate leadership remains disproportionately male. Madam Speaker touched the nuances and systemic biases that prevent women from advancing in the private sector.
- **Post-Parliamentary Disappearance:** A critical concern was the loss of women leaders after they exit political office. Unlike their male counterparts, many women do not transition into boardrooms or advisory roles, leading to a waste of experience and institutional knowledge.
- **Legislative Action Needed:** Women-led caucuses and legislatures were urged to create mechanisms that retain and repurpose the expertise of former women parliamentarians, ensuring they continue to contribute to national development and mentor future leaders.

Building Parliamentary Diplomacy and Solidarity

Madam Speaker emphasised the importance of structured collaboration across countries to advance gender-responsive governance. Madam Speaker made a proposal to establish “Friendship Committees” among women caucuses, creating formal channels for:

- Peer learning
- Sharing best practices
- Coordinating efforts on gender, climate, and community issues.

Concerns About Regressive Trends

Madam Speaker highlighted a worrying trend about women’s representation often declining over time, especially during party list reviews or when replacing outgoing members. Delegates called for party accountability to ensure that women are replaced by women, preserving gender balance and momentum.

4.4.2. Closing Sentiment

The discussions were deeply personal and reflective, underscoring the fragility of progress and the need for constant vigilance and innovation. Delegates were reminded that gender equality is not a destination, but a continuous journey one that requires intentional action, solidarity, and institutional support.

4.5. SESSION ON FUNDING FOR WOMEN-OWNED AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES AND PROJECTS

The discussion was led by Ms. Thabi Nkosi, Agriculture Economist. Ms Nkosi emphasised the following:

- **Women’s Central Role in Agriculture and Food Systems:** Women produce a significant portion of the world’s food and are deeply involved in household and community food security.

Despite this, their contributions remain undervalued and underfunded, especially in rural and informal settings.

- **Ownership and Leadership in Cultural and Agricultural Projects:** Women’s ownership of cultural initiatives, conferences, and agricultural enterprises is vital for inclusive development.
- **Parliaments should support policies that promote women’s leadership and entrepreneurship in these sectors.**
- **Access to Resources and Funding:** Women face systemic barriers in accessing land, finance, and markets for agricultural development. Legislative reforms are needed to ensure equitable access to land tenure, agricultural finance, and public investment opportunities.
- **Institutional Support and Expert Engagement.**
- **Reframing Agricultural Policy Through a Gender Lens:** There is a need to rethink agricultural policy tools to better reflect women’s roles and challenges. Gender-

responsive budgeting and targeted support for women-led agricultural initiatives should be prioritised.

4.5.1 Agriculture and Enterprise Development

- **Women's Economic Role in Agriculture:** In many developing regions, women make up 40–60% of the agricultural labour force, yet their contributions remain undervalued and underfunded. Despite producing much of the food consumed globally, women receive only:
 - 10% of available credit.
 - 5% of agricultural extension services.

This disparity is not just unjust and represents a major economic distortion.

- **Closing the Gender Gap in Agriculture:** Research from the FAO, World Bank, and OECD shows that closing the gender gap in agriculture could:
 - Increase yields by up to 30%.
 - Lift millions out of poverty.
 - Add up to 1% to national GDP.

Parliaments must prioritise gender equity in agricultural policy and investment to unlock this potential.

- **Financing Women-Owned Enterprises:** Despite decades of advocacy, finance for women-owned agricultural businesses and cultural projects remains inadequate, often limited to small pilot programs. Legislators should push for:
 - Dedicated funding streams.
 - Scalable support mechanisms.
 - Gender-responsive public investment strategies.
- **Structural Reform and Accountability:** Parliaments must address the systemic barriers that prevent women from accessing land, credit, and markets This includes:
 - Reforming land tenure laws.
 - Expanding agricultural extension services to women.
 - Tracking and reporting gender-disaggregated data in agriculture.

The session highlighted the importance of engaging experts and practitioners, such as agricultural economists and women leaders in agribusiness, to inform policy. One of the recommendations relates to the South African Parliament's Multi-Party Women Caucus redesigning/ creating mechanism to consult and collaborate with women experts in agriculture and food systems to address barriers to women economic emancipation.

5. CLOSING REMARKS

Hon. N Gantsho delivered the closing remarks, articulating a bold vision: investing in women is not charity but the most direct pathway to both national and global prosperity. She emphasised that parliaments must take concrete action across multiple fronts: embedding gender-sensitive budgeting and strengthened oversight into climate resilience strategies; enacting legislation to address wage gaps and guarantee land rights and tenure security for women; and ensuring substantial funding with improved access to finance for women-led businesses, particularly in agribusiness sectors that sustain rural economies.

Hon. Gantsho also stressed the urgency of addressing the dual burden of unpaid care work that falls disproportionately on women, calling for legislative frameworks that recognize, reduce, and redistribute care responsibilities. She concluded with a clear message: these are not aspirational goals for distant futures but immediate imperatives requiring legislative courage, budgetary commitment, and political will. The tools are in our hands. The time is now.

- (b) Report of the Inaugural P20 Young Parliamentarians Meeting Cape Town 29 – 30 September 2025.



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PROTOCOL DIVISION

PO Box 15 Cape Town 8000 Republic of South Africa

Tel: 27 (21) 403 2911

www.parliament.gov.za

**REPORT OF THE INAUGURAL P20 YOUNG
PARLIAMENTARIANS
MEETING**

Cape Town, South Africa

29 – 30 September 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Inaugural P20 Young Parliamentarians Meeting, held as part of the 11th G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20) under the auspices of the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, brought together young parliamentarians from G20 member countries and partner nations on 29 and 30 September 2025 in Kleinmond, Western Cape, South Africa. The Inaugural P20 Young Parliamentarians Meeting was convened under the theme 'Young parliamentarians as drivers of global solidarity, equality and sustainability', to share insights, and explore mechanisms of using parliamentary diplomacy as a way to find lasting solutions to cross-cutting challenges facing young people globally, and to integrate the perspectives and needs of young parliamentarians into the discussions and decision-making processes of the 11th G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20).

This first of its kind gathering under South African P20 Presidency resulted in the adoption of a Joint Declaration which, amongst others; a) reaffirmed the commitment and resolve to contribute a youth dimension to the work of the G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20) and; b) to advance the global youth agenda through enhanced participation in global governance and the development agenda. The Joint Declaration further underscored the importance of the power of parliamentary diplomacy, inclusive governance and youth-led innovation to shape a fairer, more peaceful and sustainable world, and to build consensus across diverse political systems.

Of particular importance to note, in accordance with the principle of "nothing about us without us", the Joint Declaration was adopted by consensus and expressed young parliamentarians' collective commitment to the following shared principles and actions:

- **Advancing global solidarity-** by amongst others; emphasizing the need to harness parliamentary diplomacy for the promotion of inclusive multilateralism and meaningful youth participation in international decision-making platforms and further underscoring the need to strengthen inter-parliamentary cooperation among young legislators to bridge divides and promote shared solutions to global challenges.
- **Promoting equality and sustainable development-** by amongst others; calling for intensified efforts towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination and inequality, including on grounds of sex, race, disability, and economic or social status, as well as towards the elimination of the digital divide. And for continuous monitoring of the implementation of SDG targets relating to youth, including targets 3.7, 4.4, 4.5, 8.3, 8.6, 10.2, 16.7 and 17.16.

- **Promoting parliamentary action to address climate change and sustainability-** by amongst others; underscoring the need for parliamentarians' participation in addressing climate change and the importance of implementing domestic laws aligned with national adaptation plans, and adaptation communications as well as nationally determined contributions (NDCs), as appropriate. And commit to adding valuable youth perspectives through young parliamentarians' participation and involvement in legislative processes, from reviewing legislation and budgets to using oversight tools to monitor government implementation of climate policies.
- **Promoting youth-oriented institutional reforms and inclusive political and development participation-** by amongst others; calling upon senior parliamentarians, governments and international organizations to institutionalize youth participation and integrate youth perspectives in all policy processes through youth mainstreaming. And calling upon the G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20) to consider establishing a P20 Meeting of Young Parliamentarians as a permanent component of the P20 process, providing a platform for young MPs to inform global legislative priorities.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

- **Formalization of P20 Young Parliamentarians Meeting as part of G20 Parliamentary Speakers Summit and broader parliamentary dimension of G20:** During her opening remarks, Hon. Didiza was emphatic that noted the P20 Meeting of Young Parliamentarians marked a new chapter in global parliamentary cooperation. Following the discussions and taking a cue from the Speaker's counsel, delegates agreed that, the P20 Young Parliamentarians Meeting was, indeed, a viable parliamentary diplomacy instrument with a transformative potential to make global equality, solidarity and sustainability a historical reality.

IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW UP

To translate commitment into action, the report recommends that:

- The Parliamentary Group on International Relations (PGIR) refer the Joint Declaration to the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and People with Disabilities for legislative action.
- The Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and People with Disabilities will serve as the coordination mechanism for implementation oversight with the other relevant committees including Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation (which is expected to galvanise support for the formalisation of P20 Young

Parliamentarians Meeting in multilateral inter-parliamentary structures such as BRICS Parliamentary Forum) Select Committee on Social Services and the Portfolio Committee on Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (which is supposed to champion the involvement of young parliamentarians and integration of youth perspectives in climate change negotiations and law-making processes)

- Reporting on progress will ensure accountability and sustained momentum.

PARTICIPATION

The Inaugural P20 Young Parliamentarians Meeting brought together young parliamentarians from G20 member countries and partner nations, including 6 delegation leaders. In this meeting, the South African Parliament was represented by the following Members of Parliament (MPs):

- Hon. A Kumbaca (NA)
- Hon. M Kobe (NA)
- Hon. B Nodada (NA)
- Hon. F Hassan (NA)
- Hon. R Molokomme (NCOP)
- Hon. SM Mokoena (NCOP)
- Hon. OJ Mokae (NCOP)

Participation in this meeting was also broadened to include young parliamentarians from the country's provincial legislatures.

1. OPENING SESSION AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS

The morning session was chaired by the Hon. S Smaili from Algeria and the Hon. Kobe. The Speaker of the National Assembly (NA), Hon. AT Didiza delivered key opening remarks under the theme: Young Parliamentarians as Drivers of Global Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability. In her opening remarks, Hon. Didiza told delegates that the P20 Meeting of Young Parliamentarians marked a new chapter in global parliamentary cooperation. Reflecting on the theme, she acknowledged that whereas there are unprecedented challenges faced by young people globally, the dynamism of a changing world also presents immense opportunities for youth people. Reflections were also made on youth parliamentary representation globally and a key issue for consideration was the perennial challenge of youth underrepresentation in political decision-making.

However, Hon. Speaker hastened to point out that the Inaugural P20 Young Parliamentarians Meeting provided an opportune moment to reverse the trend by empowering young legislators to shape inclusive, forward-looking policies. In reflecting on the role played by the youth historically in the fight for liberation in the country, a call was made to ensure that the same spirit and leadership will guide efforts to build a more just and sustainable world. This include ensuring that much emphasis is placed on Parliamentary Action to Fight Climate Change, Youth-Oriented Institutions: and Creating an Enabling Environment for Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment. Moreover, emphasis also ought to be placed on addressing structural inequalities that limit access to capital and mentorship. This particularly entails reforming procurement systems to favour youth-led enterprises, expanding digital infrastructure, particularly in rural areas and promoting and training for green jobs that align with Sustainable Development Goals.

In concluding her opening remarks, Hon. Didiza reminded delegates that the meeting would conclude with the adoption of a Joint Outcome Document, capturing commitments and proposed actions. She further remarked that the Outcome Document serves as an invitation for young parliamentarians to return to their respective legislatures and help turn commitments into meaningful change. Hon. Didiza also indicated that Parliaments are not only spaces for debate, but they are engines of implementation. It is through parliamentary action that international agreements on climate, equality, and sustainable development become real opportunities for young people. Let us ensure that no one is left behind, and that the voices of young people are heard and reflected in our decisions.

1.1. Remarks by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Representative

The IPU was represented in the meeting by Mr D Carden, from the IPU Bureau of the Young Parliamentarians Forum. In his remarks, Mr. Carden expressed concern about persisted gross underrepresentation of young Parliamentarians globally. Of concern for him was the decline of young women Parliamentarians under age of 30 since 2023. He noted with dismay the fact that globally, 37% (over one third) of parliaments have no MPs under the age of 30. Mr Carden was emphatic that it was imperative that Parliament are reflective of the people they represent. He went on to state that was not merely just statistics but a democratic emergency. In addition, he also noted that young people have an invaluable role to play in solving global problems and as such there is a need for more inclusive Parliaments with broader representation that includes young people. Reflections were also provided on past resolutions adopted to enhance youth representation at the IPU since 2010. It was pointed out that a Forum for Young MPs was also created within the IPU to enhance and advance the cause youth participation.

1.2. Overview: P20 Young Parliamentarians Initiative

An overview of the P20 Young Parliamentarians Initiative was provided by Hon. Sapo. This included a brief background on Brazil's 2023 Presidency of G20 developments. In 2023, the Federative Republic of Brazil held the rotating presidency of G20, with a mandate that extended from 1 December 2023 to 30 November 2024. Accordingly, based on the governance principle of presidency rotation and for the first time since the Group's formation, on December 1, 2024, South Africa assumed G20 Presidency.

Further to this background, an overview the events held during South Africa's G20 Presidency in the run up to the main 11th P20 Speakers' Summit were also provided. In his remarks, T Hon. Sapo outlined the objectives of P20 Young Parliamentarians Meeting. The meeting was informed that an overarching goal was on harnessing the potential of parliamentary diplomacy to provide an avenue for young members of parliament to discharge their constitutional duties of representation, to shape and influence global policy agenda. A reflection on the themes for the P20 Young Parliamentarians Meeting was also made, which included preliminary observations on parliamentary action to fight climate change, youth oriented institutional reforms and creating an enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship and employment. Hon. Sapo concluded by reiterating that the P20 Young Parliamentarians' Meeting was a

viable parliamentary diplomacy instrument with a transformative potential to make global equality, solidarity and sustainability a historical reality.

1.3. Remarks by Y20 Chairperson

Mr R Matlala, Chairperson of the Y20 South Africa, expressed gratitude to the South African Parliament for including Y20 in the inaugural P20 Young Parliamentarians' Meeting, noting the importance of cooperation between parliamentary and youth engagement platforms. He explained that Y20, established in 2010 as the official youth engagement group of the G20, has produced numerous communiqués with policy recommendations, but these have often remained symbolic and have not been fully integrated into G20 leaders' declarations. He highlighted South Africa's Y20 Presidency priorities, which included mainstreaming youth across all G20 structures (beyond a stand-alone youth track), and establishing a permanent institutional mechanism to ensure continuity between presidencies. He acknowledged frustrations with the lack of implementation of past Y20 communiqués and noted that South Africa deliberately issued a "chair's summary" instead of a formal communiqué to signal the need for meaningful impact rather than symbolic statements.

Mr. Matlala identified shared priorities between Y20 and P20 youth parliamentarians, including youth employment and entrepreneurship, climate change, digital innovation and Artificial Intelligence (AI), education for the future of work, and reform of multilateralism. He stressed that youth must not be treated as an afterthought but must be fully mainstreamed in decision-making processes. He concluded by supporting the institutionalisation of the P20 Young Parliamentarians' Meeting, encouraging stronger collaboration between Y20 and young MPs. He also called for follow-through on recommendations to ensure this platform does not become another "talk show," and invited parliamentarians to engage further through upcoming forums, including the G20 Social Summit in South Africa.

2. SESSION ON THE THEME: YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS AS DRIVERS OF GLOBAL SOLIDARITY, EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

This session on the theme of the meeting was co-chaired by the Indian delegate and Hon. Kumbaca from South Africa. The delegates presented country statements during this session and statements on the theme were received from the following countries:

- **Turkey:** highlighted the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, condemning Israel's actions as genocide and deliberate environmental destruction. The delegation emphasised the severe hunger and thirst affecting mainly children and young people, and expressed appreciation for South Africa's principled support. They urged young parliamentarians to transform dialogue into action and use parliamentary diplomacy to keep the International Court of Justice (ICJ) case on the global agenda, defending Palestine and international law.
- **Russia:** focused on its structured national youth policy for 39 million young people, stressing integration into politics and international cooperation. Recommendations included formalising youth laws, creating youth parliaments, centralising program management through a dedicated agency, and promoting international exchange via large-scale events. South Africa framed its G20 presidency as a historic opportunity for Africa to lead global policymaking, advocating for financial equity, climate justice, and youth-driven action. The delegation called for young parliamentarians to move beyond rhetoric, implementing real-world solutions while embedding sustainability in growth strategies
- **Algeria:** reiterated the importance of prioritising youth within a socio-economic and political context. Involving youth in decision-making was considered as key and as such Algeria established various structures within its government and Parliament to ensure active and meaningful involvement of youth. Moreover, these sentiments were also extended to female representation. Reflections were provided on the economic empowerment opportunities afforded to Algerian young and emerging entrepreneurs. Africa as an export hub was also highlighted and the need to ensure to facilitate active participation in this regard as well as the need to enhance skills to develop Africa. Emphasis was also placed on ensuring that the meeting of young parliamentarians not only provided a platform for discussion but enabled action.
- **South Africa:** on behalf of South Africa, Hon. Mokae highlighted the country's G20 presidency as having hold considerable promise for the country and the entire African continent, offering a range of potential benefits. The South African delegate focused on the crisis of youth unemployment, describing it as one of the most pressing challenges facing the country and the world. The delegate stressed that parliaments must use their oversight and legislative roles to strengthen education systems, expand entrepreneurship opportunities, and build frameworks for digital innovation. Emphasis was placed on the need for inclusive multilateralism, ensuring that voices from the Global South are fully represented in global governance. Calls were also echoed to

institutionalise youth participation in parliamentary structures so that young people can influence outcomes, not just discussions.

- **European Union (EU):** other interventions included statements from the EU, which, although lacking an elected member at the meeting, expressed strong support for enhancing youth participation in global forums, and from the Russian delegation, which attended in an observer capacity and reaffirmed the importance of youth engagement in multilateral processes. In addition, a call was made to, Push for concrete outcomes on youth issues at the P20; Engage your national parliaments to prioritise youth in lawmaking and oversight; Collaborate across borders to amplify innovation and entrepreneurship among African youth; And leverage Agenda 2063, AfCFTA, and the SDGs as interconnected frameworks to unlock the potential of our young people. Moreover, it was reiterated that “our objectives, outcomes and outputs for the G20 must be unapologetically youth-centred” and that the work done does not stay in conference halls and communiqués, but reaches every county, every district, every province, every village, and every young person across our beautiful continent.
- **Italy:** Italy recognises that climate change represents one of the most pressing challenges of our time, particularly for younger generations, whose future depends on the actions we take today. Sustainability is not only an environmental concern but a crucial investment in the well-being, prosperity, and security of youth worldwide. We must intensify our efforts to implement climate adaptation and mitigation strategies to ensure a liveable planet for the generations to come. Italy also acknowledges the broader challenges facing young people, including the impacts of war and political instability. Italy stands in solidarity with the youth of Ukraine and Palestine, who continue to bear the devastating consequences of conflict. Furthermore, stresses the importance of upholding democratic principles in all nations, including Moldova, where the protection of free and fair elections remains vital. Italy indicated that as they navigate these complex global issues, it is essential that they continue to include young people in the decision-making processes that shape their future, promoting peace, protecting rights, and ensuring sustainability for all.

3. SESSION 1: PARLIAMENTARY ACTION TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE

This session on the first day of the meeting was chaired by Hon. Nodada a Member of the South African National Assembly. Before the presentation by the resource person, Hon. Frolick was afforded an opportunity to reflect on the current state of climate change and international response. He was also asked to provide his insights on the ongoing debates and current public discourse on issues of climate change based on his involvement and participation in various United Nations Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC) or Conferences of the Parties of the UNFCCC, more commonly known as COP, locating this on climate change discourse within the legislative context.

