

EXTERNAL RELATIONS DIRECTORATE

Historical Background

- The Directorate of External Relations was established in May 2005 in recognition of Parliament's growing links with the external world and Zimbabwe's increasing political and diplomatic clout in terms of participation at regional, continental and international fora;
- The Directorate, therefore, provides a more focused approach to Parliament's interface with the external environment and operates within the broader national foreign policy framework outlined by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mission Statement

To promote and maintain good relations between Parliament of Zimbabwe, other Parliaments, International Parliamentary Organizations and the Diplomatic Community.

Objectives Of The External Relations Directorate

- To manage the directorate effectively and efficiently;
- To attend to all correspondence on issues pertaining to bilateral and multilateral relations;
- To provide regular briefs and appropriate analysis on pertinent issues taking place at the Regional, Continental and International level;
- To provide protocol and hospitality services to Presiding Officers, Members of Parliament and visiting dignitaries;
- To make appropriate and cost-effective arrangements relating to official functions, visiting dignitaries and local and international travel; and
- To provide a focal point on gender issues.

FUNCTIONS OF THE DIRECTORATE

Protocol and hospitality

The Directorate provides protocol and hospitality services to outgoing and incoming delegates.

These include:-

- Organizing Official functions hosted by Parliament. These include luncheons, dinners, receptions and some aspects of the Ceremonial Official Opening of Parliament;
- Secretariat and logistical arrangements for outgoing delegations approved by Presiding Officers;
- Arranging and covering courtesy calls by diplomats and other dignitaries in liaison with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Presiding Officers;
- Liaison with diplomatic missions and other regional and international organizations.
- Providing logistical and administrative services to members of Parliament for domestic travel (Air tickets for Bulawayo and Victoria Falls).
- Accommodation arrangements for local workshops and seminars for Members and Staff of Parliament.

Co-ordination Conferences hosted by Parliament.

International Conferences hosted by Parliament are co-ordinated by the Directorate of External Relations. In addition to co-ordinating the conference, the Directorate has specific duties related to the conference viz:-

- Drafting conference programmes (main, tours, spouses);
- Official opening programme, provision of country name plates, desk flags as well as flags outside the conference room;
- Providing protocol and hospitality services; and
- Securing Cabinet Authority to host conferences and incoming delegations.

Provision of Information

The Directorate has the responsibility of providing country briefs and other relevant information to Presiding Officers and Members of Parliament with the assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the following occasions:-

- Courtesy Calls on Presiding Officers by diplomats and other dignitaries;
- During meetings between a visiting delegation and Presiding Officers or Members of Parliament; and
- When a Zimbabwean delegation is traveling to another country either on an official visit or to attend an international conference.

International Parliamentary Organizations

Parliament of Zimbabwe is a member of the following International Parliamentary Organizations namely:-

- **IPU** Inter Parliamentary Union (www.ipu.org);
- **APU** African Parliamentary Union (www.africanpu.org);
- **SADC PF** SADC - Parliamentary Forum (www.sadcpf.org);
- **ACP/EU** Afro - Caribbean Pacific / European Union (www.acp.int);
- **PAP** Pan - African Parliament (www.pan-africanparliament.org);
- **ASSECA** The Association of Senates, SHOORA and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (www.assecaa.org);
- **SADCOPAC** Southern African Development Committee Organization of Public Accounts Committees (www.sadcopac.org)
- Membership in International Parliamentary Organizations is voluntary and joining is either initiated by Parliament or at the invitation of Parliament by a particular organization. A resolution of the House of Assembly and Senate, however, is required for Parliament of Zimbabwe to be a member of any organization.
- Once the two Houses have resolved, Parliament of Zimbabwe writes to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informing them about their decision and seeking advice on organizations whose objectives might not be in tandem with Zimbabwe's foreign policy objectives.
- Membership enhances inter-parliamentary cooperation and dialogue. It provides for a for Parliamentarians to discuss political, economic and social issues affecting people at national, regional and global level. It is aimed at finding possible solutions to global problems.

Management of the Member's Bar

- The Directorate is responsible for the Management of the Member's Bar.