

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **WORKSHOP FOR MEMBERS OF THE MAURITIUS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR PRESENTATION OF A POSITION PAPER ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RELEVANT COMMITTEE TO WORK ON INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE FINANCING FOR HIV AND AIDS PROGRAMMES IN MAURITIUS**

The Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) is currently implementing a project to strengthen the capacity of National Parliaments of SADC Member States to facilitate the implementation of SADC Regional Commitments on HIV and AIDS sustainable financing.

This project is being achieved through resources made available to the SADC PF from the SADC HIV and AIDS Fund, established by SADC Heads of States and Government, under the guidance of the Maseru Declaration, to reiterate the region's commitment on the fight against HIV and AIDS. Mauritius has been selected as one of the beneficiaries of this project, along with 6 other SADC Member States, namely- Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Malawi, Seychelles and Swaziland.

The SADC HIV and AIDS Fund consists of contributions from SADC Member States and is intended to finance projects and activities to enhance the impact of HIV and AIDS programmes in Member States. As part of an initiative under the project, Dr Amita Pathack has been appointed as Consultant for the SADC PF to prepare a position paper for the establishment of a relevant committee to work on innovative and sustainable financing for HIV and AIDS programmes in Mauritius. The Consultant disseminated the position paper to Members of Parliament (MPs) through a workshop where relevant civil society organisations and line Ministries were also invited as participants.

Mr Krishna Seegobin, the Project Officer of the SADC PF, posted at the Mauritius National Assembly highlighted that the project is motivated by the international context of global recession and economic turmoil where formally strong lending countries and institutions find difficulties in renewing their commitments in terms of HIV and AIDS programmes financing. Whereas no cure has yet been found for HIV and AIDS, consistency is key for the maintenance of HIV and AIDS programmes, and hence, the need to find other means of financing which are both innovative and sustainable, and which essentially emanate from domestic sources.

The SADC PF Consultant exposed the main points of the position paper which involved the particular situation of the HIV and AIDS epidemic in Mauritius, that is, the concentrated nature of the epidemic amongst key populations (sex workers, individuals in prison, Injecting Drug Users, etc). Emphasis was also laid on the importance for the setting up a thematic parliamentary committee consisting of MPs whose main objectives would be to look into the Government budget related to HIV and AIDS, make recommendations on HIV and AIDS legislation and issues in Parliament, including, those related to sustainable and innovative financing. It was outlined that in the event a parliamentary decision is taken to go ahead with the parliamentary committee, the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly would have to be amended accordingly.

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