In his remarks, Hon. Frolick emphasised the urgency of action, stating that there is no time to lose. He highlighted two key challenges: the escalating climate emergency and the need to make political systems inclusive for the next generation. Hon. Frolick went on to state that closer scrutiny of commitments made by Government are required and Parliaments, through their committees have a fundamental role to play in this regard. Furthermore, he indicated that besides ensuring effective laws are developed, these should also be adequately budgeted for. Hence, budgets must be scrutinised as well, and the Executive must be held to account. He concluded by reiterating the need for active, meaningful youth participation on these matters.

The Chair stressed that the session is a working meeting focused on solutions, not just discussion. He called on participants to ensure international climate commitments are reflected in national budgets and laws and to give young people a meaningful role in decision-making. The Chair noted that the credibility of governments and public trust depend on concrete outcomes from such forums. He urged participants to share effective strategies, challenge outdated approaches, build strong alliances, and leave the session with clear plans for oversight and advocacy in their parliaments. In addition, he reiterated the important advocacy role played by Parliamentarians on climate change. Moreover, he went on to state that it was important to ensure that Government's must reflect the views of society and most impoverished and marginalised are adversely affected by climate change.

Hon. Frolick's session was followed by the presentation from Resource Person: Ms V Rikhotso, Chair of the W20 Climate Justice, Environment and Food Security Task Team. The presentation began by introducing the W20 (Women20), an official G20 engagement group focused on gender equality and women's economic empowerment. The meeting was informed that W20 task teams address different issues such financial inclusion, gender-based violence,

and notably, Climate Justice, the Environment, and Food Security. The group aims to mainstream gender into the G20 agenda, with an upcoming summit in Johannesburg in October 2025. A key legacy project focuses on leveraging the power of rural women to drive progress in economic empowerment, climate resilience, and food security.

In her presentation, Ms. Rikhotso highlighted a general acknowledgement that the current state of climate change is dire. She indicated that 2024 was confirmed as the warmest year on record, with the global average temperature exceeding the critical 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Greenhouse gas concentrations and CO₂ emissions reached new record highs, depleting the remaining carbon budget to stay under 1.5°C in just a few years. The physical impacts are severe and accelerating, including record ocean heat, rising sea levels, melting ice, and more frequent and intense extreme weather events. These changes directly threaten food security, human health, and economic stability, and are contributing to displacement and conflict.

According to Ms. Rikhotso, the primary driver of climate change is greenhouse gas emissions, with the energy sector responsible for over 75% of global emissions. Historically, the United States and the European Union bear the largest responsibility for cumulative emissions, while China, the USA, and India are now the top annual emitters. The international response has been guided by agreements like the UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol, and Paris Agreement, with mechanisms like carbon markets helping to mobilise action. Progress is being made, with countries like China becoming global leaders in renewable energy expansion, demonstrating that a transition to clean energy is feasible and affordable.

In her conclusion, Ms. Rikhotso underscored the critical potential of women, particularly in rural areas, as agents of adaptation and resilience. She stated that empowering women in sectors like sustainable agriculture, aquaculture, and the just energy transition is essential for building resilient food systems and effectively tackling the climate crisis.

4. SESSION 2: YOUTH-ORIENTED INSTITUTIONS

This session was co-chaired by Hon. A Trembitskii from Russia and Hon. B Sapo from the South African National Assembly. This session kickstarted with a presentation by the resource person, Dr. Frank Lekaba, Senior Lecture from the Wits School of Governance. In his presentation, Dr Lekaba noted that the G20 under South Africa's presidency highlights the urgent need to rethink global governance. He pointed out that traditional divides between the Global North and South are fading as challenges like pandemics, migration, and security affect all nations. According to Dr. Lekaba, multilateralism must take centre stage, underpinned by

a rules-based order and democratic reforms, including to the UN Security Council. The UN's 2024 Pact for the Future recognised the Youth Agenda, offering young parliamentarians a platform to drive the implementation of SDGs, AU Agenda 2063, and Youth2030. To achieve this, institutions must strengthen youth representation, including through the UN Youth Office, youth quotas in parliaments, and transnational democratic innovations that ensure inclusive participation across political, racial, and gender divides.

It was further pointed out that universities, think tanks, and civil society play a pivotal role in shaping youth-oriented policies by convening dialogues, building capacity, and scaling youth-focused programs. Access to education, healthcare, finance, and employment must be improved, with internships linked directly to meaningful job opportunities. Although UN support for youth initiatives has grown, systemic barriers remain, particularly in workforce representation. Dr Lekaba concluded his presentation by pointing out that young parliamentarians have a unique opportunity to advocate for youth in global structures, advance equitable policies, and champion the values of solidarity, partnership, and equality, ensuring that youth are not only heard but empowered to shape a sustainable, inclusive future.

This was the last presentation during the first day and it was followed by closing remarks by the Hon. Horn who noted the valuable contributions made by all delegates from various countries. He expressed deep gratitude to members, colleagues, and guests for the insightful discussions during the session. He remarked that debates on climate action and institutional renewal emphasised both the seriousness of the challenges and the strength of collective commitment. He noted that participants must leave with a clearer understanding of their responsibilities to represent constituents and to protect the future of the coming generations. He encouraged delegates to carry forward the spirit of collaboration and accountability, stressing that the work begins now. He called on everyone to return to their parliaments with renewed determination to turn the session's ideas into concrete actions, ensuring governance reflects both current urgency and future promise. The session formally ended the first day of the inaugural P20 Young Parliamentarians Meeting.

5. SESSION 3: CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT

The second day the Meeting of Young Parliamentarians commenced with a recap of the first day. This was followed by two key discussion sessions. The first session, co-chaired by Hon. F Onori from Italy and Hon. Mokae from South Africa, focussed on "Creating an enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship" and the second session, which was the last session,

was on the outcome document. The day concluded with the adoption of the outcome document.

The segment of the session on “Creating an Enabling Environment for Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment” included a presentation by Mr Saki Zamxaka, Acting Group CEO of the Gauteng Growth and Development Agency. His presentation highlighted the following:

- Historical context: South Africa's 1994 democracy is based on unity, prosperity, democracy principles, and reflected on the 1996 Constitution with Bill of Rights prohibiting age-based discrimination.
- Early institutional framework: This included noting the Umsobomvu Youth Fund (later incorporated into National Youth Development Agency), and the National Youth Commission.
- Youth Policies: National-level policies that have demonstrated tangible results for youth entrepreneurship and employment include South Africa's National Youth Policy (NYP) 2020–2030, which sets out a comprehensive approach encompassing enterprise funding, training, internships, and digital innovation.
- Current programs: the presentation highlighted the Presidential Youth Initiative Program, YES Programme (Youth Employment Scheme)-private sector incentives for youth hiring, and the National Youth Development Agency providing grants up to R1 million (50% grants, 50% loans). Key strategic programs, such as the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI), address job creation through wage incentives, skills matching, and mentorship projects. The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) delivers grant programs, micro- and small-business support, as well as incubation for youth-owned start-ups, helping thousands to formalise ventures and access finance. He also mentioned provincial funding agencies with hybrid financing models, this included small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) financing for incubators and coaching programs.

The meeting was informed that internationally, the OECD's action plans highlight integrating entrepreneurship education into school curricula, fast-tracking youth in procurement systems, and opening market access for youth SMEs, all of which boost youth employment prospects and business formation rates.

Mr. Zamxaka observed that recent years have seen an intensification of efforts, such as South Africa allocating R100 billion through the Transformation Fund to catalyse black-owned and youth businesses, while the Spaza Shop Support Fund and Innovation Fund channel millions into micro-enterprises in rural and peri-urban areas. Programs like SAYouth.mobi and the

expanded Basic Education Employment Initiative provide digital infrastructure and first jobs for hundreds of thousands of youth. These initiatives are coordinated and measured through the Integrated Youth Development Strategy (IYDS), aiming for greater economic inclusion and systemic support for youth entrepreneurship.

In terms of global economic challenges and youth impact, it was noted that mega technology companies are increasingly driving market concentration. with projections such as OpenAI's potential \$450 billion income surpassing the entire economy of South Africa at \$400 billion, raising concerns about the balance of power between corporations and states. Mr Zamxaka went on to state that big companies like Volkswagen have delayed automation in the Eastern Cape to safeguard 4000 jobs, highlighting the tension between efficiency and employment. Whereas the first industrial revolution was shaped by scarcity, today's developing world faces an abundance of labour that struggles to find productive opportunities.

Policymakers must therefore grapple with the dual challenge of promoting job creation while accommodating the demands of efficiency, all within a global system where regulatory arbitrage undermines national efforts. Mr Zamxaka added that this is compounded by billionaire tax avoidance strategies, with many paying less than 10 per cent tax through loan structures against shares, eroding public revenues. In response, proposals such as taxing robots have emerged as potential mechanisms to replace lost income tax from jobs displaced by automation, underscoring the urgent need for coordinated international policy solutions.

Delegates were also afforded the opportunity to share their experiences and provided input based on the matters raised by Mr Zamxaka. The international country experiences were noted as follows:

- **Russia:** In the aftermath of COVID-19, youth entrepreneurship has emerged as a strategic priority in Russia, with 6% of the country's three million businesses now led by young people, the highest proportion since 2019. There has also been a remarkable 230% increase in self-employed entrepreneurs over the same period, reflecting a growing appetite for independent economic activity. To support this trend, the Russian government has introduced a wide range of mechanisms, including grants from several ministries and agencies, targeted programmes through the Foundation for Innovation, and special agricultural grants for rural youth. A national project aims to engage 75% of young people by 2030, with 35000 already participating in the programme launched in 2024. Russia's strategy follows a two-track approach, focusing on raising awareness and engagement while also providing structured training and mentorship.

- **Turkey:** Turkey has prioritised youth employment as part of its G20 commitment announced in Antalya in 2015, aiming to reduce the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) by 15% by 2025. Youth unemployment has fallen to 15%, its lowest level in two decades as of May. Several initiatives underpin this progress, including young entrepreneur grants in key areas such as machinery, software and clean energy, with over 1.2 billion Turkish liras invested in more than 3000 startups. The development of technology zones and targeted training, such as the 250000 young people trained in solar panel installation, demonstrate a strong focus on equipping youth with digital and green skills to align with emerging economic opportunities.
- **Mozambique:** The government of Mozambique has set a target of achieving a 71.4% employment rate by 2029, with a particular emphasis on reducing youth unemployment. Efforts are being supported through local development and youth employment funds, with 60% of projects allocated to women to strengthen inclusivity. Integrated policies are designed to link schools directly to employment pathways, while initiatives promoting the green economy are opening new opportunities for young people. Mozambique is also building international partnerships to exchange best practices and strengthen its policy frameworks for youth employment.
- **Angola:** With 70% of its population under the age of 30, Angola has placed youth empowerment at the centre of its development strategy. The Angolan delegate outlined a four-pillar approach consisting of protective legislation for young people, financial support and fiscal oversight, improved education, and structured mentorship. Community-focused initiatives and agricultural integration programmes are also central to engaging youth in sustainable economic activity. The approach emphasises the importance of sufficient funding and accountability mechanisms to ensure that interventions deliver tangible results for the country's young population.
- **South Africa:** South Africa continues to face significant structural challenges in supporting youth entrepreneurship and employment. Coordination problems between different levels of government have created fragmentation, while the requirements set by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) are often too complex for young entrepreneurs to navigate. There is also a persistent mismatch between skills development and employment opportunities, underlining the need for legislation to address market access barriers and more effective skills capacitation within government departments. Such reforms are critical if South Africa is to respond effectively to the needs of its young workforce.

The session concluded with reflections of the chairperson and co-chairperson as follows. It was noted that one of the most pressing challenges lies in funding and risk management for youth entrepreneurs. Traditional backward-looking risk assessment models fail to capture the realities of new ventures, prompting interest in alternative credit scoring methods such as joint account access. State-owned lenders also face a heavy compliance burden, making it difficult to adapt to the needs of younger borrowers. Policymakers must take responsibility for setting appropriate levels of risk tolerance and balancing portfolio-wide assessments with individual deal scrutiny. The Industrial Development Corporation's 50-50 partnership model, with the state taking the first loss position, represents one innovative approach to de-risking investments in youth businesses.

6. SESSION 4: CONSIDERATION OF THE P20 YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS' JOINT OUTCOME DOCUMENT

The final session of the day was the consideration of the P20 Young Parliamentarians Outcome Document. This session also covered three components, namely, a presentation on the drafting process and key themes captured in the statement, the official adoption of the Joint Statement and the concluding remarks.

The part on the drafting process and key themes outlined in the statement was presented by Hon. Kumbaca. Following this, the chairperson of the session the Hon. Nodada took the delegates through the Joint Statement and then called on delegates on the floor for final inputs acknowledging that the document on principle had been agreed to. The meeting concluded with the adoption of the Declaration.

the Joint Declaration was adopted by consensus and expressed young parliamentarians' collective commitment to the following shared principles and actions:

- **Advancing global solidarity-** by amongst others; emphasizing the need to harness parliamentary diplomacy for the promotion of inclusive multilateralism and meaningful youth participation in international decision-making platforms and further underscoring the need to strengthen inter-parliamentary cooperation among young legislators to bridge divides and promote shared solutions to global challenges.
- **Promoting equality and sustainable development-** by amongst others; calling for intensified efforts towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination and inequality, including on grounds of sex, race, disability, and economic or social status, as well as

towards the elimination of the digital divide. And for continuous monitoring of the implementation of SDG targets relating to youth, including targets 3.7, 4.4, 4.5, 8.3, 8.6, 10.2, 16.7 and 17.16.

- **Promoting parliamentary action to address climate change and sustainability-** by amongst others; underscoring the need for parliamentarians' participation in addressing climate change and the importance of implementing domestic laws aligned with national adaptation plans, and adaptation communications as well as nationally determined contributions (NDCs), as appropriate. And commit to adding valuable youth perspectives through young parliamentarians' participation and involvement in legislative processes, from reviewing legislation and budgets to using oversight tools to monitor government implementation of climate policies.
- **Promoting youth-oriented institutional reforms and inclusive political and development participation-** by amongst others; calling upon senior parliamentarians, governments and international organizations to institutionalize youth participation and integrate youth perspectives in all policy processes through youth mainstreaming. And calling upon the G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20) to consider establishing a P20 Meeting of Young Parliamentarians as a permanent component of the P20 process, providing a platform for young MPs to inform global legislative priorities.

7. CLOSING REMARKS

The concluding remarks and vote of thanks was rendered by Hon. F. Hassan. Due recognition was given to the delegates whose countries were present and participated in the meeting- which included Angola, Mozambique, Algeria, Russia, Türkiye, Italy, EU, IPU, CPA, SADC and the African Union. In addition to this, appreciation was also extended to various provincial delegations from across South Africa. Hon. Hassan remarked that broad representation reflected the global, diverse, and intergenerational character of the gathering. But more than that, it showed that when young people come together, borders matter less, and solidarity matters more.

Hon. Hassan further pointed out that, for Africa, and for South Africa as the host, this meeting is not just a diplomatic milestone. It is proof that Africa is no longer content to be a spectator in global decision-making. The African Union now sits permanently at the G20 table. South Africa carries the responsibility of the presidency not for itself alone, but for a continent of 1.4 billion people — the youngest, most vibrant, and most dynamic population in the world.

She pointed out that in Africa, 60% of the people are under 25. By 2050, Africa will have the largest working-age population in the world, and this is not a weakness. It is a future of

possibilities and power. According to Hon. Hassan, 'Africa is the hope of a world that is ageing, divided, and in desperate need of renewal. And yet — this potential can only be realised if we, the youth, are empowered with education, with economic opportunity, with healthcare, with digital access, and with a seat at the table of power'. That is why South Africa's presidency has placed youth at the very heart of the P20 agenda. For Hon. Hassan, young people 'have said clearly: the G20 must be unapologetically youth centred'.

Hon. Hassan further acknowledged the numerous global challenges such as the genocide in Gaza, conflict and instability from Sudan to the eastern DRC, from Cabo Delgado to the Sahel. She went on to state that these conflicts rob young people of their futures and undermine collective progress. That is the reason why Africa declared its vision of Silencing the Guns. Moreover, climate emergency posed as another global threat - destroying livelihoods, deepening inequality, and displacing millions. And while Africa contributes barely 5% of global emissions, it pays the highest price in droughts, floods, and hunger. In addition, Hon. Hassan noted that young people today appeared to be living through what could be the collapse of multilateralism — or its rebirth. And 'the difference will depend on whether we act boldly, together'.

In addition to that, Hon. Hassan further indicated that the meeting of young parliamentarians has been a reminder that hope is not naïve. Hope is a discipline. It is built in concrete commitments and shared struggles. She informed the meeting that, as a collective, the young parliamentarians have:

- Reaffirmed their dedication to climate action, demanding parliaments pass laws that leave no one behind while ensuring climate justice, scrutinise budgets for climate finance, and push for a just energy transition that creates green jobs for youth and those in carbon intensive industries.
- Called for youth-oriented institutional reforms — from quotas that guarantee youth representation, to youth caucuses, to mentoring and training that make parliaments more open to the young.
- Demanded action on entrepreneurship and employment — unlocking finance, innovation hubs, and cross-border opportunities through the African Continental Free Trade Area and other agreements.
- And most importantly, they have committed to make this P20 Young Parliamentarians Meeting a permanent feature of the G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit, so that this gathering is not the last, but the first of many.

Delegates were reminded that parliamentary diplomacy means that the work of politics is not left only to executives and diplomats — but that the people, through their elected representatives (us), have a voice in shaping the future of the world. And when young parliamentarians take up that role, diplomacy itself is transformed. It becomes bolder, more creative, more accountable to future generations. Hence the meeting of young parliamentarians was not merely symbolic but substantive and proof that youth are not just the future leaders but leaders of the here and now. In concluding, the Hon. Hassan also noted that as South Africa prepares to hand over the P20 and ultimately the G20 presidency to the USA, it is done with a challenge and a hope. The challenge being that work done by the South African Presidency should be built on and that the voices of youth should not fall silent after Cape Town, South Africa but instead in must be carried forward. This would entail making the Meeting of Young Parliamentarians a permanent fixture of the P20 — in Washington, for future hosts, and for generations to come. The hope is that the USA, as the incoming host, will also ensure that young people are not relegated to the sidelines, but are at the centre of the P20 process.

In her final remarks, Hon. Hassan noted that the world is changing — but change without justice is chaos and that the task of young Parliamentarians was to ensure that the change of this century is towards justice, equality, and sustainability. She implored young people across the globe to be bold enough to imagine a different world and be disciplined enough to build it. She pleaded with fellow delegates to work hard and “Let this inaugural meeting of young parliamentarians not to be remembered as a conference or talk shop, but as the moment our generation took its rightful place in shaping the destiny of the world”.

- (c) Report of the South African Parliamentary delegation to the 30th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the 20th Session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the 7th Session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of Parties to the Paris Agreement Brazil 15 – 21 November 2025.



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**REPORT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION TO
THE 30TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE
(UNFCCC), THE 20TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE KYOTO
PROTOCOL AND THE 7TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
PARTIES SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE PARIS
AGREEMENT**

Belém, Brazil

15 to 21 November 2025

Parliament

**FOLLOWING UP ON OUR COMMITMENTS TO THE PEOPLE.
MAKING YOUR FUTURE WORK BETTER.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South African Parliamentary Delegation attended COP30 in Belém, Brazil, from 15 to 21 November 2025, where they participated in United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) plenaries, high-level events, and several parliamentary and thematic engagements. The delegation actively contributed to discussions on adaptation, loss and damage, the just transition, and climate finance, emphasising the need for balanced approaches that strengthen both mitigation and adaptation without indebting vulnerable nations. The delegation also underscored the importance of nature-based solutions, oversight of South Africa's Nationally Determined Contributions, and the prioritisation of climate justice for frontline and neglected communities.

Lessons drawn from various pavilions highlighted the value of inclusive climate action, green industrialisation, bankable climate-project pipelines, public-private partnerships for implementing NDCs, and the integration of indigenous knowledge in climate resilience. COP30 produced a blend of progress and unresolved issues. Key outcomes included a voluntary framework for transitioning away from fossil fuels, the launch of the Global Mutirão Implementation Accelerator, and an enhanced transparency framework to support developing countries' reporting obligations. Delegates noted renewed commitments to scale climate finance to at least \$300 billion annually by 2035 as part of the broader \$1.3 trillion goal, alongside improvements in access to multilateral finance, debt relief mechanisms, and the establishment of the Tropical Forest Facility. The Loss and Damage Fund became fully operational, issuing its first call for proposals and attracting \$6.7 billion in pledges. Additional progress was made on just transition support through the new Belém Action Mechanism and on gender- and health-responsive climate action through the Belém Gender and Health Action Plans. Nonetheless, COP30 faced a backlog of unresolved matters from previous conferences, and concerns remained about insufficient global ambition, stalled Article 6 carbon market negotiations, inadequate finance flows, and indications that several countries were retreating from decarbonisation commitments, all of which increased the likelihood of surpassing the 1.5°C threshold.

