

**Statement of Solidarity during the 16th Annual Conference of the
Southern African Development Community Organisation of Public Accounts Committees
(SADCOPAC)**

Victoria Falls, ZIMBABWE, 10th September 2024

Protocols

Mr Mugoriya, Director, Office of the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution

Honourable Hwende, Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee, Zimbabwe

Honourable Mwambazi, Chairperson, Southern African Development Community Organisation of Public Accounts Committees (SADCOPAC)

Honourable Members of Parliament from Across Africa and of Public Accounts Committees

Honourable Members of Parliament from the SADC Region and Across the Continent

Distinguished Representatives from the West African Association of Public Accounts Committees; East African of Public Accounts Committees; Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees

Distinguished Representatives from African Organisation of English-Speaking Supreme Audit Institutions (AFROSAI-E); from the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF)

Representatives from Member States from across the continent

Representatives from Civil Society, Special Groups, and the Fourth Estate,

Good morning!

I want to begin by extending my deepest gratitude to SADCOPAC for inviting AFRODAD to deliver a statement of solidarity during the opening of the 16th Annual Conference. We are humbled by your kind gesture of including us in your very important programme.

Distinguished Honourable Members and Representatives of Parliament, I stand before you this morning because African solidarity is needed more now than it was. Our continent and the SADC Region, specifically, is under attack by all manner of challenges. Be it developmental, climatic, geo-political, international, or domestic. Our continent is finding itself amidst a multitude of challenges, and without solidarity, we risk being pulled apart to the very core of our own existence.

Honourable Members, we are facing a debt crisis that is worse than that of the late 1990s and early 2000s that gave rise to the Jubilee Debt Cancellation. Indeed, many of the countries that qualified for

debt cancellation then, are back in the same if not worse situation today. Close to half of the continents' countries are paying more in debt service interest payments than there are allocating towards investments in health and education. This is a grave situation that is by design and by accident. We operate in an international system that is still nursing a colonial and extractivism *modus operandi*. It is for this reason that organisations like AFRODAD are calling for an overhaul of the Global Economic and Financial Architecture. We should be bold to call out bad deals that don't serve the interests of our people nor our continent.

Distinguished Members, the year 2024 is indeed a year of solidarity. Solidarity amongst us as African citizens; Solidarity amongst us as **SOVEREIGN** Member States; Solidarity in how we assess and analyse our challenges and develop our **OWN HOME-GROWN SOLUTIONS**. Allow me to illustrate why I mention 2024 as a year of solidarity. The **2024 theme for the African Union Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa. The theme of the fifty-sixth session of the Conference of Ministers of Finance of Africa was "Financing the transition to inclusive green economies in Africa: imperatives, opportunities and policy options" ... a meeting that was held in this very city, and this very location. The Theme of the 44th SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government, titled "Promoting Innovation to unlock opportunities for sustained economic growth and development towards an Industrialised SADC". And finally, the theme for this 16th Annual Conference "Enhancing Regional Prosperity through Parliamentary Oversight, Prudent Financial Management and Accountability"**

A common thread in all these themes, **Honourable Members**, is public finance and financial resources for supporting investments that will catalyse the transformation of the region specifically, and of our continent at large along the lines of Agenda 2063. It cannot be emphasized enough the importance of Parliamentary oversight when it comes to public financial management. As custodians of democratic values and principles, and as the mouthpiece for the people, Parliaments and Parliamentary Committees such as the Public Accounts Committees play a vital role in checks and balances of how public resources are utilised for the advancement of our people, countries, region, and continent.

For us to transform these various interlocking themes into reality for our people, it is critical that we appreciate Africa should be a rule maker and not a rule taker when it comes to public finance. A good example of this is the SADC PF model Public Finance Management law that was adopted in 2021 in Lilongwe, MALAWI during the 51st Meeting of SADC-PF. The Model PFM law is a broad ranging piece of legislation that provides ideas and options for optimising the enhancement of Parliamentary Oversight on public finances. In the spirit of solidarity, and embarking on making these themes are reality, I call on

the distinguished members of SADCOPAC to engage with this legislation at national and regional level for prudent financial management and accountability during these very turbulent times our region and continent face.

As I conclude, Honourable Members, I mentioned that Africa should be a **Rule Maker not Rule Taker**, and by this I mean she should be the one setting the rules when it comes to Global Economic Governance. And indeed, we are on this path. At the international level, many of you will know the Africa Group in the United Nations has been spearheading the establishment of a UN Framework Convention on Tax Rules. Furthermore, the Africa Group has also called for a Global Legal Framework for handling issues of Debt. And more importantly, we have from the SADC region member states that critical to these international processes such Namibia in the Capacity of Co-Facilitator of the UN Summit of the Future slotted for later this year; Malawi as the current Chair of the LDC Group; and Summit of the Landlocked Developing Countries will be held in the region later this year too. And therefore, **distinguished Honourable Members** our solidarity on these matters is the difference between continuing to operate in a colonial and extractivist system, or breaking the shackles of oppression and claiming our sovereignty. As AFRODAD, we remain committed to working with Parliaments and Parliamentarians in ensuring we become rule makers. It is for this reason I look forward to having further conversation with SADCOPAC to see how we can actualise our solidarity for our good of our people and continent.

I will close by invoking the spirit of Bob Marley and his famous song 'Africa Unite'.

Tatenda! Ahsante Sana! Obrigado! Merci! Thank you very much!

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