

## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

### **REF: HOLDING OF WOMEN'S PARLIAMENT – MAHÉ, SEYCHELLES 5 AND 6 JULY 2017: FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT BY PARLIAMENTS TO IMPLEMENT RESOLUTION 60/2 “WOMEN, THE GIRL CHILD AND HIV AND AIDS”**

On behalf of the SADC Parliamentary Forum and indeed on my own behalf, I am pleased to inform you that the SADC PF in collaboration with Sweden and NORAD; the Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus (RWPC); ARASA; UNDP and UN Women will host a Women's Parliament during the 41<sup>st</sup> Plenary Assembly Session of SADC PF in Mahe, Seychelles from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of July, 2017. The Women's Parliament is scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2017.

This will be the first time that such a Women's Parliament will be convened. In addition to SADC PF MPs, the Women's Parliament will involve the participation of delegates from the Pan African Parliament (PAP), the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union (EU) to allow for cross knowledge and sharing of lessons as the world acts to stop HIV infections among women and girls and tap into the demographic dividend that the epidemic threatens to eliminate.

The Women's Parliament will provide a rare opportunity for the SADC PF MPs to interrogate the SADC-sponsored Resolution 60/2 which focuses on women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS with a view to determining how they can actively support the realization of its noble objectives. This is a particularly exciting opportunity not to be missed, given that SADC PF exists to, among others, support the implementation capacity of SADC with respect to Protocols, Treaties and other instruments.

Passed by consensus, Resolution 60/2 seeks to reduce the high levels of HIV infections among young women, adolescent girls and to address related root causes, given their vulnerability which is worsened by discrimination and all forms of violence, sexual exploitation and harmful practices. It is imperative that the momentum towards the goals of this progressive Resolution is not lost.

Women Members of Parliament are expected to play important roles in advocating for universal and equitable access to HIV and AIDS related services and products but their ability to effectively advocate and legislate is sometimes hamstrung by lack of up-to-date information and appropriate strategies. This Women's Parliament will link our MPs with evidence on current and emerging HIV and AIDS issues and ramp up political will to address the root causes of the high levels of new HIV infections among young women and adolescent girls and the disproportionate burden of AIDS on women in Southern Africa.

It presents our Women Parliamentarians to unite against factors that continue to increase the vulnerability of the region's woman and girls. Additionally, it will enable the MPs to revisit a plethora of instruments to which their governments are party, with a view to determining the status of implementation and what needs to be done going forward.

Should there be partner organizations in your country who might wish to be part of this groundbreaking parliament at their own expense, please encourage them to contact our Communications and Advocacy Specialist Mr. Moses Magadza, whom I have assigned to liaise with such organizations. Magadza's email address is [mmagadza@sadcpf.org](mailto:mmagadza@sadcpf.org) or [moses.magadza@gmail.com](mailto:moses.magadza@gmail.com). Please copy in our Director of Programmes, Ms. Boemo

Sekgoma whose email address is [bsekgoma@sadcpf.org](mailto:bsekgoma@sadcpf.org) and Ms. Agnes Lilungwe [alilungwe@sadcpf.org](mailto:alilungwe@sadcpf.org)

All working documents including the programme and logistics memo will be made available on the SADC website <http://women.sadcpf.org> on 31 March, 2017.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr Esau Chiviya,**

**SECRETARY GENERAL**