The report concludes that robust implementation, strengthened accountability, and enhanced international cooperation are essential for meaningful progress. It recommends that Parliament intensify oversight of climate-related planning and budgeting, strengthen reporting systems for NDCs and climate finance flows, ensure inclusive and equitable just transition processes, protect environmental levies through ring-fenced legislation, accelerate energy and industrial decarbonisation, enhance institutional coordination, and improve the timeliness of preparations for future COP participation.

1 INTRODUCTION

This report highlights the participation of the South African parliamentary delegation in climate change events. The events are the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30), the 20th meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP20), and the 7th meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA7) meetings held in Belem, Brazil, from 15 to 21 November 2025. The report highlights the composition of the South African delegations, key discussions, outcomes and parliamentary recommendations.

The COP is the main decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), where 198 nations and the European Union, all signatories to the Framework Convention, meet to make crucial decisions on tackling the climate crisis. The COP gathering also marked the 63rd meetings of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 63) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 63). These two permanent subsidiary bodies are part of the Convention. The SBI supports the implementation of the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement by reviewing progress, providing financial and technical advice, and facilitating capacity-building. The SBSTA provides scientific guidance on climate issues, technology transfer, and emission inventories.

Although COP is regarded as an annual event, it functions as an ongoing, year-round process that advances global climate efforts. It sets ambitious targets, promotes international cooperation, and monitors countries' progress in fighting climate change. For COP30, Brazil articulated ambitious objectives under the slogan “global mutirão,” which means “collective effort.” These objectives included strengthening multilateralism, tripling adaptation finance by 2035, boosting collective actions to reduce emissions, and developing a “roadmap” for moving away from fossil fuels. Governments, scientists, activists, businesses, and civil society come together at COP to share ideas, negotiate agreements, and plan for a more sustainable future. COP30 was called a COP of implementation, as parties aimed to shift from merely making Paris Agreement commitments to actively implementing them, consistent with the ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) due before the conference.

The Parliament of South Africa has consistently played an active role in combating climate change. For over a decade, parliamentary delegations have attended COP meetings and associated parliamentary events. Participating in these events is Parliament's way of ensuring legislators' voices are heard in the development of climate policies. South Africa's participation in COP demonstrates its determination to contribute meaningfully to global efforts to combat climate change, strengthening multilateralism and ensuring a just and sustainable transition for its people and the international community.

2 THE SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

The delegation was comprised of Members of Parliament from the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces.

- 1) Mr MG Modise, MP – Delegation leader and Chairperson of the Select Committee on Agriculture, Land Reform and Mineral Resources.
- 2) Ms N Mokoena, MP
- 3) Mr H Van den Berg, MP
- 4) Mr MN Paulsen, MP
- 5) Mr B Farmer, MP
- 6) Ms MG Dhlamini, MP
- 7) Mr AD de Blocq van Scheltinga, MP
- 8) Mr SP Mkhize, MP

Mr N Ginindza, the Content Advisor, supported the COP30 delegation.

3 COP30 EVENTS

3.1 Parliamentary dialogue on adaptation and loss and damage

During COP30, the Global Legislators Organisation for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE) International, a cross-party network of parliamentarians committed to enhancing governance for sustainable development, co-hosted some meetings that were specific for parliamentarians. The meetings encouraged networking, peer learning, caucusing, and sharing best practices. The delegation participated in the Parliamentary Dialogue on Loss and Damage and Adaptation Finance session, organised by DanChurchAid, GLOBE, the Climate Vulnerable Forum, and the V20 Finance Ministers. Hon. Frolick, as a panellist, highlighted the need for a balanced approach to financing climate impact adaptation and emphasised that adaptation should not come at the expense of mitigation. He called on the legislative arm of government to rise to the challenge, not only as lawmakers but as guardians of accountability, equity, and justice. He advocated for nature-based solutions to combat climate change, oversight focused on implementing countries' NDCs, climate finance that avoids further indebting vulnerable nations, and targeted capacity building and infrastructure investments. He urged parliamentarians to act as climate champions, framing adaptation and loss and damage not only as technical challenges but also as questions of justice, equity, and survival. Honourables de Blocq, Mkhize, and Dr Managa contributed from the floor, emphasising that their expectations include prioritising vulnerable and neglected communities in climate action to ensure climate justice prevails. They also highlighted Parliament's oversight priorities, including a just transition that leaves no one behind, decarbonising at a pace and scale that are affordable for the economy and society, the phased implementation of the Climate Change Act No 22 of 2024, and the development of regulations that are consultative and inclusive. They warned about the risks of miscalculating

decarbonisation in the coal value chain, which could worsen poverty, unemployment, and inequalities and threaten local economic development.

The main themes of GLOBE-related events included legislating for adaptation and resilience, a just transition, greenhouse gas emission mitigation, increasing parliamentary influence on climate decisions, overseeing the inclusion of vulnerable frontline communities, domestic and regional climate justice, advances in technology and innovation, climate finance, and showcasing a Parliamentarian's Guide to Climate Change and Climate Solutions. These were followed by discussions on topics such as finance, trade and investment, relief and recovery, science and technology, gender equality, peace, just transition, food and agriculture, legislation, education and skills, and accountability.

3.2 Lessons from other pavilions

The South African parliamentary delegates actively participated in other pavilions and drew lessons on various topics and approaches, including:

- How consultative and inclusive climate action and just transition drives economic development,
- Policy certainty, good governance and climate ambition as key levers for attracting green investment,
- The need for developing bankable and scalable pipeline climate projects to access climate finances.
- Enhancing access to green industrialisation financing for smallholder farmers and SMEs in value chains, including South-South cooperation in supporting green value chains,
- The need for public-private partnerships to co-finance the implementation of NDCs and drive climate action,
- The need for procedural rights protections since job losses are inevitable in a transition away from fossil industries,
- How the phased ban on plastics mitigated massive job losses while allowing the creation of green jobs,
- Just transition carries the risk of perpetuating gender disparities, as the transition will have to cater for male-dominated fossil-fuel jobs, and
- The need for integration of local communities and indigenous knowledge in fire management plans and investments.

3.3 Country representation at the High-Level Segment (HLS) of COP 30

The parliamentary delegation attended the High-Level Segment of COP 30/CMP 20/CMA 7, representing the country in the plenary, where ministers tabled country statements. The key messages were the need to address the climate crisis with the necessary urgency and ambition, and to rapidly increase both the pace and scale of global action. The emphasis was on historical polluters upholding their common but differentiated responsibilities. This transition remains only if international commitments are backed by robust financial

mechanisms that allow Least Developed Countries to fund loss and damage and build resilience without being forced into further debt.

3.4 Updates by the South African negotiators

The team of negotiators from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment briefed the Parliamentary delegation on the status of negotiations. The negotiation updates included progress in priority committees negotiating the Global Mutirão Decision Package, means of implementation, mitigation, transparency, a just transition, adaptation, and cross-cutting issues related to youth, gender, and loss and damage. Progress was at various stages, and there were still outstanding issues to be negotiated under each priority. Optimism remained high that the conclusions would align with South Africa's position and aspirations, despite contestation and divergence on some critical issues among negotiators.

4 KEY OUTCOMES OF COP30

The outcomes of COP30, as outlined in this section, are a mix of achievements and disappointments. Going into COP30, there were expectations for improvements to the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on Climate Finance to support countries in implementing their NDCs, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), low-emission development plans, inclusive just transition pathways, and national development plans toward a green and sustainable future.

4.1 Roadmap for fossil fuel transition

- As was COP28 and COP29, countries agreed to transition away from fossil fuels, but disagreements on the text to phase out fossil fuels were irreconcilable. Hence, a compromise was reached to develop a voluntary framework for a fossil fuel transition and to end deforestation. It was emphasised that countries should increase their renewable energy capacities and efficiencies.

4.2 Mutirão decision and transparency

- The "Global Mutirão" framework established the Global Implementation Accelerator and the "Belém Mission to 1.5" to fast-track climate action and increase national ambition toward the 1.5°C goal.
- The adopted Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) aligns reporting cycles and common formats while strengthening the link between transparency, finance, and adaptation. The framework acts as a bridge between negotiations and national practice, prioritising scaling up capacity-building and technical support to help developing nations meet their reporting obligations.

4.3 Climate Finance and the Roadmap to \$1.3 trillion

- COP30 saw a renewed commitment to providing financial support to developing countries for climate action of at least \$300 billion by 2035, as well as the broader climate finance goal under the Baku to Belem Roadmap, in line with the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance, aiming for \$1.3 trillion annually by 2035 from public and private sources. The roadmap also addresses debt sustainability, including debt-for-climate swaps and a pause in debt repayments after major climate disasters.
- The COP30 decision enhanced the matchmaking function of the Mitigation Work Programme, facilitating direct interaction between developing countries, Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), and the private sector.
- The Tropical Forest Facility, a blended-finance mechanism to prevent deforestation, was launched and raised \$9 billion in pledges and aims to pay countries in return for safeguarding their forests.
- The meeting instructed the Standing Committee on Finance, Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund, and the Loss and Damage Fund to establish simpler and quicker procedures, enhance direct access, and prioritise adaptation initiatives and locally led strategies.
- Countries reaffirmed that climate-related measures must not result in arbitrary discrimination or disguised restrictions on international trade, such as Carbon Border Taxes.

4.4 Mitigation and trade matters

- To support Just Transition, Parties agreed to enhance technical assistance, capacity-building and knowledge sharing, via a new mechanism: the Belém Action Mechanism (BAM) for a Global Just Transition. The mechanism aims to align climate action with measurable socio-economic outcomes, including labour, human, and environmental rights. The BAM includes a "helpdesk" to provide technical assistance and ensure that the transition in the Global South is supported by technology transfer and non-debt-inducing finance.
- Parties pledged to enhance renewable, zero-emission, and low-carbon energy generation and speed up the decarbonisation of current energy production from fossil fuels.
- COP30 established a workstream on trade due to the growing importance or threat of some carbon trade measures or instruments, such as a carbon tax on trade.

4.5 Global goal on adaptation and resilience

- While the adaptation goal was finalised, the 100 Belem indicators to measure adaptation effectiveness and resilience were cut to 59, with some countries saying they were watered down and unimplementable. A two-year "Belém-Addis Vision" was initiated to refine the technical details of these indicators, ensuring their continued relevance in developing-country contexts.

- The agreement to triple adaptation finance to \$120 billion annually, as part of the broader commitment of \$300 billion annually in climate finance (referred to as the new collective quantified goal), constitutes significant progress.

4.6 Operationalisation of the loss and damage fund

- The Fund issued its first \$250 million call for proposals, allowing the most vulnerable countries to finally submit project requests. The Santiago Network is providing technical assistance to help countries assess and manage climate-related risks.
- The total pledges reached approximately \$6.7 billion, with Brazil and several EU nations leading new contributions.

4.7 Health and gender action plans

- COP30 established the Belém Gender and Health Action Plans, historic frameworks that finally integrate protections for marginalised groups (indigenous, Afro-descendant, and rural women), environmental defenders, and public health systems into global climate strategy. These plans introduce first-of-their-kind commitments to integrating health into climate action and gender-responsive budgeting. However, the removal of human-rights language and the voluntary nature of these commitments mean their impact depends on turning high-level rhetoric into sustained funding and integrated national policy.

4.8 Challenges and the road ahead

While COP30 made some progress, significant challenges persist, particularly regarding issues from COP28 and COP29 that were expected to be finalised in Belem. Consequently, COP30 faced a backlog of critical outstanding matters.

- Translating agreements from Dubai and Baku into tangible action hinged on robust implementation and accountability mechanisms. Access to climate finance has been difficult for many developing countries due to slow disbursement.
- Pledges, whether for adaptation, mitigation, loss and damage or halting deforestation, have been far below the required amounts, and their replenishments are increasingly uncertain as some countries are or have reviewed their policies to prioritise domestic interests.
- Although COP30 provided some hope, there are concerning signs that some nations, especially those with economies heavily dependent on fossil fuels, are stepping back from their mitigation commitments (decarbonisation). Despite failing to secure binding agreements on fossil fuels or deforestation, COP30 introduced voluntary alternatives, including a 2026 transition conference and a Brazilian-led forestry roadmap for COP31.
- The first official recognition that global warming is likely to overshoot as driven by insufficiently ambitious and incomplete NDCs underscored the urgent need for

intensified international cooperation and solidarity to bridge the ambition gap and ensure an equitable transition for all communities.

- While negotiations on official carbon markets under Article 6 remained stalled, a new Brazilian-led "Open Coalition" has emerged to independently standardise and integrate compliance trading systems. Nonetheless, the conference also reflected a growing global consensus on the urgent need for ambitious climate solutions.

5 PARLIAMENTARY RECOMMENDATIONS

The urgency of addressing climate change through robust plan implementation and comprehensive global cooperation became clear, emphasising the need for decisive action to protect the planet for future generations. The role of parliaments was also clear: the legislative sector needs to take the lead in ensuring the implementation of programmes aligned with climate agreements, particularly in South Africa. The overarching recommendation is to require orientation sessions for new MPs on climate science, policy, and just transitions, enabling them to oversee the integration of climate considerations into their portfolios.

5.1 Continuous monitoring and reporting

- Parliament's Environment Committees should use their legislative and oversight role to ensure the allocation of resources to implement the recently updated NDCs, to support emission reduction strategies, adaptation measures, and support for green economy initiatives, clean technology practices, and sustainable practices.
- Parliament's Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Committees, and relevant Committees should use their oversight role to ensure that the Government adopts climate-sensitive planning, budgeting and expenditure monitoring, particularly for climate-sensitive sectors, such as agriculture, health, tourism, biodiversity, water, etc.
- Parliament should require all departments, such as energy, transport, education, environment, public works and infrastructure, etc., to integrate climate action targets, risk screening, and climate disaster recovery into their planning and budgeting.
- Parliament's Environment, Energy, and Finance Committees need to ensure that the Government establishes a centralised reporting system for monitoring green investments, climate finance, and their social, environmental, and economic impacts. It should focus on high-impact initiatives to maximise benefits, reduce unnecessary debt, and use resources efficiently.
- Parliament Performance and Evaluation Committee should ensure that the government establish clear institutional responsibilities for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of climate adaptation in various departments.
- Parliament Environment Committees should require either the Presidential Climate Commission or the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment to table an annual report for NDC evaluation, progress, sectoral carbon budgets, and climate finance flows.

- Parliament relevant Committees should require key sectors to build evaluative capacity and make climate-risk screening compulsory for all infrastructure, transport, water, and waste investments.
- Parliament's Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities should oversee the alignment of laws and policies that advance gender equality and human rights in climate action and ensure the participation and representation of women, youth, rural communities, people living with disabilities and other vulnerable and underrepresented groups in decision-making processes and implementation.
- The House Chairpersons' Offices could develop a framework to track actions of relevant Committees emanating from international engagements that discussed environmental issues.

5.2 Increase support for climate finance

- Parliament's Environment Committees should ensure the alignment of national and provincial climate policies and long-term planning, good governance, regular public reporting and strong institutions to improve climate finance readiness and attract climate investments.
- Parliament should oversee that the National Treasury designs risk-sharing mechanisms that unlock private climate investment without increasing sovereign debt.
- In various fora, Parliamentary delegates should advocate for sufficient funds, urge developed nations to fulfil their financial commitments, and support the reform of global financial institutions to enhance the accessibility of climate finance, especially for developing countries.
- Parliament's Trade, Industry and Competition Committees should support the development of incentives for the development of green steel, green cement, and low-carbon materials through government procurement and standards.

5.3 Restructuring the collection and allocation of environmental levies and taxes

- Parliament's Environment Committees should initiate discussions with the National Treasury on the ringfencing of environmental levies and taxes, ensuring they are used solely for their intended purposes rather than absorbed into the national fiscus. The allocated funds should be proportional to the generated funds of that line item.
- The Portfolio Committee on Environment should explore legislative amendments that mandate that funds from environmental levies, such as those on tyres and plastics, be directed to a dedicated line item within the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment responsible for collecting and distributing the generated revenue, alongside monitoring and reporting on the use of the funds concerning established goals.

5.4 Accelerate the energy transition and decarbonisation of key sectors

- Parliament's relevant committees should oversee sectors with high emissions to facilitate a realistic transition to renewable energy and enhance energy efficiency, thereby minimising emissions from industry, transportation, buildings, and land use without compromising economic and developmental goals.
- Furthermore, Parliament should diligently oversee the ongoing Just Transition across various sectors, broadening its scope beyond the primary focus on the energy sector. It is essential to endorse low-carbon solutions and to promote a carefully planned, pragmatic, and systematic shift away from fossil-fuel-dependent transportation and coal-based power generation.
- Parliament's Energy Committee should oversee the streamlining of permitting and the grid connection process, as well as the reduction of tariffs on renewable energy generation or installations

5.5 Timeous COP preparations

- To ensure timely COP registration and logistical arrangements, the parliamentary administration should initiate logistical preparations in earnest, in line with Parliamentary policies.
- The delegation recommends that a meeting be arranged with the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces and the Secretary to Parliament to discuss the logistical challenges experienced leading up to and during COP30 in Brazil.

The report to be adopted

- (d) Report of the South African delegation to the Artificial Intelligence Conference on the role of Parliament in shaping the future of responsible AI Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 28 – 30 November 2025.

**REPORT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION TO THE ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE CONFERENCE ON THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT IN SHAPING THE
FUTURE OF RESPONSIBLE AI**

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

28-30 November 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Strategic Plan of the 7th Parliament 2024-29 identifies “improved performance and effectiveness through information and culture optimisation” as a key strategic outcome. The Plan identifies the development of a digital transformation strategy to transition Parliament to a digital workplace, amongst others, in recognition of the impact of artificial intelligence (AI). This is one of the outcomes adopted towards supporting Parliament in achieving its strategic priorities, namely strengthening oversight, enhancing legislative processes and public involvement, improving public appointment processes, and improving international engagements.

In this light, South Africa’s participation at the first ever *Artificial Intelligence Conference on The Role of Parliament in Shaping the Future of Responsible AI* proved opportune and timely in sharing knowledge with other parliamentary stakeholders and international partners on the key issues related to AI and parliaments.

The Conference held various plenaries and work sessions leading up to the drafting and adoption of an [outcome document](#) with **13 recommendations for parliaments**. Due to the rapid development and evolution of AI technologies and its impact on societies, **parliaments are encouraged to reflect on these with urgency and report back on progress by June 2026**. It is therefore recommended that the **ICT Division of Parliament develop an institutional coordination and implementation strategy for Parliament’s implementation of the recommendations** it deems necessary. **All detailed supplementary documentation of the Conference and that may be of assistance to Parliament are accessible on the Conference website at: <https://sites.google.com/view/parliaments-responsible-ai/>.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the meeting: The conference had two objectives:

- To expand inter-parliamentary cooperation, dialogue and knowledge exchange on AI governance.
- To catalyse political will for building national capacity for AI, including the use of AI within parliamentary institutions.

