



11<sup>TH</sup> G20  
PARLIAMENTARY  
SPEAKERS' SUMMIT



**REMARKS ON THE ROLE OF  
AFRICAN PARLIAMENTS IN  
ADVANCING WOMEN'S STATUS  
AND GENDER EQUALITY**

18 July 2025

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**Harnessing Parliamentary Diplomacy for the Realization of Global Solidarity,  
Equality, and Sustainability**

**Honourable Members of the Pan African Parliament Women's Caucus,  
Esteemed Colleagues and Distinguished Guests,**

I bring you warm and fraternal greetings from the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa. It is both an honour and a profound responsibility to address this august body at such a pivotal moment in our continental history.

As you are all aware, South Africa has the privilege of chairing the G20 and hosting the G20 Speakers' Summit – the P20 – in 2025. This is not just a diplomatic milestone; it is a historic opportunity to advance the cause of African women and to put gender equality and women's empowerment firmly on the global agenda.

This is Africa's moment. And we – as African women parliamentarians – must seize it.

## **1. A New Era for Women's Leadership in Global Governance**

The upcoming P20 Summit in Cape Town marks the first time that this global parliamentary forum will be hosted on African soil. For us, as African women leaders, this is not just symbolic. It is an open door to influence, to speak boldly, and to ensure that our voices are no longer on the periphery of global discourse – but at the very centre.

The P20 provides us with key strategic opportunities:

- **Knowledge Sharing:** To learn from one another and global peers on how we craft legislation, monitor gender equality outcomes, and empower women's participation in governance.
- **Resource Mobilisation:** To advocate for funding that supports women's empowerment – in climate resilience, healthcare, education, and the economy.

- **Climate and Gender Integration:** To champion women-led solutions to the climate crisis, recognising how climate change disproportionately affects African women and girls.

This convergence of South Africa's G20 leadership and Africa's rising voice must be used to advance the status of African women now – not tomorrow, not one day, but today.

## **2. The Urgency of Now: Agenda 2063 and Our Responsibility**

Honourable Members,

We are approaching the midpoint of **Agenda 2063**, the Africa We Want. But the truth is sobering. Despite strong policy frameworks, African women continue to be held back by systemic and structural barriers.

Women hold only **26% of parliamentary seats in lower houses** across the continent. Child marriage persists. Gender-based violence remains endemic. Discriminatory legal systems continue to dominate – especially for rural women under customary and religious laws.

The **Maputo Protocol**, the **Beijing Platform**, and now the **African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AU CEVAWG)** provide us with powerful instruments. But we must move from ratification to implementation.

The **rights of women and girls** cannot exist on paper alone. They must be seen in practice, in courtrooms, in clinics, in classrooms, and in every village across Africa.

## **3. Strategic Actions for Parliaments: Turning Commitment into Change**

### **a) Legislative Reform**

We need to pass comprehensive, gender-responsive laws. Laws that eliminate workplace discrimination, that protect pregnant workers, and that penalise sexual harassment.

We must repeal laws that prohibit women from working in certain sectors or at night.

We must urgently ratify the **AU CEVAWG Convention** in every national parliament and ensure that it leads to survivor-centred support systems, prevention programmes, and crisis protocols.

## **b) Economic Empowerment**

Let us legislate for:

- Equal land ownership and inheritance rights.
- Gender quotas on corporate boards.
- Preferential procurement for women-owned enterprises.
- Social protection systems that acknowledge the unpaid care work women do.

## **c) Reproductive Health and Rights**

Parliaments must guarantee:

- Universal access to maternal healthcare and contraception.
- Comprehensive sexuality education.
- Adolescent-friendly health services.
- Legal frameworks to end child marriage and support reproductive autonomy.

## **d) Oversight and Representation**

Our gender committees and women's caucuses must be resourced, institutionalised, and supported by skilled staff. These bodies must monitor national gender budgets, review compliance with conventions like **CEDAW** and the **Maputo Protocol**, and regularly engage with civil society.

We need strong **data systems** to track gender outcomes – disaggregated by sex, age, disability, and region – to guide targeted interventions.

#### **4. Strengthening Regional and International Cooperation**

We must align with the **African Union** and its protocols. We must use this Pan African Parliament and the **SADC Parliamentary Forum** to exchange experiences, learn from one another, and harmonise our legislative responses to gender inequality.

These platforms offer peer learning opportunities to overcome implementation bottlenecks and institutional gaps.

#### **5. Conclusion: The Time for Action is Now**

Honourable Members,

We stand at a defining moment in Africa's journey towards gender equality. The frameworks are there. The statistics are known. The needs are urgent.

What remains is action – deliberate, determined, and driven by political will.

Let us remind ourselves: **gender equality is not a women's issue – it is a societal imperative**. It is the cornerstone of sustainable development, peace, and prosperity.

Let the work we do here at the Pan African Parliament **reach every province, every district, every village of our continent**. Let our voices shape the outcome document of the P20 Summit. Let our leadership inspire policy, funding, and global solidarity for African women and girls.

Let us lead the change. Because when African women rise, Africa rises.

**I thank you.**