Delegation Members:

- Hon. R. Mtsweni-Tsipane, MP and Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP)
- Hon. Dr A. Lotriet, MP and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Co-Chairperson of the ICT Focus Group
- Hon. Mr B. Radebe, MP and House Chairperson: Members Support and International Relations, Co-Chairperson of the Parliamentary Group on International Relations, and Co-Chairperson of the ICT Focus Group
- Mr J. Pieterse, Manager, MIS: ICT Strategy and Architecture Unit
- Dr N. Leibrandt-Loxton, Content Specialist: Office of the Deputy Speaker

2. MEETING OUTCOMES

The programme for the Artificial Intelligence Conference on “The Role of Parliament in Shaping the Future of Responsible AI” comprised a mix of plenary sessions and parallel workshops structured around two main tracks: AI policy (focusing on legislative, oversight and ethical dimensions) and AI in parliament (addressing practical applications and governance within parliamentary work). The format included an opening ceremony and thematic plenaries on 28 and 30 November, complemented by interactive workshops featuring group work, problem-solving exercises and case studies. Sessions explored topics such as societal transformation, national capacity-building, lawmaking and oversight, gender and AI, and parliamentary AI adoption. Interpretation was provided in four languages for all formal sessions, while an “Unconference” on 30 November allowed informal, participant-led discussions. The programme concluded with a plenary to identify priorities for parliamentary action and a closing ceremony to adopt the outcome document. The outcome document, attached hereto as [Annexure 1](#), incorporates all the perspectives raised during the preceding plenaries and interactive workshops.

2.1 South African Analytical Contributions and Reflections

The South African delegation participated in various work session discussions towards the development of the outcome document, notably the following:

- In her remarks during the opening session, Hon. Mtsweni-Tsipane underscored the strategic imperative for parliaments to engage proactively on artificial intelligence. She emphasised that AI should accelerate human development and support human judgment rather than replace it, and that bias in AI systems must be addressed. She called for structured AI literacy programmes for Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff, and for the responsible deployment of tools such as automated transcription to enhance workflow efficiency.
- Hon. Mtsweni-Tsipane also moderated the session on “Gender and AI” with panelists from UN Women, Meta, International Institution for Global Health, and the University of Technology of Malaysia.
- Hon. Lotriet moderated the session on “Navigating societal transformation in the age of AI” with panelists from parliaments of Armenia and Thailand, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Amazon Web Services. She also presented the session’s key outcomes during the closing plenary session.
- Hon. Radebe, during the closing plenary, emphasised the importance of parliamentary diplomacy and inter-parliamentary cooperation for parliaments to adapt and embrace AI internally for parliaments, as well as in terms of the execution of their constitutional functions.

The global trends presented during the Conference have specific significance for South Africa:

- **Rapid AI acceleration** demands that Parliament modernise its systems to remain relevant and effective.
- **Concentration of compute power** among a few global corporations heightens dependency risks.
- **Environmental pressures** related to AI infrastructure amplify sustainability concerns in the national context.

- **Misinformation and deepfakes** threaten public trust and parliamentary communication integrity.
- **Digital inequality** may deepen social exclusion if not addressed in AI deployment strategies.

Moreover, five scenario futures discussed at the Conference provided insights on how AI may reshape democratic governance in future:

- **Scenario 1: The Augmented Assembly:** AI enhances oversight and legislative capacity while preserving human judgement.
- **Scenario 2: The Data-Driven Legislature:** Efficiency improves, but excessive reliance on algorithms may weaken deliberation.
- **Scenario 3: The Divided Democracy:** Unequal digital access erodes legitimacy and deepens inequality.
- **Scenario 4: The Shadowed Legislature:** Executive dominance increases if parliamentary oversight does not modernise.
- **Scenario 5: The Corporate Commons:** Governance shifts toward private platforms, risking democratic authority.

These scenarios show that the future of parliamentary governance under AI depends on **institutional preparedness, governance frameworks and proactive oversight**, rather than technological inevitability.

2.2 The IPU AI Maturity Framework

The [IPU AI Maturity Framework](#), launched during the conference, provides a structured way for parliaments to assess their readiness for artificial intelligence. The framework outlines a progression across six maturity levels:

- **Level 0 – Informal Use:** No formal strategy or governance. AI may be used experimentally by individuals, but without institutional guidance.
- **Level 1 – Basic Awareness:** Parliaments recognise AI's relevance and risks, but structured discussions and policy development are still emerging.
- **Level 2 – Early Pilots and Initial Governance:** Small-scale AI projects begin, typically in areas such as transcription or research support, alongside the first attempts at governance or ethical guidelines.
- **Level 3 – Systematic Deployment:** AI becomes integrated into selected parliamentary processes, with clearer governance mechanisms and early oversight practices.
- **Level 4 – Enterprise-Level Integration:** AI is embedded across multiple functions, supported by organisational strategy, shared infrastructure, and frameworks for accountability, ethics and capacity-building.
- **Level 5 – Advanced, Future-Ready Legislature:** Parliaments demonstrate continuous innovation, mature governance, strong public trust, and the ability to influence global standards. Few, if any, institutions globally have reached this level.

A survey conducted during the conference revealed a clear global trend: **most parliaments assessed themselves at Level 2**, indicating that they have begun experimenting with AI through small pilot projects and early governance discussions, but have not yet moved toward systematic or institutionalised adoption. Levels 3 to 5 – where AI becomes integrated across parliamentary

functions, supported by robust governance, capacity-building programmes and long-term strategic planning – remained largely out of reach, with **no parliament reporting full maturity**.

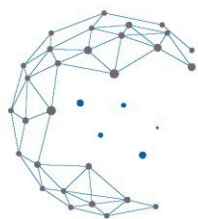
This shared self-assessment highlights both the opportunity and the urgency facing legislatures worldwide: while AI is rapidly reshaping the governance landscape, institutional readiness is still developing. Against this backdrop, the South African delegation undertook additional analytical work during the conference to help clarify what internal capabilities Parliament will need in order to transition from early experimentation to responsible, sustainable and democratically aligned AI adoption. Accordingly, an AI Capability Model proposal was developed for the South African Parliament, attached hereto as [Annexure 2](#).

3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARLIAMENT

- The [outcome document](#) (copy also attached as [Annexure 1](#) below) contains **13 recommendations for parliaments** to consider, covering different dimensions of AI in the parliamentary context:
 - *Governance, Ethics & Public Trust* (Setting values, rules, and public-facing guardrails for AI in political life and society)
 - *Legislative & Regulatory Frameworks* (Reviewing and strengthening the laws foundational to responsible AI).
 - *Oversight & Accountability* (National Readiness & Sector Impacts) (Ensuring government progress on AI strategies and scrutinising real-world impacts, such as gender and race biases, etc).
 - *Capacity, Expertise & Evidence* (Building skills and securing knowledge for parliamentarians and staff).
 - *Internal Adoption & Institutional Readiness* (Utilising the IPU Maturity Framework to assess Parliament's readiness for artificial intelligence towards preparing its internal governance, capabilities, and platforms to use AI responsibly).
 - *International Engagement & Inter-Parliamentary Collaboration* (Connecting with global partners, sharing practices, and co-designing shared solutions).
- Significantly, it states that “international partners [are requested] to support parliaments in the implementation of these Recommendations...[and that]...all parliaments [must] **provide a progress update by 1 June 2026**, and conference organisers [must] publish a status report by 1 August 2026.”
- The **urgency of parliamentary action was emphasised**, notably as most parliaments remain unsure about how to incorporate the ethical and safe use of AI into both their constitutionally mandated work as well as internal administrative systems and processes, due to the absence of regulatory frameworks nationally as well as within parliaments, despite its rapidly evolving yet growing impact on society.
- Timely consideration and subsequent implementation of the recommendations will require a **well-coordinated and streamlined institutional approach** to ensure action and tangible, reportable progress by 1 June 2026.
- It is therefore recommended that **the ICT Division develop a coordination and implementation strategy for Parliament's implementation of the 13 recommendations**, as well as the following as submitted by the delegation:

- Regulate Private-Sector Influence on Governance
- Mandate Environmental Accountability for AI Infrastructure
- Lead a National Dialogue on AI's Social and Democratic Impact
- Prepare for the Future Through Scenario-Based Planning

ANNEXURE 1: THE CONFERENCE OUTCOME DOCUMENT



28-30 November 2025 **Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**

Artificial Intelligence Conference

The Role of Parliament in Shaping
the Future of Responsible AI



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.



PARLIAMENT OF MALAYSIA



#ResponsibleAI



Kuala Lumpur Declaration *Parliaments and responsible AI*

30 November 2025

We, more than 200 parliamentarians and staff from national parliaments and devolved legislatures in 65 countries, have met in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 28 to 30 November 2025 at the parliamentary conference *The Role of Parliament in Shaping the Future of Responsible AI*. We acknowledge with gratitude the Parliament of Malaysia, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for convening this event, the first of its kind internationally.

We stand on the threshold of technological innovations that have the potential to transform every aspect of society. Artificial intelligence (AI) holds great promise in many areas, from opening new areas of scientific inquiry and optimizing energy grids to improving public health and agriculture and promoting broader progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. AI also presents significant opportunities for parliaments to become more efficient and effective institutions, enabling them to better serve citizens and facilitating public engagement in political processes.

Yet we are deeply concerned by the widening gap between the speed of AI development and the ability of societies, institutions and regulatory frameworks to keep pace. If the technology is not governed responsibly, there is a risk that AI systems could undermine public trust in democratic institutions and elections, entrench existing inequalities and discrimination, accelerate climate change, and widen the economic and technological divide between and within nations. We must urgently work to prevent these outcomes.

AI is a global issue that demands responsible governance in the common interest of humanity, with an equal voice for the Global South. We do not accept the concentration of power in the hands of a few actors. We believe that international cooperation should prioritize AI safety,

accountability measures, capacity-building and public awareness, and privacy and personal data protection.

In particular, we wish to see a commitment from governments, the private sector and all stakeholders to rapidly come to an agreement on safety measures and on the red lines that this technology cannot be allowed to cross.

We recognize the emerging body of international and regional initiatives on AI, including within the United Nations and other multilateral forums, which seek to promote safe, secure and trustworthy AI grounded in human rights. We encourage all parliaments – as institutions that play a central role in ensuring the democratization of international AI governance – to engage actively with these efforts and ensure coherence between domestic legislation and evolving international standards.

Many parliaments are undertaking legislative and oversight initiatives on AI. We call on all parliaments to accelerate their AI policy work, to hold governments accountable for advancing international cooperation, and to take the lead in stimulating public awareness, debate and multi-stakeholder dialogue around AI.

We acknowledge that parliaments must adapt and innovate in the AI era. We encourage parliaments to pursue their unique AI journeys responsibly and transparently, ensuring that AI meaningfully enhances their democratic functions.

We affirm that it is still possible for parliaments worldwide to come together and shape the future of AI, although that window of opportunity may not remain open for long. Every country has a stake in responsible AI. Alone, we are vulnerable. Together, we can shape the future that we want. The time to act is now.

Recommendations

Building upon the IPU resolution *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*, adopted by the 149th IPU Assembly, held in Geneva, Switzerland, in October 2024, we recommend the following priorities for parliamentary action on AI:

Recommendation 1: Assess the current level of AI readiness in parliament, both for parliamentary engagement in AI policy and for the use of AI within the institution, and develop a strategic road map to increase parliamentary capacity where needed.

Recommendation 2: Convene political parties to establish common rules, codes of conduct and, where appropriate, regulatory frameworks for the use of AI in political life, covering issues such as AI-generated simulations of politicians, political mis- and disinformation, technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and the use of AI in election campaigns.

Recommendation 3: Hold inclusive national dialogues to define shared values and ethical boundaries on AI, and support public education campaigns to improve literacy in AI and other emerging technologies.

Recommendation 4: Carry out capacity-building activities for parliamentarians and staff on digital technology and AI, with a plan for continuous learning cycles to keep up to date with emerging technologies.

Recommendation 5: Identify national and international sources of expertise that can support parliamentary committees and research services with policy briefs, analyses and regularly updated information on AI developments, harms and risks.

Recommendation 6: Create or empower parliamentary bodies and specialized oversight mechanisms with a mandate to scrutinize AI development, deployment and impact, and examine sector-specific regulation in relation to the impact of AI.

Recommendation 7: Conduct an initial assessment of the existing legislative framework in areas that are foundational to AI, such as data protection, privacy, anti-discrimination and cybersecurity, and identify where legislation may need to be strengthened.

Recommendation 8: Scrutinize the state of national AI readiness and hold government to account for progress on national AI strategies, including efforts to foster an AI ecosystem and develop AI-related skills, public digital infrastructure and data governance frameworks.

Recommendation 9: Conduct thorough, evidence-based inquiries into gender bias, diversity and equity in the development, deployment and impact of AI systems.

Recommendation 10: Engage with international and multi-stakeholder dialogues relating to AI governance, while also exploring new opportunities for international forums, bilateral engagements and parliamentary diplomacy initiatives on AI.

Recommendation 11: Promote the responsible and effective use of AI in parliament by establishing or strengthening key building blocks, including parliament's internal AI governance, technical and organizational capabilities.

Recommendation 12: Participate actively in inter-parliamentary exchanges on AI policy and the use of AI in parliaments, including by sharing experience, good practices and parliamentary AI use cases.

Recommendation 13: Participate, through the IPU, the CPA, UNDP and other international partners, in the co-design of a shared parliamentary AI platform, built on a common core with nationally adaptable components, that would address resource gaps, facilitate cross-border collaboration and knowledge-sharing, and support parliamentarians and staff with casework, scrutiny, legislative drafting and policy development.

We request international partners to support parliaments in the implementation of these recommendations. We call upon all parliaments to provide a progress update by 1 June 2026, and upon the conference organizers to publish a status report by 1 August 2026.

ANNEXURE 2: PROPOSAL – AN AI CAPABILITY MODEL FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN PARLIAMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

To support Parliament's internal preparation for the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence (AI), the delegation developed an **AI Capability Model** proposal offering a structured and intuitive way to understand the ecosystem required for responsible, effective and sustainable AI adoption. The model provides a framework to map the journey of increasing AI maturity over time. The model is organised along two complementary axes:

- 1) **Technology, People and Governance**, and
- 2) **Foundation, Structure and Outcome**.

Together, these dimensions present a holistic framework for evaluating AI maturity within an organisation and ensuring that technological advancement aligns with democratic values.

2. THE MODEL

2.1 Foundation Level

The foundation level identifies the essential prerequisites for AI **readiness**:

- **Security (Technology)**: Ensures systems and data remain protected, resilient and trustworthy.
- **Continuous Learning (People)**: Enables parliamentarians and staff to adapt to emerging technologies and evolving responsibilities.
- **Accountability (Governance)**: Provides transparency, oversight and traceability, which are essential for public trust.

2.2 Structural Level

The structural level reflects the systems and culture that enable AI integration:

- **Data Integration (Technology)**: Ensures technical coherence across functions and workflows.
- **Meaning Creation (People)**: Highlights the central role of humans in interpreting and contextualising AI outputs.
- **Ethics (Governance)**: Establishes the normative guardrails that prevent harm and uphold constitutional values.

2.3 Outcome Level

The outcome level identifies the value Parliament can derive from AI:

- **Knowledge Discovery (Technology)**: AI's potential to enhance evidence-based decision-making.

- **Purpose-Driven Practice (People):** The intentional use of AI aligned to legislative and oversight missions.
- **Values Alignment (Governance):** Ensures AI strengthens Parliament's democratic role.

2.4 Extension of the Model: Democratic Impact

Recognising Parliament's constitutional role as the guarantor of democratic accountability, the delegation extended the model to include a fourth domain: **Democratic Impact**, ensuring technological capability is evaluated alongside democratic value.

- **Responsiveness (Foundation):** Parliament's ability to keep pace with societal and technological change.
- **Legitimacy (Structure):** Ethical conduct, transparency and public participation in AI-enabled governance.
- **Empowered Citizens (Outcome):** AI used to enhance democratic engagement, inclusion and trust.

This extension positions AI not merely as an operational tool but as a strategic asset for strengthening South Africa's constitutional democracy.

2.5 Funding and Sustainability Requirements

Building the capabilities outlined in the model requires **predictable, sustained and long-term investment**. AI readiness cannot be achieved through isolated or short-term initiatives. It requires:

- Reliable funding for secure and modern infrastructure
- Continuous learning and development programmes
- Governance mechanisms for ethical oversight
- Processes that promote transparency, accessibility and inclusion

By treating AI capability as a **core institutional asset**, Parliament can maintain resilience, adapt to emerging risks and ensure technological advancement supports, rather than challenges, its constitutional mandate.

2.6 Democratic Impact Extension

The addition of the **Democratic Impact** dimension reflects the view that AI readiness must be assessed through a broader lens instead of organisational capacity alone. AI adoption influences how citizens engage with Parliament, how oversight is conducted and how democratic legitimacy is sustained. By mirroring the foundational, structural and outcome tiers of the core model, this extension enables Parliament to evaluate **democratic benefit alongside technological readiness**. It also transforms the AI Capability Model into a comprehensive tool for assessing how AI strengthens democratic institutions, protects public trust and enhances Parliament's constitutional authority.

- (e) Report of the South African Delegation to the 58th SADC PF Plenary Assembly, Durban 29 November – 6 December 2025.

**DELEGATION REPORT OF THE 58th SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM PLENARY
ASSEMBLY**

**ETHEKWINI METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY (DURBAN)
SOUTH AFRICA**

29TH NOVEMBER TO 6TH DECEMBER 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South African Parliament's permanent delegation to SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) attended the 58th SADC PF Plenary Assembly held from 29th November to 6th December 2025 at the Coastlands Hotel and Convention Centre, eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality (Durban), South Africa. The Plenary Assembly met under the theme "The Impact of Climate Change on Women and Youth in the SADC Region and the Role of Parliaments in Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation". On 01 December 2025, the Plenary Assembly, through a Symposium, reflected on the theme, and received presentations from different stakeholders. The Symposium, which brought together Hon. Speakers and Parliamentarians from 14 SADC Member States, representatives of the South African government, civil society and business representatives, provided a viable platform for sharing of experiences and best practices by both state and non-state actors on the impact of climate change on women and youth in the SADC region and on responses to climate change induced natural disasters.

Further to that, the Plenary Assembly also considered country reports on progress in implementation of the resolutions of the 57th SADC PF Plenary Assembly Session held at Victoria Falls City, Zimbabwe. It also considered and deliberated on various reports emanating from the Report of the Joint Session of the Standing Committees of the SADC Parliamentary Forum held from 24th to 29th October 2025 at Premier Hotel in Johannesburg, South Africa- including the Report of the Executive Committee (EXCO) Meeting that took place from the 26th to the 27th of November 2025 in Durban, South Africa. The Exco Report dealt with the general SADC PF Policy, Administrative and Financial Matters (Treasurer's Report).

In addition to adopting various motions by SADC PF members— the Plenary Assembly resolved, amongst others, to express profound concern over the escalating impacts of climate change in the SADC region, including intensified droughts, devastating floods, tropical cyclones, and rising sea levels, which threaten food security, water access, public health, and socio-economic stability, thereby undermining the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and SADC's regional integration agenda.

The Plenary Assembly also acknowledged that climate change is neither gender-neutral nor generation-blind, recognising that women and youth bear a disproportionate burden due to pre-existing socio-economic inequalities, reliance on climate-sensitive resources, and limited access to decision-making, finance, and technology. It further resolved to prioritise parliamentary oversight and promote regional policy harmonisation to combat the climate crisis, safeguarding citizens and aligning climate action with the developmental aspirations of the SADC region as outlined in the SADC Vision 2050, the AU Agenda 2063, the outcomes of the 2025 G20 Summit, and COP30.

With regards to advancement of the 7th Parliament's priorities and strategic imperatives, the following can be highlighted:

- **Law-making and Oversight:** The Plenary Assembly's consideration and adoption of the resolutions of Standing Committees and the Plenary's theme debate presented South African delegates with the opportunity to contribute to key regional policy issues/concerns, as well as share South Africa's experiences, where relevant. The final adopted motions will inform and strengthen the law-making and oversight role of relevant South African parliamentary committees as they consider these policy recommendations that are informed by regional perspectives. Therefore, the referral of these Plenary motions is important in this regard.
- **Deepening international engagement:** The South African delegation contributed to deepening Parliament's international engagement and promoting South Africa's foreign policy position of unifying SADC through (1) delivering country report on the implementation of the adopted resolutions of the 57th Plenary Assembly and (2) making statements on several motions emanating from the public hearings of various Standing Committees.

The Parliamentary Group on International Relations (PGIR) is advised to table and refer the following 57th Plenary Assembly's resolutions with the relevant committees of Parliament for noting and/or actioning:

Resolution by 58th SADC PF	Committee(s) to be referred to
<i>The need to prioritise parliamentary oversight and promote regional policy harmonisation to combat the climate crisis, safeguarding citizens and aligning climate action with the</i>	• PC on Forestry, Fisheries and Environment • PC on Agriculture • PC on Land Reform and Rural Development • PC on Minerals and Petroleum Resources • SC on Agriculture, Land Reform and Mineral Resources

<i>developmental aspirations of the SADC region as outlined in the SADC Vision 2050, the AU Agenda 2063, the outcomes of the 2025 G20 Summit, and COP30.</i>	• PC on Small Business Development • PC on Water and Sanitation
<i>The need to prioritise the ratification and domestication of the SADC Energy Protocol, strengthen oversight of its implementation and regional power pool integration, and utilise their budgetary authority to approve strategic investments in renewable energy and grid modernisation to promote a just energy transition;</i>	• PC on Electricity and Energy • PC on Minerals and Petroleum Resources • SC on Economic Development and Trade
<i>The need for predictable funding and increased parliamentary participation in SADC PF Election Observation Missions (EOMs), and institutionalisation of EOM funding within the national budgets of Member Parliaments;</i>	• Parliamentary Group on International Relations (PGIR) • Parliamentary Administration [Secretariat] • SC and PC Programming Committees
<i>The need to strengthen oversight of anti-corruption strategies, advocate for the ratification of the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, and lead the revision of the SADC Model Law on Elections to address contemporary challenges such as cybersecurity, digital disinformation, and the conduct of elections during public health emergencies;</i>	• PC on International Relations and Cooperation • SC on Justice and Security • PC on Police • PC on Justice and Constitutional Development
<i>The need to ensure that climate policies and financing are guided by robust gender analysis, supported by gender-disaggregated data in carbon markets, and reinforced by strengthened oversight to hold implementing agencies accountable to gender inclusion standards</i>	• PC on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities • PC on Social Development • SC on Health and Social Services • Multi-Party Women's Caucus • PC on Trade, Industry and Competition • PC on Small Business Development • SC on Economic Development and Trade
<i>The urgent need to advocate for the ratification and domestication of the Gender Protocol; accelerate the adoption of gender-responsive budgeting; strengthen monitoring frameworks; implement reforms to address digital gender-based violence; and promote expanded intergenerational dialogue.</i>	• PC on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities • Multi-Party Women's Caucus • SC on Health and Social Services • SC on Social Services • SC on Finance • Finance Standing Committee • PC on Communications and Digital Technologies • PC on Science, Technology and Innovation
<i>The need for promotion of gender equality and youth empowerment, and development of a Youth Development Scorecard, alongside the institutionalisation of multisectoral engagement and sustained resource allocation to ensure inclusive and effective regional implementation</i>	• PC on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities • Multi-Party Women's Caucus • PC on Social Development • SC on Health and Social Services

<i>The need for need for strengthened parliamentary oversight in the areas of health and labour, by urging parliaments to: ensure adequate domestic funding for health protocols; ring-fence resources for HIV/AIDS and TB programmes; and expedite the ratification of the SADC Protocol on Employment and Labour</i>	• PC on Health • SC on Health and Social Services • PC on Employment and Labour • SC on Finance and SC on Appropriations • Standing Committees on Finance, Appropriations, Public Accounts and Auditor-General
<i>The need to advocate for the elevation of the SADC Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) Strategy into a legally binding Protocol, to ensure uniform legal reforms, enforceable commitments, and mandatory budget allocations across Member States—thereby strengthening accountability, enhancing implementation, and promoting sustainable progress in SRHR;</i>	• PC on Health • SC on Health and Social Services • SC on Finance and SC on Appropriations • Standing Committees on Finance, Appropriations, Public Accounts and Auditor-General
<i>The urgent need to prioritise the ratification of key trade and industry protocols and their annexes, align national legislation to eliminate non-tariff barriers, and enhance oversight of Executive commitments related to regional trade obligations</i>	• PC on International Relations and Cooperation • PC on Trade, Industry and Competition • PC on Small Business Development • SC on Economic Development and Trade
<i>The need to fast-track ratification and domestication of the Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons, align national laws to support regional integration and a unified investment zone, and enhance oversight to ensure timely implementation of related commitments;</i>	• PC on Home Affairs • SC on Economic Development and Trade • PC on Trade, Industry and Competition

1. INTRODUCTION

The SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) 58th Plenary Assembly was held from 30th November to 5th December 2025 in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality (Durban), Republic of South Africa, under the theme, ‘The Impact of Climate Change on Women and Youth in the SADC Region and the Role of Parliaments in Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation.’

The Plenary Assembly was attended by fourteen (14) of the fifteen (15) SADC PF Member Parliaments, namely, Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania tendered its apology.

The Plenary Assembly was also attended by representatives from partner organisations, including civil society, Members of Parliament from the Parliament of South Africa, who participated as observers, delegates from the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature, the South African Legislative Sector, eThekweni Municipality, Toyota South Africa—who presented on the theme—and academia, including the Thabo Mbeki African School of Public and International Affairs at UNISA.

The Plenary Assembly was officially opened by His Excellency Mr. Paul Mashatile, Acting President of the Republic of South Africa, who called for collective parliamentary action to address climate change, particularly its impact on women and youth. He highlighted key outcomes of the G20 Summit hosted by South Africa, including progress on climate resilience, energy access, food security, and youth empowerment. Commending SADC's efforts to develop regional climate strategies, the Acting President emphasised the need for gender-responsive legislation, alignment of policies with international frameworks, and stronger oversight. Citing South Africa's 2024 Climate Change Act, the Acting President urged parliaments to allocate resources effectively, promote accountability, and ensure inclusive, people-centred climate policies.

The President of the SADC PF and Speaker of the Parliament of Madagascar, Hon. Randrianasoloniaiko Siteny Thierry, emphasised the Plenary Assembly's role in promoting democracy, good governance, and regional integration, while commending South Africa's leadership in championing the establishment of a SADC Parliament. He reaffirmed the Forum's commitment to inter-parliamentary cooperation and citizen participation, reiterated its readiness to evolve into a fully-fledged Parliament, anchored on strong governance and professional management systems, and called for support to ratify the Protocol to establish the SADC Parliament by August 2026.

In her welcome address, Hon. Thokozile Didiza, Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, underscored the urgency of collective action on climate change, citing recent climate-related disasters in the SADC region and stressed the need for climate-resilient policies and parliamentary leadership through legislation, oversight, and gender-responsive budgeting. Reflecting on COP30 outcomes, including the "Global Mutirao Decision" and the just transition mechanism, the Host Speaker called for

harmonised legislative action across SADC member states to advance climate mitigation, adaptation, and inclusive development.

The Secretary General of the SADC PF, Her Excellency Boemo Sekgoma, in her introductory statement, paid tribute to South Africa's visionary leadership in global and regional affairs under the stewardship of President Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa and highlighted eThekweni's legacy as a symbol of resilience and pan-African unity. Characterising climate change as a daily reality, she called for urgent, innovative, and bold parliamentary action rooted in regional solidarity and the legacy of the Frontline States. The Secretary General welcomed the Plenary Assembly's diverse representation, with 40.6% of the 69 parliamentarians in attendance being female.

Hon. Princess N. Mojapelo from the Southern Africa Youth Parliament, representing the youth, reaffirmed the vital role of young people in shaping policy in the SADC region, commended the SADC PF's youth-inclusive practices, and called for investment in youth leadership to address challenges such as unemployment, exclusion, conflict, gender-based violence, and climate change. She welcomed the establishment of the SADC PF Youth Caucus, urged parliaments to enact bold, inclusive legislation, and concluded by declaring that youth are not leaders in waiting but leaders in motion.

The Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus (RWPC) Interim Chairperson, Hon. Senator Dr Lindiwe Nxumalo, commemorated the 2025 16 Days of Activism campaign by honouring iconic KwaZulu-Natal women leaders—Queen Nandi, Charlotte Maxeke, and Dorothy Nyembe—and called for urgent action against digital violence, gender-based violence, and climate vulnerability. The RWPC Interim Chairperson urged the domestication of the SADC PF Model Laws on GBV and Child Marriage, adoption of climate-smart, gender-responsive legislation, expanded SRHR access, and full women's representation, while commending South Africa's leadership through its National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide and recognition of GBV as a national crisis.

The Executive Mayor of eThekweni Municipality, Councillor Cyril Xaba, welcomed delegates to the city and emphasised that eThekweni has consistently borne the brunt of climate change impacts—such as catastrophic floods and extreme weather events—

making it a fitting venue for critical regional dialogue on mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.

The Minister of Human Settlements of the Republic of South Africa, Hon. Thembi Simelane, emphasised the urgent need for deliberate and sustained investment in research, development, and innovative financing mechanisms to support climate-resilient infrastructure. The Minister underscored that rebuilding after climate-induced disasters requires a fundamental shift toward housing, human settlements, and public works that are capable of withstanding future shocks—thereby safeguarding communities and advancing sustainable development across the SADC region.

Whilst the overarching objective of the 58th SADC PF Plenary Assembly were to explore and define the role of Parliaments in accelerating the implementation of the AfCFTA towards deeper regional integration within the SADC region. The specific objectives were as follows:

- a) To assess the current level of parliamentary engagement in AfCFTA processes within SADC member states.
- b) To identify gaps and challenges in legislative and oversight frameworks relating to AfCFTA domestication.
- c) To promote parliamentary cooperation and harmonization of trade-related laws in the SADC region.
- d) To develop actionable recommendations for enhancing parliamentary capacity and participation in AfCFTA implementation.
- e) To foster dialogue between Parliaments, regional bodies (e.g., SADC Parliamentary Forum), private sector, and civil society

Delegation Composition

Members of the South African Delegation to the 57th SADC PF Plenary Assembly included:

- Hon. Ms Thokozile Angela Didiza, Speaker of the NA, Leader of the Delegation
- Hon. Ms Sylvia Lucas, MP- ANC and SADC PF Vice President
- Hon. Mr Kenneth Mmoiemang, MP- ANC
- Hon. Mr Bonginkosi Madikizela, MP – DA

- Hon. Mr David Mandla Skosana, MP- MK Party
- Hon. Mrs. Veronica Ntombovuyo Mente-Nkuna, MP- EFF
- Hon. Mrs Dina Pule, MP-ANC and Observer

Delegation Secretariat:

- Mr X. George- Secretary to Parliament
- Mr D. Sithole: Division Manager – International Relations and Protocol Division (IRPD)
- Mr Z. Mvulane: Manager – Office of the Chief Whip: NCOP (National Council of Provinces)
- Mr. Reggie Ngcobo- Manager in the Office of Speaker of the NA
- Dr Sifiso Ntombela- Advisor, Office of the Speaker of the NA
- Ms N. Shabalala- Executive Personal Assistant to the Speaker of the NA
- Mr T. Mbadlanyana – Content Support – IRPD
- Ms. Sindisiwe Mthembu, Executive Assistant, Office of the Secretary to Parliament
- Ms. Vuyo Mboto, Executive Assistant, Office of the NCOP Deputy Chief Whip
- Mr. Likhaya Gqezana, Advisor- Office of the Secretary to Parliament
- Mr. Sithembiso Tembe- Acting Section Manager: Policy Analysis (IRPD)
- Mr. Mzuvukile Ngese- Content Support- IRPD

2. MEETING PROCEEDINGS AND OUTCOMES

2.1 Opening Ceremony

The 58th SADC PF Plenary Assembly was officially opened on Sunday, 30th November 2025. The Executive Mayor of eThekweni Municipality, Councillor Cyril Xaba, welcomed delegates to the city and emphasised that eThekweni has consistently borne the brunt of climate change impacts—such as catastrophic floods and extreme weather events—making it a fitting venue for critical regional dialogue on mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.

The Mayoral Welcome Address was followed by opening remarks and reading of credentials of Delegates by H.E. Boemo Sekgoma, SADC PF Secretary General. In her opening remarks, Ms Sekgoma paid tribute to South Africa's visionary leadership in global and regional affairs under the stewardship of President Cyril Matamela

Ramaphosa and highlighted eThekweni's legacy as a symbol of resilience and pan-African unity. Characterising climate change as a daily reality, she called for urgent, innovative, and bold parliamentary action rooted in regional solidarity and the legacy of the Frontline States. The Secretary General welcomed the Plenary Assembly's diverse representation, with 40.6% of the 69 parliamentarians in attendance being female.

After the opening remarks by the SADC PF Secretary General, few messages of solidarity were delivered. Amongst others, these included Statements received from the representative of the Southern Africa Youth Parliament, Ms Princess N. Mojapelo, Southern Africa Youth Parliamentarian for South Africa and Statement from the Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus Hon. Senator Dr Linda Lorraine Nxumalo, National Women Parliamentary Caucus, Eswatini.

Hon. Princess N. Mojapelo from the Southern Africa Youth Parliament, representing the youth, reaffirmed the vital role of young people in shaping policy in the SADC region, commended the SADC PF's youth-inclusive practices, and called for investment in youth leadership to address challenges such as unemployment, exclusion, conflict, gender-based violence, and climate change. She welcomed the establishment of the SADC PF Youth Caucus, urged parliaments to enact bold, inclusive legislation, and concluded by declaring that youth are not leaders in waiting but leaders in motion.

The Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus (RWPC) Interim Chairperson, Hon. Senator Dr Lindiwe Nxumalo, commemorated the 2025 16 Days of Activism campaign by honouring iconic KwaZulu-Natal women leaders—Queen Nandi, Charlotte Maxeke, and Dorothy Nyembe—and called for urgent action against digital violence, gender-based violence, and climate vulnerability. The RWPC Interim Chairperson urged the domestication of the SADC PF Model Laws on GBV and Child Marriage, adoption of climate-smart, gender-responsive legislation, expanded SRHR access, and full women's representation, while commending South Africa's leadership through its National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide and recognition of GBV as a national crisis.

The messages of solidarity were followed by a keynote opening address by the SADC PF President, Hon Randrianasoloniaiko Siteny Thierry, Speaker of the Parliament of Madagascar. The President of the SADC PF emphasised the Plenary Assembly's role in promoting democracy, good governance, and regional integration, while commending South Africa's leadership in championing the establishment of a SADC Parliament. He reaffirmed the Forum's commitment to inter-parliamentary cooperation and citizen participation, reiterated its readiness to evolve into a fully-fledged Parliament, anchored on strong governance and professional management systems, and called for support to ratify the Protocol to establish the SADC Parliament by August 2026.

This keynote address by the Forum's President was followed by the official opening of the Plenary Assembly by the Guest of Honour, His Excellency, Mr. Paul Mashatile, Acting President of the Republic of South Africa. In her welcome address and introduction of the Guest of Honour, Hon. Thokozile Didiza, Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, underscored the urgency of collective action on climate change, citing recent climate-related disasters in the SADC region and stressed the need for climate-resilient policies and parliamentary leadership through legislation, oversight, and gender-responsive budgeting. Reflecting on COP30 outcomes, including the "Global Mutirao Decision" and the just transition mechanism, the Host Speaker called for harmonised legislative action across SADC member states to advance climate mitigation, adaptation, and inclusive development.

Following his introduction by the Host Speaker, in delivering his keynote address, the Acting Deputy President noted that the 58th Plenary Assembly's theme "The impact of climate change on women and youth in the SADC Region and the role of Parliaments in climate change mitigation and adaptation" underscores the necessity of collective action by parliaments to address and develop sustainable solutions for this pressing challenge.

The Acting President called for collective parliamentary action to address climate change, particularly its impact on women and youth. Additionally, he highlighted key outcomes of the G20 Summit hosted by South Africa, including progress on climate resilience, energy access, food security, and youth empowerment. His Excellency further informed the delegates that climate change was also a central topic at the G20 Summit that was integrated into several working groups and culminated in specific

commitments in the Leaders' Declaration. In particular, the leaders acknowledged the increasing frequency and intensity of disasters and welcomed the G20 Voluntary High-Level Principles for Investing in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). They also reiterated the urgent need for universal coverage of early warning systems, particularly in Africa, by 2027.

Whilst commending SADC's efforts to develop regional climate strategies, the Acting President underscored the need for gender-responsive legislation, alignment of policies with international frameworks, and stronger oversight. He pointed out that, whilst considerable progress has been made in terms of climate change adaptation and mitigation, however, significant challenges remain, and the region is still highly vulnerable to climate impacts. Climate change disproportionately affects women and young people, increasing their work burdens, escalating health risks, and heightening the dangers of gender-based violence and exploitation. It poses a significant threat multiplier, exacerbating existing socio-economic vulnerabilities. Relatedly, climate change impacts such as persistent droughts, extreme weather events (including floods and cyclones), land degradation, and shifting rainfall patterns profoundly undermine sustainable development in SADC, particularly affecting women and youth.

The delegates were informed that SADC Parliaments hold a vital mandate and play a multifaceted role in promoting effective and equitable climate action. In part, this is accomplished through their functions related to legislation, oversight, and representation. As such, this necessitates that Parliaments in the region enact and strengthen policies to align with regional agreements such as the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, SADC Climate Change Strategy and international climate agreements such as the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). For Acting President, as veritable hubs of representative democracy, parliaments in the region ought to also promote gender-sensitive policies by introducing legislation that ensures a just and equitable approach and mandates the mainstreaming of gender considerations in all climate policies. Equally so, they must play an integral role in facilitating the transition to clean energy by enacting laws and creating enabling policy environments that incentivise renewable energy investments, improve access to clean energy, and leverage critical minerals for sustainable supply chains.

The Acting President concluded his keynote address by citing South Africa's 2024 Climate Change Act, which outlines a national climate change response, including mitigation and adaptation measures, as well as South Africa's fair contribution to the global climate change response. The delegates were informed that the law also sets out to enhance South Africa's ability and capacity over time to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build climate resilience while reducing the risk of job losses and promoting opportunities emerging in the green economy. Lastly, the Acting President urged parliaments to allocate resources effectively, promote accountability, and ensure inclusive, people-centred climate policies.

2.2 Symposium on the Theme: “The Impact of Climate Change on Women and Youth in the SADC Region and the Role of Parliaments in Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation”

The SADC PF 58th Plenary Assembly Session convened a Symposium, on Monday, 1st of December 2025 under a timely and existentially urgent theme "The Impact of Climate Change on Women and Youth in the SADC Region, and the Role of Parliaments in Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation." The Symposium, held at Coastlands Hotel and Convention Centre, Durban- brought together Hon. Speakers and Parliamentarians from 14 SADC Member States, representatives of the South African government, civil society and business representatives. The Symposium provided a viable platform for sharing of experiences and best practices by both state and non-state actors on the impact of climate change on women and youth in the SADC region and on responses to climate change induced natural disasters.

As part of its outcomes, the symposium further provided concrete recommendations for legislative action to support climate resilience; strengthened networks among stakeholders working on climate change, gender, and youth issues and contributed to increased commitment from parliamentarians to integrate gender and youth perspectives into climate policies.

In officially opening the Symposium, the President of the SADC PF, Hon. Speaker Randrianasoloniaiko Siteny Thierry, Speaker of the National Assembly of Madagascar stated that the theme of the 58th Plenary Assembly Symposium is reaffirming the centrality of parliamentary leadership in advancing climate adaptation, resilience, and long-term climate justice across the SADC region through informed, coordinated, and robust parliamentary action. He challenged members of the Forum to decide whether: they want to be remembered for empty resolutions or as the Parliament that truly inspired a binding Regional Charter on Climate for genuine climate action? Whether they want to keep approving budgets blind to climate risk, or they want to champion climate-smart ones that build resilience? Whether they want to watch governments fail in silos, or to press for strong committees that promote accountability? And finally, whether they want to remain passive in the face of suffering, or they want to marshal parliamentary diplomacy to unlock the climate finance our survival requires?

The President of the Forum concluded his opening remarks by imploring SADC PF members to recommit themselves to purposeful climate financing, strengthened accountability, and people-centred adaptation and mitigation strategies. He urged them to choose partnership over isolation, foresight over reaction and courage over hesitation.

The South African Minister of Human Settlements, Ms Thembi Simelane, MP also highlighted the devastating impact of climate change in the SADC region. She said that the 58th SADC PF Plenary Assembly is ‘meeting at a time when our region is experiencing climate impacts of unprecedented scale’. According to Minister Simelane, ‘Climate change is no longer a distant environmental concern. It is a developmental crisis. It is a human settlements crisis. It is a socio-economic and governance crisis, and across the Southern African Development Community, it is increasingly becoming a human security crisis’.

In addition to presentations from eThekweni Municipality, civil society groupings such as Abahlali Basemjondolo (informal settlements dwellers association) and business community as represented by the Toyota Group- the Symposium also benefited from a presentations from the South African government as represented by Mr M Kekana, Deputy Director-General of Climate Change and Air Quality Management, Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. Mr. Kekana’s presentation touched on,

amongst others, the impact of climate change in the SADC region, and parliamentary obligations.

The presentation from the South African Forestry, Fisheries and Environment Ministry highlighted the following: firstly, the fact that the region is likely to become generally drier, with more intense droughts and unprecedented heatwaves. Secondly, the fact that extreme rainfall events are projected to occur more frequently and intensively, with increasing flood hazard, across Mozambique and into eastern South Africa. Thirdly, the possibility of a risk associated with the first Category Five tropical cyclones making landfall in Madagascar, Mozambique and Malawi. Lastly, the fact that across SADC, there is a rising risk of agricultural drought. This relates to the more frequent occurrence of intense heatwaves and an intensifying El Niño – La Niña cycle. On parliamentary diplomacy and regional leadership, SADC PF member parliaments were urged to; firstly, use regional blocs and networks such the SADC Parliamentary Forum (PF), African Parliamentary Network on Climate change (ANPCC), Pan African Parliament (PAP) and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to amplify Africa's voice in global climate issues. Secondly, champion equity, climate finance delivery and technology transfer for the region. Lastly, promote harmonised climate policies across SADC region, especially for shared and transboundary resources

In delivering the vote of thanks, the host Speaker Hon AT Didiza, Speaker of the National Assembly, Parliament of the Republic of South Africa informed the delegates that as they are gathered for the 58th SADC PF Plenary Assembly Symposium, their hearts and prayers are with the people of New Hanover, whose houses and infrastructure was washed away by floods just five days ago. Honourable Speaker further reported that Earlier this year, close to 21 145 individuals in KwaZulu Natal, Eastern Cape and Northern Cape were impacted by floods, severe heart waves and other climate related shocks, illustrating the lived stress and impact of climate change. In her concluding remarks, Hon. Speaker Didiza issued a clarion call for SADC Solidarity. She averred that the challenges of climate change respect no borders. He emphasised that a drought in one member state impacts food security across the region and therefore, legislative responses must be harmonised. She called upon the SADC Parliamentary Forum to strengthen its framework for climate governance. Let us use this Forum to share best

practices, coordinate our legislative efforts on trans-boundary water resources, and push for faster ratification of regional climate protocols.

Speaker Didiza further implored members of the Forum to commit to moving from rhetoric to tangible results and rise to meet the urgency of this moment, ensuring that every piece of legislation we pass, every budget we approve, and every oversight function we execute, is done with the future of our daughters and sons, and the resilience of our beloved SADC region, firmly in mind. Moreover, in closing, she reaffirmed South Africa's commitment to regional cooperation in tackling climate change and promoting a just transition that leaves no woman, no young person, and no vulnerable person behind. For Hon. Didiza, 'Together, we can build a climate-resilient SADC—united in purpose, and unwavering in determination'.

2.3 Presentation of Country Reports on Implementation of the 57th Plenary Assembly Resolutions and Adoption of Standing Committee Reports

The Plenary Assembly deliberated on and adopted resolutions pertaining to multiple matters of interest pursuant to its consideration of various reports. Country Reports on progress made on the implementation of the Resolutions of the 57th Plenary Assembly were considered. The Leaders of Delegations presented their respective country reports to the 58th Plenary Assembly on the 2nd of December 2025. South Africa's country report was presented by Hon. Speaker Didiza.

Following the presentation of Country Reports on progress made on the implementation of the Resolutions of the 57th Plenary Assembly were considered, other reports were also considered, including those submitted by the Forum's Organs, including the Executive Committee, Standing Committees, the Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus (RWPC) and the Regional Parliamentary Model Law Oversight Committee. Moreover, five motions were also considered by the 58th Plenary Assembly and following plenary deliberations, the resolutions adopted touched on various policy, administrative and financial matters of the Forum.

The Standing Committees had examined crucial governance frameworks such as the Revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2021), strategic commitments like the SADC Strategy for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (2019-2030), and the SADC Declaration on Youth Development and Empowerment (2015), as well as key SADC Model Laws on Eradicating Child Marriage, on Gender-Based Violence, and on Elections. At the end, having considered all reports of Standing Committees, the 58th Plenary Assembly:

- I. Called for parliamentary action to address the regional energy deficit by URGING national Parliaments to prioritise the ratification and domestication of the SADC Energy Protocol, strengthen oversight of its implementation and regional power pool integration, and utilise their budgetary authority to approve strategic investments in renewable energy and grid modernisation to promote a just energy transition;
- II. Reaffirmed the critical role of Parliamentarians in election observation for democratic consolidation, called for predictable funding and increased parliamentary participation in SADC PF Election Observation Missions (EOMs), and urged the institutionalisation of EOM funding within the national budgets of Member Parliaments;
- III. Encouraged Member Parliaments to strengthen oversight of anti-corruption strategies, advocate for the ratification of the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, and lead the revision of the SADC Model Law on Elections to address contemporary challenges such as cybersecurity, digital disinformation, and the conduct of elections during public health emergencies;
- IV. Expressed strong support for the RWPC's advocacy for gender-responsive climate action and encouraged Member Parliaments to ensure that climate policies and financing are guided by robust gender analysis, supported by gender-disaggregated data in carbon markets, and reinforced by strengthened oversight to hold implementing agencies accountable to gender inclusion standards;
- V. Commended the landmark benchmarking visit to Lesotho by the Regional Parliamentary Model Laws Oversight Committee and urged Member Parliaments to institutionalise similar peer-learning processes to support the domestication of SADC Model Laws, strengthen legal drafting capacity, enhance multi-stakeholder collaboration, and establish dedicated budgetary allocations and robust monitoring frameworks to translate model laws into tangible outcomes for SADC citizens;

- VI. Commended the ongoing development of the SADC Model Law on Safe Abortion, as mandated by the Plenary Assembly, and urged Member Parliaments to actively champion it as a vital, harmonised regional framework, while facilitating inclusive national consultations on its context-sensitive, rights-based provisions;
- VII. Urged national parliaments to: advocate for the ratification and domestication of the Gender Protocol; accelerate the adoption of gender-responsive budgeting; strengthen monitoring frameworks; implement reforms to address digital gender-based violence; and promote expanded intergenerational dialogue;
- VIII. Reaffirmed the SADC PF's commitment to gender equality and youth empowerment, and called for the development of a Youth Development Scorecard, alongside the institutionalisation of multisectoral engagement and sustained resource allocation to ensure inclusive and effective regional implementation;
- IX. Emphasised the critical need for strengthened parliamentary oversight in the areas of health and labour, by urging parliaments to: ensure adequate domestic funding for health protocols; ring-fence resources for HIV/AIDS and TB programmes; and expedite the ratification of the SADC Protocol on Employment and Labour;
- X. Strongly recommended that the SADC PF advocate for the elevation of the SADC SRHR Strategy into a legally binding Protocol, to ensure uniform legal reforms, enforceable commitments, and mandatory budget allocations across Member States—thereby strengthening accountability, enhancing implementation, and promoting sustainable progress in SRHR;
- XI. Reiterated that regional economic integration relies on effective parliamentary action, and urged Member Parliaments to prioritise the ratification of key trade and industry protocols and their annexes, align national legislation to eliminate non-tariff barriers, and enhance oversight of Executive commitments related to regional trade obligations;
- XII. Resolved to urge SADC Member Parliaments to fast-track ratification and domestication of the Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons, align national laws to support regional integration and a unified investment zone, and enhance oversight to ensure timely implementation of related commitments;

2.4 Consideration of Member's Motions

Following the adoption of all the country reports and standing committee reports tabled, the following Member's motions were all adopted.

- A. The Plenary Assembly adopted the **Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus** moved by Hon. Dr. Senator Linda NXUMALO and seconded by Hon. Julien NYEMBA,
- B. The Plenary Assembly adopted the **Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Standing Committee on Gender Equality, Women Advancement and Youth Development** moved by Hon. Chushi KASANDA, Chairperson of the Standing Committee and seconded by Hon. Senator Thato Mako MOHALE, Vice Chairperson.
- C. The Plenary Assembly adopted the **Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Standing Committee on Human and Social Development and Special Programmes** moved by Hon. Mope KHATI, Chairperson and seconded by Hon. Lynette KARENYI, Vice Chairperson.
- D. The Plenary Assembly adopted the **Motion moved by Hon. Madikizela on Increasing Efforts to Prevent the Spread and Impact of HIV and AIDS in the SADC Region**, reaffirming the urgent need for sustained political commitment, regional coordination and domestic financing to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.
- E. The Plenary Assembly adopted the **Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Standing Committee on Democratisation, Governance and Human Rights** moved by Hon. Senator Isaac MAGAGULA, Committee Member and seconded by Hon. Pedro SEBASTIAO, Committee Member.
- F. The Plenary Assembly adopted the **Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Standing Committee on Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment** moved by Hon. Ruth MENDES, Chairperson and seconded by Hon. Dumelang SALESHANDO, Committee Member.
- G. The Plenary Assembly adopted the **Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Standing Committee on Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Climate Action** moved by Hon. Sicelo JELE, Committee Member and seconded by Hon. Ntombovuyo MENTE, Committee Member.
- H. The Plenary Assembly adopted the **Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Regional Parliamentary Model Laws Oversight Committee** moved by Hon. Chushi KASANDA, Chairperson and seconded by Hon. Mope KHATI, Committee Member.

- I. The Plenary Assembly adopted the **Motion for the Adoption of the Report on the 151st IPU Assembly and other related meetings** held from 19th to 23rd October 2025 in Geneva, Switzerland moved by Hon. Nelly B. K. Kashumba MUTTI, SC, Member of the IPU Executive Committee and Speaker of the Parliament of Zambia and seconded by Hon. Speaker Thoko DIDIZA, Chairperson of the IPU Africa Geopolitical Group.
- J. The Plenary Assembly adopted **Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Executive Committee on Financial Matters (Treasurer's Report)** moved by Hon. Dr. Pinkie Rosemary MANAMOLELA, Treasurer and seconded by Hon. Senator Isaac MAGAGULA – Member of the Executive Committee.
- K. The Plenary Assembly adopted **Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Executive Committee on Policy and Administrative Matters** moved by Hon. Speaker Tlohang SEKHAMANE, Member of the Executive Committee and seconded by Hon. Dumelang SALESHANDO, Member of the Executive Committee.
- L. The Plenary Assembly unanimously adopted the **Motion for the Adoption of the Report of the Joint Sitting of Standing Committees** moved by Hon. Mope KHATI, HSDSP Chairperson and seconded by Hon. Ruth MENDES, TIFI Chairperson.

Pursuant to Rule 45 of the Rules of Procedure, the 57th Plenary Assembly also received statement by Hon. Nelly B. K. Kashumba Mutti, SC, Speaker of the Parliament of Zambia, on the 151th IPU Assembly and other related meetings held from 19th to 23rd October 2025 in Geneva, Switzerland.

3. CLOSING CEREMONY

Following the reading of an official 58th Plenary Assembly Communique, closing Statement was delivered by the SADC PF President & Speaker of the Parliament of Madagascar, Hon. Randrianasoloniaiko Siteny Thierry.

The Plenary Assembly expressed profound concern over the escalating impacts of climate change in the SADC region, including intensified droughts, devastating floods, tropical cyclones, and rising sea levels, which threaten food security, water access, public health, and socio-economic stability, thereby undermining the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and SADC's regional integration agenda.

The Plenary Assembly acknowledged that climate change is neither gender-neutral nor generation-blind, recognising that women and youth bear a disproportionate burden due to pre-existing socio-economic inequalities, reliance on climate-sensitive resources, and limited access to decision-making, finance, and technology.

The Plenary Assembly resolved to prioritise parliamentary oversight and promote regional policy harmonisation to combat the climate crisis, safeguarding citizens and aligning climate action with the developmental aspirations of the SADC region as outlined in the SADC Vision 2050, the AU Agenda 2063, the outcomes of the 2025 G20 Summit, and COP30.

The Plenary Assembly further reaffirmed the critical interlinkages between climate change, health, and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), noting that climate-induced disasters disrupt healthcare systems, restrict access to essential SRHR services, and heighten risks of maternal mortality, gender-based violence, child marriage, and the spread of HIV/AIDS. It also reaffirmed the central role of Parliaments in enacting climate-responsive legislation, approving climate-sensitive budgets, and strengthening oversight, while emphasising the need for dedicated climate research funding and the urgent adoption of gender-responsive, youth-sensitive policies that recognise women and youth as key agents of change.

Moreover, the Plenary Assembly underscored the importance of strong parliamentary oversight to ensure transparency and accountability in climate finance, while promoting innovative financing for a just transition, and urged Member Parliaments to integrate climate resilience into national policies on agriculture, water management, and energy in response to threats to food sovereignty and water security.

The Plenary Assembly commended Member Parliaments for their progress in implementing previous resolutions and exercising effective oversight over the Executive. It further applauded the comprehensive country reports presented, reflecting a strong commitment to peer learning, mutual accountability, and advancing the SADC PF's strategic objective of strengthening the implementation capacity of SADC.

More importantly, the Plenary Assembly also adopted the reports of the Standing Committees, the Joint Sitting of Standing Committees, and the RWPC, which had convened

under the theme, ‘Enhancing the Role of Parliamentarians in Advocating for the Signing, Ratification, Accession, Domestication, and Implementation of SADC Protocols.’ The Committees had deliberated on a wide range of critical regional instruments essential for deepening integration and governance, with a particular focus on key SADC Protocols, including those on Energy (1996), Combating Corruption, Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (2001), Health (1999), Trade (1996), Industry (2019), the Facilitation of Movement of Persons (2005), Finance and Investment (2006), the Revised Protocol on Gender and Development (2016), and the Protocol on Employment and Labour (2025).

The Plenary Assembly adopted the Report of the 151st Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly held in Geneva from 19th to 23rd October 2025, welcomed the active participation of SADC Member Parliaments, acknowledged key outcomes—including the Geneva Declaration on humanitarian norms, resolutions on illegal international adoptions, and the call for a female UN Secretary-General—and commended both Member Parliaments for their continued engagement in global processes and the SADC PF for its effective coordination which ensures a unified SADC voice within the African geopolitical group.

At the end, the Plenary Assembly extended its sincere appreciation to the Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, Hon. Didiza and, through her, to the Government and people of the Republic of South Africa for their warm hospitality, excellent organisation and steadfast commitment to the success of the 58th Plenary Assembly Session.

The Plenary Assembly also expressed its appreciation to the Parliament of the Republic of Seychelles for its commitment to inter-parliamentary cooperation in the SADC region by offering to host the 59th Plenary Assembly scheduled for the first quarter of 2026.

ENDS

- (f) Report of the South African delegation to the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC), India 14 – 16 January 2025.

**REPORT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION TO THE 28th CONFERENCE OF
THE PRESIDING OFFICERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH (CSPOC)**

New Delhi, India

14 - 16 January 2026

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1. PURPOSE	3
2. BACKGROUND	4
3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS	4
Day 1 – Arrival of Delegates and Welcome Ceremony.....	4
Day 2 – Arrival of Presiding Officers and Plenary for Workshop Topics 1 and 2	4
Day 3 – Plenary for Workshop Topic 3 and 4, Special Plenary Topic Session and Closing Plenary	5
4. OBSERVATIONS	7
5. Key Outcomes and Resolutions	8
6. RECOMMENDATIONS and CONCLUSION	9
7. Other LINKS.....	9

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This summary aims to capture the key outcomes and resolutions of the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC), hosted by the Parliament of India in New Delhi from 14 to 16 January 2026. The Conference brought together 61 Speakers and Presiding Officers from 42 Commonwealth parliaments and four semi-autonomous legislatures, reaffirming a shared commitment to strengthening parliamentary democracy.

“Improved performance and effectiveness through information and culture optimisation” is a key strategic outcome of the 2024 – 2029 Strategic Plan of the 7th Parliament. This plan envisions the development (and implementation) of a digital transformation strategy to transition Parliament to a digital workplace, amongst others, by recognising the impact of artificial intelligence. This contributes to the achievement of the strategic priorities of Parliament, i.e. strengthening oversight, enhancing legislative processes and public involvement, improving public appointment processes, and improving international engagements.

In a Special Plenary held, the role of Speakers and Presiding Officers in shaping a People’s Parliament to foster an effective and meaningful democracy were discussed and unpacked. The important aspect of this topic was to enhance public confidence in democratic institutions. The conference concluded with resolute commitment by Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth to continue to enhance democracy by ensuring that Parliamentarians are continuously empowered to exercise their mandate.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to give an account of the outcomes of the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) held in New Delhi, India, from 14 to 16 January 2026.

The delegation was comprised as follows:

- Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces Hon. P. Govender
- Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Hon. Dr. A. Lotriet

The Presiding Officers were supported by:

- Mr GC. Wiegand - Official (Office of the Deputy Speaker NA)
- Ms Z. De Bruyn - Official (Office of the Deputy Chairperson NCOP)

CSPOC is an **independent** group and has no formal affiliation with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Commonwealth Secretariat or the Commonwealth Heads of Government. CSPOC operates on a **two-year cycle**, holding a conference of the full membership every two years, usually early in January, with a meeting of the **Standing Committee** at the same time during the intervening year. The 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the CSPOC Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference was an integral component of the international participation of the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa.

2. BACKGROUND

The 28th CSPOC was hosted by the Parliament of India from 14 to 16 January 2026. During the 28th CSPOC, there were workshops held covering the following topics:

- AI in Parliament: Balancing innovation, Oversight and Adaptation
- Social media and its impact on Parliamentarians
- Innovative strategies to enhance public understanding of Parliament and citizen's participation beyond voting
- Security, Health and wellbeing of Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff.

In addition, a Special Plenary was held to discuss the following topic:

The role of Speakers and Presiding Officers in shaping a People's Parliament, fostering effective and meaningful democracy and strengthening public faith in democratic institutions.

3. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

DAY 1 – ARRIVAL OF DELEGATES AND WELCOME CEREMONY

The delegates were received with a Traditional Welcome, including Members of the Standing Committee of CSPOC, visiting Speakers, Presiding Officers, and their accompanying teams. Shri Om Birla, Hon'ble Speaker of the Lok Sabha and Chairperson of CSPOC, hosted a dinner in their honour, during which a meeting of the Standing Committee of CSPOC was also convened.

DAY 2 – ARRIVAL OF PRESIDING OFFICERS AND PLENARY FOR WORKSHOP TOPICS 1 AND 2

Following the arrival of Honourable Speakers and Presiding Officers of CSPOC Countries, Hon. Shri Om Birla, Speaker of Lok Sabha and Chairperson of 28th CSPOC lead a procession of Speakers and Presiding Officers. This was followed by remarks delivered by the Hon. Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Hon. Dr. Christopher Kalila, Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Hon. Dr. Tulia Ackson, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and Hon. Shri Om Birla in his capacity as Chairperson of the 28th CSPOC.

An **Opening Address** was then made by Hon. Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi who welcomed Speakers and Presiding Officers to India and thanked them for their participation in the Conference. This address was followed by a group photo of Speaker and Presiding Officers with the Prime Minister.

An **Opening Plenary** on Workshop Topics 1 and 2 which included the following:

- Opening remarks by Hon'ble Speaker of Lok Sabha and Chairperson of 28th CSPOC
- Adoption of Agenda
- Announcement of two Vice Chairpersons
- Remarks by Secretary, CSPOC
- Remarks by Hon'ble Speaker of Lok Sabha and Chairperson of 28th CSPOC on future venue of CSPOC and items stemming from Standing Committee Meeting
- Address by Special Invitee Hon. Dr. Tulia Ackson, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

During the Opening Plenary, a Keynote Address on **Workshop Topic 1 - AI in Parliament: Balancing Innovation, Oversight and Adaptation** was undertaken by Hon'ble Leo Cato, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Grenada. This was followed by a Keynote Address on **Workshop Topic 2 - Social media and its impact on Parliamentarians** by Rt. Hon. Dr. Moses M. Wetang'ula, Speaker of the National Assembly, Kenya.

Presiding Officers of CSPOC were divided into **Group A** which would discuss Workshop Topic 1 and **Group B** which would discuss Workshop Topic 2. Group A included a presentation by Sh. Harivansh, Hon. Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha and the session was chaired by Rt. Hon. Tlohang Sekhamane, Speaker of National Assembly, Lesotho. Group B included a presentation by Dr. Jagath Wickramaratne, Hon'ble Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka and the session was chaired by Hon. Juan Watterson, Speaker, House of Keys, Isle of Man.

As the sessions continued, **Group A** then discussed Workshop Topic 2 which included a presentation by Hon'ble Jagdeo Singh, Speaker of House of Representatives, Trinidad & Tobago and the session was Chaired by Hon. Angelo Farrugia, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Malta. Group B then discussed Workshop Topic 1 which included a presentation by H. E. Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Johari bin Abdul, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Malaysia. This session was chaired by H. E. Lord John McFall of Alcluith, Lord Speaker, House of Lords, United Kingdom.

Following these engagements, the day concluded with a Cultural Programme and Banquet Dinner hosted by Shri Om Birla, Hon. Speaker of the Lok Sabha and Chairperson of the 28th CSPOC. The event was held in honour of the attending Speakers and Presiding Officers, as well as their accompanying delegates and spouses.

DAY 3 – PLENARY FOR WORKSHOP TOPIC 3 AND 4, SPECIAL PLENARY TOPIC SESSION AND CLOSING PLENARY

Day 3 of the conference began with a window being provided for CSPOC countries to conduct bilateral engagements. The window of Bilateral Engagements was followed by an opening plenary session which included the following:

- Opening remarks by Hon. Speaker of Lok Sabha and Chairperson of 28th CSPOC
- Address by Special Invitee Dr Christopher Kalila, Hon. Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)
- Keynote Address by Hon. Manzoor Nadir, Speaker of the National Assembly, Guyana on **Workshop Topic 3 - Innovative Strategies to Enhance Public Understanding of Parliament and Citizen Participation Beyond Voting.**
- Keynote Address by Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia, Speaker of the House of Commons, Canada on **Workshop Topic 4 - Security, Health and Wellbeing of Members of Parliament and Parliamentary Staff**

The first session had **Group A** discussing Workshop Topic 3 which included a presentation by Rt. Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nigeria and the session was Chaired by Hon'ble Milton Dick, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Australia. **Group B** discussed Workshop Topic 4 which included a presentation by Hon. Dithapelo Keorapetse, Speaker of the National Assembly of Botswana and the session was chaired by Hon'ble Mrs. Shirin Aumeeruddy-Cziffra, Speaker of the National Assembly of Mauritius.

During the second session, Group A discussed Workshop Topic 4 and Group B discussed Workshop Topic 3. Group A included a presentation by Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Speaker of House of Commons, United Kingdom and the session was chaired by Sir Richard McMahon, Bailiff of Guernsey, States of Guernsey. Notably, Group B included a presentation by **Hon. Mr. P. Govender, Deputy Chairperson, National Council of Provinces, South Africa** who addressed the Conference session on the topic of "[Innovative Strategies to Enhance Public Understanding of Parliament and Citizen Participation Beyond Voting](#)". This session was chaired by Rt. Hon'ble Robert MacRae, Bailiff, Jersey.

Following these sessions, a lunch was hosted by Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan, Hon. Vice President of India. A session was then hosted which provided Chairpersons of Groups A and B with the opportunity to present reports on discussions pertaining to Workshop Topics 1, 2, 3 and 4. A "lightning round" was then conducted which allowed some interaction on the discussed topics. The special plenary session was then hosted on the topic of "The Role of Speakers and Presiding Officers in maintaining strong democratic institutions".

After some remarks, a keynote address was made by Shri Om Birla, Hon'ble Speaker of Lok Sabha and Chairperson of 28th CSPOC and the floor was open for interventions with 3 minutes allocated for each delegate subject to availability of time.

This interactive session was followed by a closing ceremony which included the following:

- Announcement of nomination/election of new Members of CSPOC Standing Committee for the term 2026-2028
- Venues for future conferences and meetings

Shri Om Birla, Hon. Speaker of the Lok Sabha and Chairperson of the 28th CSPOC, formally handed over the Chairmanship of CSPOC to Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Hon. Speaker of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom and host of the 29th CSPOC. Sir Lindsay Hoyle then delivered an acceptance speech regarding the United Kingdom's hosting of the next conference. The session was concluded by Hon. Shri Om Birla.

Day 4 of the conference was comprised of tours with delegations expected to depart from India on Day 5 of the conference.

4. OBSERVATIONS

Members of the South African delegation participating in the 68th CPC observed the following:

- The CSPOC was attended by Speakers and Presiding Officers of Parliaments of **53 Commonwealth** countries, and a total of **229** delegates attended the Conference. Two of the Special Invitees to 28th CSPOC were **Hon. Dr. Tulia Ackson, President of Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) and Hon. Dr. Christopher Kalila, Chairperson, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.**
- The **Standing Committee of CSPOC** is an important structure comprised of fifteen (15) members, with five members forming the quorum, ensuring both broad representation and effective decision-making between Conferences. The Committee is chaired by the Speaker of the lower House of the jurisdiction hosting the next Conference, with its term of office extending from the conclusion of one Conference until the end of the subsequent Conference. The Committee comprises elected regional representatives along with three ex officio members representing the previous host, the current host and the next host legislatures, ensuring continuity and regional balance. The Standing Committee is **responsible for deciding the dates, venues and procedures of the next Conference**, as well as **proposing subjects** for discussion and preparing the **draft agenda**. In addition, the Committee **reviews the Standing Rules** and **proposes draft amendments** for consideration by the Conference, while also **overseeing organisational and financial arrangements** of the CSPOC.

5. KEY OUTCOMES AND RESOLUTIONS

Reaffirmation of Parliamentary Democracy: Delegates unanimously reiterated their commitment to democratic institutions founded on fairness, impartiality, accountability, and respect for constitutional values.

Responsible Use of Technology: The Conference highlighted the need for ethical frameworks governing artificial intelligence and digital tools in parliamentary work, emphasising transparency, data protection, and avoidance of misinformation.

Role of Speakers and Presiding Officers: Participants underlined the evolving role of Presiding Officers as guardians of parliamentary dignity, neutrality, and orderly conduct, particularly in polarised political environments.

Citizen Engagement Beyond Elections: Legislatures resolved to adopt innovative approaches to strengthen public trust, including digital outreach, enhanced committee work, and civic education beyond voting cycles.

Managing Social Media Impact: The Conference stressed collective responsibility to address the disruptive effects of social media on parliamentary debate while safeguarding freedom of expression.

Well-being, Safety, and Security of Members: Delegates recognised the importance of protecting the physical and mental well-being of Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff.

Knowledge Sharing within the Commonwealth: There was strong support for structured exchange of best practices, capacity-building initiatives, and technological cooperation among Commonwealth parliaments.

Handover of CSPOC Chairmanship: The chairmanship of the CSPOC was formally handed over to the Speaker of the UK House of Commons, confirming London as the host of the 29th CSPOC.

The 28th CSPOC highlighted the enduring importance of Speakers' Conferences as strategic platforms for addressing emerging democratic challenges. The conference in New Delhi is widely regarded as a milestone, marked by record participation and a strong focus on technology, democratic delivery, institutional trust, and inclusivity across Commonwealth parliaments.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Having noted the above-mentioned observations, the following recommendations can be considered:

- South Africa must continue its strategic participation in the CSPOC and carefully consider what role it will play at upcoming events relating to Commonwealth Parliaments
- With continued strategic engagement in CSPOC, South Africa can become an important voice in bringing an innovative perspective on matters affecting the role played by Parliaments and Parliamentarians
- South Africa must continue to share its successes and approaches to challenges while also continuing to strive for positive change within Commonwealth Parliaments.

7. OTHER LINKS

1. [*PM Modi's inauguration speech 28th CSPOC January 2026*](#)
 2. [CPA Official Conference Report](#)
-

- (g) Report of the Forum for Parliamentarians with Disabilities Cape Town 26 – 28 May 2026.

REPORT OF THE FORUM FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES

26-28 May 2026

The Westin Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa

Prepared by:

International Relations & Protocol Division (IRPD) and the Parliamentary Research Unit (PRU)

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	2
1. PURPOSE	3
2. BACKGROUND	3
3. OBSERVATIONS	3
4. CONCLUSION	5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) Forum 2026 held an event to bring together Parliamentarians living with disabilities from across the globe, to share best practices in advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities. This CPwD event was hosted in partnership with the Provincial Parliament of Western Cape. The Forum concluded with a site visit Jo-Dolphin Swartland APD based in Malmesbury, outside of Cape Town.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to give an account to the discussions which took place during the Forum for Parliamentarians with Disabilities which was held at the Westin Hotel in Cape Town, South Africa and hosted in partnership with the Provincial Parliament of the Western Cape.

Members nominated from the **National Council of Provinces** were as follows:

- Hon. House Chairperson Dennis Ryder :
- Hon. Mapule Gladys Dhlamini:

Members nominated from the **National Assembly** were as follows:

- Hon. Tshehofatso Meagan Chauke-Adonis
- Hon. Zibuse Khayelihle Abednego Cele

Parliamentary officials providing support included

- Ms. Nomfundo Sonjica (IRPD)
- Dr. David Madlala (PRU)
- Mr. Jorome Charles (IRPD)

2. BACKGROUND

The **Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD)** network has been established to facilitate activities and programmes to champion and increase the representation of persons with disabilities and to work towards the mainstreaming of disability considerations in Commonwealth Parliaments, and across all CPA activities and programmes.

The Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) Forum 2026 is the first Pan-Commonwealth CPwD event held since 2017 and sought to bring together Parliamentarians living with disabilities from across the globe, to share best practices in advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities. This CPwD event was hosted in partnership with the Provincial Parliament of Western Cape.

3. OBSERVATIONS

On the 26th of May 2026, the Forum began with remarks the Chairperson of the CPwD Senator Hon. Isaiah Jacob of Malaysia. These remarks were followed by remarks from the Speaker of the Pfovincial Parliament of the Western Cape Hon. Daylin Mitchell. Remarks were also made by a representative of the CPA as well as a representative from the organisation Disabled People South Africa.

These remarks were followed with a session of opening reflections entitled “The Commonwealth and Disability Rights” which discussed progress and gaps in advancing inclusion within parliaments across the Commonwealth. The speakers during this session included a Representative of the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Hon. Timothy Wanyoni (Member of the National Assembly of Kenya and CPwD Africa Regional Champion).

Session 1 of the Forum discussed the topic “**Intersectionality and Inclusion: Women with Disabilities in Political Leadership**”. This session examined how gender and disability intersect to create unique challenges in accessing elected office, and explored effective strategies for advancing

representation. Participants of this session discussed mentorship, advocacy, and institutional support systems, including the role of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) network in promoting intersectional inclusion across the Commonwealth's democracies.

Day 1 of the Forum concluded with a welcome reception at the Western Cape Provincial Parliament.

Day 2 of the Forum began with **Session 2** which discussed the topic “**Legislative Leadership for Disability Inclusion**”. This session was intended to examine effective approaches to drafting, debating, and enacting disability rights laws, as well as the critical oversight role parliaments play in ensuring implementation. Case studies were discussed to demonstrate how legislative champions have successfully advanced inclusion in their jurisdictions and references will be made to the CPA's own model law for disability acts. Speakers during this session included:

- Nomahlubi Khwinana, Human Rights Commissioner
- Naleli Morojele, Research Advisor
- Sharlene Cassel, Chairlady of South African Disability Alliance

The morning component of Day 2 was followed by **Session 3** which discussed the topic “**Accessibility in Action - Building and Auditing Inclusive Parliamentary Environments**”. This session was intended to showcase real-world examples of accessible parliamentary design, adapted procedures, and inclusive communication practices from Commonwealth jurisdictions. Participants explored how small changes can create a transformative impact for parliamentarians and staff with disabilities. Participants will work through practical exercises to identify gaps in their own parliamentary environments and develop action plans for improvement. This hands-on session empowered attendees with a framework they can immediately apply in their home legislatures. Speakers during this session included:

- Prof Theresa Lorenzo PhD Programme Convenor, Division of Disability Studies
- Clive Barker, Programmes Manager, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

Day 2 of the Forum was concluded by **Session 4** which discussed the topic “**Employment and Representation - Pathways for Persons with Disabilities in Politics**”. This session was comprised of a roundtable where parliamentarians with disabilities shared their lived experiences of navigating political systems, electoral processes, and workplace challenges. Participants identified actionable strategies to create more inclusive pathways to political representation in workplaces, even including their own Parliaments (e.g. internships specifically targeted for persons with disabilities). This session also considered how Parliaments should consider themselves as model institutions in societies, spearheading wider participation. The primary speaker during this session was Bongiwe Matsane, National Executive Committee Member.

The final day of the Forum began with **Session 5** which discussed the topic **Partnering for Progress - Civil Society and the Role of Parliamentary Committees**. This session was intended to examine effective collaboration models between parliaments, national disability councils, disabled people's organisations (DPOs), and civil society. This session presented participants with case studies of how parliamentary committees have worked with disability advocates to shape inclusive policies and strengthen oversight. The session included a presentation by Andrew Madella of the Disabled People South Africa (DPSA).

Session 5 was then followed by **Session 6** which discussed the topic **Technology and Innovation for Political Participation**. The session was intended to explore how digital tools, assistive technologies, and e-parliament innovations can enhance the participation of persons

with disabilities. This session examined accessible voting systems, remote participation options, real-time captioning, and other technological solutions that are transforming parliamentary accessibility. Participants discussed both opportunities and challenges in implementing technology-driven inclusion. This session included a presentation by Sharlene Cassel, Chairperson of South African Disability Alliance.

The final day of the Forum included a site visit Jo-Dolphin Swartland APD based in Malmesbury, outside of Cape Town. Jo-Dolphin Swartland APD is a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) committed to creating a more inclusive and supportive community for individuals with disabilities

4. CONCLUSION

The Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) network encourages all Parliamentarians to include a disabilities perspective in all aspects of their role - legislation, oversight and representation - and helps Parliaments to become institutions that are sensitive to issues that persons with disabilities are confronted with, as an often marginalised group. The network helps Parliaments to sensitise themselves to disability issues in a variety of ways, including supporting changes to facilities for accessibility, the development of research publications and the coordination of workshops and events to further promote the disability agenda. It is critical that the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa continues participate meaningfully in events and initiatives conducted by the CPwD network.

- (h) Report of the 4th African Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Family, Sovereignty and African Values, Accra, Ghana 3 – 6 June 2026.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PROTOCOL DIVISION

PO Box 15 Cape Town 8000 Republic of South Africa

Tel: 27 (21) 403 2911

www.parliament.gov.za

www.parliament.gov.za

DELEGATION REPORT

*(CONSOLIDATING PARLIAMENTARY CONSENSUS: ADVANCING THE
AFRICAN CHARTER ON FAMILY, VALUES AND SOVEREIGNTY)*

**(4TH AFRICAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE
ON FAMILY, SOVEREIGNTY AND AFRICAN VALUES)**

03 - 06 JUNE 2026

ACCRA, GHANA

1. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

This report provides an overview of the outcomes emanating from the 4th African Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Family, Sovereignty and Values that was held in Accra, Ghana, from the 3-6 June 2026. The Conference is an annual gathering of conservative African legislators, religious leaders, and civil society groups dedicated to protecting traditional family structures. It seeks to reject what it refers to as foreign social ideologies (including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and/or Aromantic, plus other+ identities (LGBTQ+) rights and certain reproductive health mandates). The conference also seeks to draft its own Continental Charter on Family Values and further launch a formalised parliamentary network.

Moreover, it is a private event that is not mandated by any inter-governmental body and was initially established by the Republic of Uganda to promote Uganda's 2023 Anti-Homosexual Act as a legislative model for the African Continent. The intended objectives of its deliberations are poised towards laying a foundation for a coordinated response to the emerging challenges that impact traditional family systems and the integrity of national and cultural identity, stemming from interactions on intellectual, cultural and legislative levels.

The African Inter-Parliamentary Conference had since convened three conferences on Family Values and Sovereignty, with the first focused on the of Protecting African culture and family values. The second gathering was also convened in Uganda in 2024 with the aim of deepening dialogue by strengthening inter-parliamentary collaborations on family values and sovereignty. Similarly, the third conference, centered on the development of a continental framework under the theme "Towards an African Charter on Family Values and Sovereignty," was held in Uganda in 2025, thereby establishing a foundation for the eventual adoption of the Charter in 2026.

The 4th African Inter-parliamentary Conference was held under the theme "Consolidating Parliamentary Consensus: Advancing the African Charter on Family Values and Sovereignty", thus aligning it to the sequential progression of previous

conferences. In particular, the conference focused its deliberations on the following thematic areas;

- African Family Systems in Contemporary Times: Dynamics, Pressure and Resilience
- Sovereignty and Cultural Preservation: Implications for Law-Making and Governance
- Values-based Education and Youth Development; Safeguarding Future Generations
- Gender, Marriages and Family Well-being: Promoting Balance While Upholding Cultural Norms
- Technology, Media and Global Influences: Assessing Risks to African Identity and Family Cohesion
- Comparative Legislative Approaches: Lessons from African and Global Jurisdictions

The Parliament of South Africa attended and participated in the proceedings of the 4th African Inter-Parliamentary Conference [you might need to mention the session(s) SA delegation participated in). The delegation comprised of the following;

- **Hon Zandile Majozi: House Chairperson for International Relations in the National Assembly (Leader of Delegation).**
- **Mr Andile Ngcongco: Accompanying Official in the Office of the House Chairperson**
- **Mr Mzuvukile Ngese: Policy Analyst: International Relations and Protocol Division (IRPD)**

Fully aware of the exclusionary, conservative and problematic nature of the policy issues discussed by this parliamentary network, the South African Parliament chose to attend and participate to allow itself an opportunity to present its perspective and express its rejection of the issues that sought to contradict its constitution, and the fact that these are issues the country has legislated because of the political history the country emerges from. . The South African Parliament also opted to participate in order to provide clarity to other parliaments in the continent regarding its comprehensive approach to promoting and upholding human rights across racial, gender, and sexual orientation lines, as enshrined in the country's constitution.

It was essential for the Parliament of South Africa to adopt a stance of constructive criticism among fellow African parliamentarians in order to persuade one another regarding the exclusionary and discriminatory approaches that the charter is taking

towards the rights of individuals involved in same-sex marriages and homosexuality, which are characterized as foreign ideologies that are alien to the African context. In the final analysis, the message that seem to come strongly from this conference was a shared concern over growing threats to the African family, national sovereignty, and societal values arising from external pressures, ideological influences, and policy frameworks that do not reflect the aspirations, traditional and realities of African peoples.

2. Messages of Solidarity

The 4th Conference on African Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation began with the messages of solidarity from the Chief of Staff of the Republic of Ghana, Hon Julious Deborah, representing H.E John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana. He reaffirmed the importance of preserving African values through strong families, responsible leadership and institutions that promote social cohesion and national identity. He also advocated for family-centered policies that promote social protection systems, improved maternal and child health services, expanded employment opportunities, and inclusive economic growth. Moreover, Hon. Deborah further reaffirmed Africa's commitment to international cooperation, mutual respect and constructive partnerships while insisting on the continent's right to chart its own development path. He called on delegates to ensure that the principles of the African Charter on Family Values and Sovereignty are translated into practical actions and policies.

His message was followed by the Chair of the Conference of Speakers and Presidents of the African Legislatures (COSPAL) and Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana, Hon Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin. In his keynote address, the Hon. Speaker drew a parallel between the Fourth African Inter-Parliamentary Conference and the 1958 All-African Peoples' Conference in Accra. He stated that Africa has achieved political independence but now faces a new struggle to preserve its cultural identity, family values, and sovereignty. The Hon Speaker further stressed that the family is the most fundamental unit of governance and social security on the continent and that weakening family structures directly undermines national stability. He cautioned against external pressures imposing foreign legal and cultural paradigms. He further highlighted severe strains on African families from

poverty, migration educational deficiencies, and unregulated digital influences, calling for a shift from rhetoric to practical actions. He urged targeted government policies such as affordable housing, child nutrition, maternal healthcare, and support for elderly care, as opposed to harmful traditional practices, and child labour.

3. Discussion and Analysis: Thematic Issues and keys Issues Arising from the African Charter on Family, Sovereignty and Values

3.1 African Family Systems in Contemporary Times: Dynamics, pressures, resilience

During the deliberations on the thematic area, delegates expressed a range of perspectives and divergent views, including sharing their experiences in relation to their national policies and constitutional provisions. Some participants recognised that true sovereignty may require difficult choices and sacrifices, and stressed that Africa's sovereignty, cultural identity, and value systems are non-negotiable and must not be compromised in exchange for foreign assistance, political influence, or external conditionalities. Participants identified weakening transmission of African values to younger generations due to poverty, youth unemployment, parental neglect, excessive dependence on digital media, and declining engagement with traditional and faith-based institutions and agreed on renewed efforts by families, communities, religious bodies, and educational institutions to strengthen moral formation and cultural education.

Some participants deliberated on the growing erosion of African family structures, cultural identity, communal values, and moral foundations resulting from rapid globalisation, urbanisation, migration, technological influences, and increasing social fragmentation and agreed that the family remains the natural and fundamental unit of society and the primary vehicle for the transmission of values, culture, faith, and civic responsibility. A segment of participants expressed concern regarding external ideological and cultural pressures that aim to redefine African notions of family, marriage, morality, and social organization. They concurred that African nations should safeguard the sovereign rights of their citizens and establish their own values, laws, policies, and development priorities in alignment with their cultural traditions, constitutional frameworks, and aspirations.

4.Sovereignty and Cultural Preservation: Implications for Law-Making and Governance

During this session South Africa presented its perspective and articulated its viewpoint on the protection of fundamental freedoms for all individuals, regardless of gender, race, or sexual orientation, in accordance with the principles outlined in the Universal Declarations of Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Honourable Majozi further emphasized that South Africa has enacted legislation to protect and recognize the fundamental freedoms associated with same-sex marriages, and that the country's constitution safeguards the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. She informed the delegates that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is regarded as one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, as it explicitly prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. Ratified in 1996, it was the first national constitution in the world to safeguard the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals. The basis for LGBTQ+ rights in South Africa is found in Section 9(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. It states that the state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on several grounds, including:

- Sexual orientation
- Race, gender, and sex
- Marital status, age, and disability

Based on this constitutional mandate, the Parliament and Government of the Republic of South Africa have enacted the following sweeping legislative protections and landmark court rulings [this is not complete, some information is missing]:

During the discussions, participants deliberated on the need to preserve the sovereignty and cultural values of African nations and noted that there is growing erosion of African family structures, cultural identity, communal values, and moral foundations resulting from rapid globalisation, urbanisation, migration, technological influences, and increasing social fragmentation and agreed that in Africa, the family remains the natural and fundamental unit of society and the primary vehicle for the transmission of cultural values, religion, education, nutrition and civic responsibility.

Participants were concerned by external ideological and cultural pressures that seek to redefine African conceptions of family, marriage, morality, and social organisation and agreed that African nations must reaffirm the sovereignty of the African people to determine their own values, laws, policies, and development priorities in accordance with their cultural traditions, constitutional frameworks, and aspirations.

Participants appreciated that true sovereignty may require difficult choices and sacrifices, and stressed that Africa's sovereignty, cultural identity, and value systems are non-negotiable and must not be compromised in exchange for foreign assistance, political influence, or external conditionalities.

Participants further expressed their concern by the weakening transmission of African values to younger generations due to poverty, youth unemployment, parental neglect, excessive dependence on digital media, and declining engagement with traditional and faith-based institutions, and agreed for renewed efforts by families, communities, religious bodies, and educational institutions to strengthen moral formation and cultural education. It was reiterated that for sovereignty and African culture to be preserved, there must be consistent strengthening of collaboration among Parliaments, traditional authorities, faith-based institutions, civil society organizations, and citizens to develop and implement practical frameworks, policies, and accountability mechanisms that promote family values, cultural resilience, national sovereignty, and African-led solutions to African challenges.

5. Values-Based Education and Youth Development: Safeguarding Future Generations

In this thematic area, discussions centered on educational systems as a means to safeguard the future of African youth. It was observed that there is increasing moral uncertainty, sexualized education, cultural fragmentation, and a decline in values within contemporary societies, all of which pose a threat to social cohesion, national identity, and the moral foundations essential for sustainable development. There was a consensus to advocate for policies and programs that reinforce families in their role of imparting values, culture, religion, responsibility, and respect for human dignity to future generations.

Participants further examined the growing influence of digital platforms, commercial entertainment systems, and social media algorithms on the attitudes and behaviours of African youth, often in the absence of adequate parental guidance, cultural context, or moral direction. They reached a consensus on the establishment of mentorship and youth development programs that involve parents, educators, faith-based organizations, traditional authorities, and community leaders to guide African youth towards responsible citizenship and leadership. It was recommended that value-based education be prioritized, family life be strengthened, mentorship and moral leadership be promoted, all aimed at preserving African identity and empowering young people as agents of positive change.

Gender, Marriage, and Family Well-being: Promoting Balance While Upholding Cultural Norms

In this session, participants were concerned that sex education in some contexts is increasingly detached from family involvement, cultural values, and moral responsibility and agreed to advocate family-centred and age-appropriate approaches to sex education that actively involve parents and guardians as primary educators of their children. In this regard, delegates expressed concern that changing social attitudes towards marriage may undermine its perceived role in family formation, child development, and social stability and stressed to promote policies, programmes, and educational initiatives that encourage the active involvement of fathers and men in family life, parenting, and the moral formation of children.

A concern was expressed regarding contemporary discussions on family life, parenting, and sexuality, which have increasingly marginalized the role of fathers and men. This marginalization has the potential to weaken family structures and the transmission of values. It was agreed to promote policies, programs, and educational initiatives that encourage the active involvement of fathers and men in family life, parenting, and the moral development of children.

To this end, participants emphasised the need for legislative frameworks that promote family cohesion, child welfare, and cultural values and agreed to support continued dialogue among African parliaments, governments, faith-based organisations, traditional leaders, civil society, and families towards the development and implementation of policies that strengthen families, protect children, and preserve Africa's cultural heritage and values.

6. Technology, Media, and Global Influences: assessing risks to African identity and family cohesion

Under this session, participants discussed the need to mitigate the negative effect of technology on the African youth and agreed to develop comprehensive national and continental frameworks for data protection, cybersecurity and digital governance and accelerate the ratification, domestication and implementation of the Malabo Convention across African countries. They agreed that to safeguard African data sovereignty through local data hosting, data localisation policies and stronger regulatory oversight, develop indigenous African AI systems, language models and digital technologies.

Furthermore, participants appreciated that African governments should promote the inclusion of African languages, cultures, traditions and indigenous knowledge systems within digital platforms and AI applications. They also agreed to protect African children and youth from harmful online content, cyberbullying, digital exploitation and technology-driven addiction by enhancing digital literacy and cybersecurity awareness programmes for citizens, families, educators and public institutions.

Lastly, participants emphasized the need for enhanced collaboration among governments, universities, technology experts, civil society organizations, and policymakers to promote greater African participation in shaping global digital governance standards, content moderation frameworks, and technology regulations. This collaboration is essential for effectively addressing the challenges posed by digital governance and emerging technologies.

7. Comparative Legislative Approaches: Lessons from African and global Jurisdictions

During this session delegates discussed the need to strengthen policies and legal frameworks aimed at protecting children, safeguarding the right to life, and ensuring the welfare and dignity of vulnerable groups within society. They further took note of the effort to divert and redefine African values through other legislations and agreed that effort should be made to promote African identity,

An analysis was conducted to explore comparative legislative approaches in the African context and in other jurisdictions, leading to a consensus that policy frameworks should continue to align with existing international and regional human rights instruments, including the International Bill of Rights and core human rights treaties. Participants concurred that national political, legal, and human rights institutions must be strengthened to ensure effective protection of rights, accountability, and the preservation of African sovereignty. Additionally, integration, unity, and cultural heritage were identified as key drivers of sustainable political and economic advancement across the continent.

8. Observations and the Critique of the African Charter on Family, Sovereignty and Values

The Charter Promotes what it describes as Family Values by rejecting the incorporation of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) within legal and policy frameworks. It calls on signatory states to review national laws, policies and international commitments to remove references to SRHR from legal and policy instruments. It proposes that States reassess international and regional human rights treaties they have ratified, signed or acceded to, as well as interpretations issued by treaty monitoring bodies. The stated objective is to reject concepts associated with SRHR that the draft Charter characterises as ideological foreign, or incompatible with Africa Values.

The Charter appears to attribute challenges relating to sexuality, reproduction, and family wellbeing to the influence of international legal frameworks or the SRHR discourse.

Sexual abuse often occurs within family or community settings, unsafe abortion persists despite restrictive legal environments, and sexual and gender-based violence remains prevalent across diverse legal systems. These realities cannot reasonably be attributed to the existence of international human rights law relating to sexuality and reproduction, or its interpretive frameworks. The challenges facing African families and children are rooted in complex social, economic, and structural conditions.

The draft African Charter on the Protection of the Family, Sovereignty, and Religious and Cultural Values (draft Charter) presents itself as an urgent normative response to perceived threats to African family systems, cultural identity, and state sovereignty. Framed as the product of consultations among political leaders, legal actors, religious authorities, and civil society, the draft Charter asserts that African families and values are under siege from foreign ideologies, donor-driven agendas, and evolving interpretations of international human rights law. It positions family protection as the foundation of Africa's moral integrity, social cohesion, development, and sovereignty, and advances a values-based framework aimed at reclaiming what it describes as Africa's moral and developmental autonomy.

The central finding of this analysis is that the draft Charter retains the language of rights, equality, and legal principle throughout its text, yet systematically diminishes the protective essence of that language. This represents a deliberate technique of distortion in which established legal concepts are cited in form but inverted in substance. For instance, the provisions regarding equality fail to include enforceable protections against discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, and other statuses.

References to family protection sever the obligations to eliminate discrimination against women and to uphold the best interests of the child that are attached to family rights in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Charter) and the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol). The language of sovereignty is deployed not in defence of political self-determination but to justify near-absolute state control over health, education, sexuality, and moral life, and to authorise the rejection of treaty obligations that African states have voluntarily assumed.

Measured against the interpretive standards established in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT), which obliges states to interpret treaty terms in good faith, in

accordance with their ordinary meaning, and in light of a treaty's object and purpose, the draft Charter's definitional provisions and operative articles systematically invert these principles.

Key terms are assigned meanings that contradict the object and purpose of instruments to which African states are party, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the African Charter, the Maputo Protocol, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC).

9. Institutionalisation of the African Inter-Parliamentary Network and Adoption of the Charter

During the plenary sessions and discussions, significant time was dedicated to deliberating recommendations concerning the formal establishment of the parliamentary network, including its intended purpose and responsibilities. A key recommendation was for the Conference of Speakers and Presidents of African Legislatures to formally adopt the activities, processes, resolutions, and outcome documents resulting from the first four Inter-Parliamentary Conferences, which led to the development of the Charter.

It was also recommended that COSPAL establish a Committee on Family, Sovereignty, and Values, composed of three to five Speakers of Parliament, to provide strategic oversight and direction for the institutionalization process. Furthermore, it was suggested that COSPAL create a Secretariat, drawing from the founding members and supported by appropriate technical expertise, to coordinate and advance the work of the Network.

10. Adoption of the Charter and Conclusion

Following the deliberations of the recommendations relating to the establishment of the African Parliamentary Network, the plenary session focused its attention on the item relating to the adoption of the African Charter. During this session some delegates from Liberia proposed that the adoption must be extended to a later period to allow countries and member Parliament consult comprehensively with their government on the issues emerging on the content of the Draft African Charter on Family, Sovereignty and Values. It was also during this moment that South Africa through the representation of Honourable Majozi expressed a motion that in a spirit of good faith will not be adopting the African Charter on Family, Sovereignty and Values. The reasons emanate from the fact the Charter contradicts the South African constitution and does not align with the regional and international laws that South Africa is signatory to and has legislated on. It is exclusionary and discriminatory in its approach and the issues that it is at variance with are issues that South Africa has legislated on. It is therefore impossible for Parliament as a custodian of oversight to be at the point of convergence with the conference by adopting a charter contradicts the country's constitution and our national laws.

Throughout our participation at the 4th African Inter-Parliamentary Conference, the South Africa delegation implemented its strategic imperatives of deepening engagement in international fora and promoted its parliamentary diplomacy priorities of complementarity and norm setting. This approach emphasized the promotion of constitutional values and maintained that, in the spirit of complementarity, South Africa's parliamentary diplomacy should align with government positions. It is essential to ensure that these efforts are consistent with South Africa's Constitution, national interests, and national development goals, fostering a cohesive approach that reflects the nation's unified stance on international matters.

Equally, given its decision not to adopt the Charter due to its problematic and exclusionary nature, one could effectively argue that our participation in strategic international engagements has demonstrated a commitment to promoting respect for international law, human rights, democracy, and social justice at both regional and international levels, thereby highlighting South Africa's dedication to fostering stability and cooperation on the global stage.

This report is submitted to leader of delegation for her consideration and further processing. Equally, the report is hereby submitted to the Parliamentary Group on International Relations for noting and further discussion by the Members of the PGIR and Presiding Officers if so required.



PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

TABLING OF DELEGATION REPORTS

REFERRALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO PORTFOLIO AND SELECT COMMITTEES

The Parliamentary Group on International Relations (PGIR) is advised to refer the following reports to the below noted Portfolio Committees and Select Committees for implementation.

1. *Report of the 2nd P20 Women Parliamentarians Meeting_Cape Town_29 – 30 September 2025*

Declaration by the 2nd P20 Women Parliamentarians Meeting	Committees (s) to be referred to
JOINT DECLARATION OF THE 2ND P20 WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS MEETING	• Multi-Party Women Caucus • SC on Social Services • PC on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities • PC on Forestry, Fisheries and Environment.

2. *Report of the Inaugural P20 Young Parliamentarians Meeting_Cape Town_29 – 30 September 2025*

Declaration by the 2nd P20 Women Parliamentarians Meeting	Committees (s) to be referred to
Joint Declaration of the 2 nd Inaugural P20 Young Parliamentarians Meeting	• PC on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

To translate commitment into action, the report recommends that:

- The Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities will serve as the coordination mechanism for implementation oversight with the other relevant committees including Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation (which is expected to galvanise support for the formalisation of P20 Young Parliamentarians Meeting in multilateral inter-parliamentary structures such as BRICS Parliamentary Forum) Select Committee on Social Services and the Portfolio Committee on Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (which is supposed to champion the involvement of young parliamentarians and integration of youth perspectives in climate change negotiations and law-making processes)
- Reporting on progress will ensure accountability and sustained momentum.

3. Report of the South African Parliamentary delegation to the 30th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the 20th Session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the 7th Session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of Parties to the Paris Agreement_Brazil_15 – 21 November 2025

	Committees (s) to be referred to
30th UN Climate Change Conference (COP30)	• PC on Forestry fisheries and the Environment • PC on Electricity and Energy

4. Report of the South African delegation to the Artificial Intelligence Conference on the role of Parliament in shaping the future of responsible AI_Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 28 – 30 November 2025

	Committees (s) to be referred to
Artificial Intelligence Conference	• PC on Communication and Digital Technologies • PC on Basic Education • PC on Higher Education and Training

5. Report of the South African Delegation to the 58th SADC PF Plenary Assembly, Durban_ 29 Nov - 6 Dec 2025

Resolution by 58 th SADC PF	Committee(s) to be referred to
The need to prioritise parliamentary oversight and promote regional policy harmonisation to combat the climate crisis, safeguarding citizens and aligning climate action with the developmental aspirations of the SADC region as outlined in the SADC Vision 2050, the AU Agenda 2063, the outcomes of the 2025 G20 Summit, and COP30.	• PC on Forestry, Fisheries and Environment • PC on Agriculture • PC on Land Reform and Rural Development • PC on Minerals and Petroleum Resources • SC on Agriculture, Land Reform and Mineral Resources • PC on Small Business Development • PC on Water and Sanitation
The need to prioritise the ratification and domestication of the SADC Energy Protocol, strengthen oversight of its implementation and regional power pool integration, and utilise their budgetary authority to approve strategic investments in renewable energy and grid modernisation to promote a just energy transition; Error! Reference source not found.	• PC on Electricity and Energy • PC on Minerals and Petroleum Resources • SC on Economic Development and Trade
The need for predictable funding and increased parliamentary participation in	• Parliamentary Group on International Relations (PGIR) • Parliamentary Administration [Secretariat]

SADC PF Election Observation Missions (EOMs), and institutionalisation of EOM funding within the national budgets of Member Parliaments; Error! Reference source not found.	• SC and PC Programming Committees
Error! Reference source not found. need to strengthen oversight of anti-corruption strategies, advocate for the ratification of the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, and lead the revision of the SADC Model Law on Elections to address contemporary challenges such as cybersecurity, digital disinformation, and the conduct of elections during public health emergencies;	• PC on International Relations and Cooperation • SC on Justice and Security • PC on Police • PC on Justice and Constitutional Development
The need to ensure that climate policies and financing are guided by robust gender analysis, supported by gender-disaggregated data in carbon markets, and reinforced by strengthened oversight to hold implementing agencies accountable to gender inclusion standards	• PC on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities • PC on Social Development • SC on Health and Social Services • Multi-Party Women's Caucus • PC on Trade, Industry and Competition • PC on Small Business Development • SC on Economic Development and Trade
The urgent need to advocate for the ratification and domestication of the Gender Protocol; accelerate the adoption of gender-responsive budgeting; strengthen monitoring frameworks; implement reforms to address digital gender-based violence; and promote expanded intergenerational dialogue.	• PC on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities • Multi-Party Women's Caucus • SC on Health and Social Services • SC on Social Services • SC on Finance • Finance Standing Committee • PC on Communications and Digital Technologies • PC on Science, Technology and Innovation
The need for promotion of gender equality and youth empowerment, and development of a Youth Development Scorecard, alongside the institutionalisation of multisectoral engagement and sustained resource allocation to ensure inclusive and effective regional implementation	• PC on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities • Multi-Party Women's Caucus • PC on Social Development • SC on Health and Social Services
Error! Reference source not found.	
The need for need for strengthened parliamentary oversight in the areas of health and labour, by urging parliaments to ensure adequate domestic funding for health	• PC on Health • SC on Health and Social Services • PC on Employment and Labour

protocols; ring-fence resources for HIV/AIDS and TB programmes; and expedite the ratification of the SADC Protocol on Employment and Labour	• SC on Finance and SC on Appropriations • Standing Committees on Finance, Appropriations, Public Accounts and Auditor-General
The need to advocate for the elevation of the SADC Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) Strategy into a legally binding Protocol, to ensure uniform legal reforms, enforceable commitments, and mandatory budget allocations across Member States - thereby strengthening accountability, enhancing implementation, and promoting sustainable progress in SRHR;	• PC on Health • SC on Health and Social Services • SC on Finance and SC on Appropriations • Standing Committees on Finance, Appropriations, Public Accounts and Auditor-General
The urgent need to prioritise the ratification of key trade and industry protocols and their annexes, align national legislation to eliminate non-tariff barriers, and enhance oversight of Executive commitments related to regional trade obligations	• PC on International Relations and Cooperation • PC on Trade, Industry and Competition • PC on Small Business Development • SC on Economic Development and Trade
The need to fast-track ratification and domestication of the Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons, align national laws to support regional integration and a unified investment zone, and enhance oversight to ensure timely implementation of related commitments;	• PC on Home Affairs • SC on Economic Development and Trade • PC on Trade, Industry and Competition

The Parliamentary Group on International Relations (PGIR) is advised to refer the following reports as is for noting.

1. *Report of the South African delegation to the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC), India_14 – 16 January 2025*

The report is adopted and noted as is.

2. *Report of the Forum for Parliamentarians with Disabilities_Cape Town_26 – 28 May 2026*

The report is adopted and noted as is.

3. *Report of the 4th African Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Family, Sovereignty and African Values, Accra, Ghana_03 – 06 June 2026*

The report is adopted and noted as is.