SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) DECLARATION ON THE PROTECTION OF PERSONS WITH ALBINISM

PREAMBLE

We, Heads of State or Government of:

The Republic of Angola
The Republic of Botswana
The Union of the Comoros
The Democratic Republic of Congo
The Kingdom of Eswatini
The Kingdom of Lesotho
The Republic of Madagascar
The Republic of Malawi
The Republic of Mauritius
The Republic of Mozambique
The Republic of Namibia
The Republic of South Africa
The Republic of Seychelles
The United Republic of Tanzania
The Republic of Zambia
The Republic of Zimbabwe

RECOGNIZING that SADC and its Member States have agreed to act in accordance with, amongst others, the following principles:

(a) solidarity, peace and security;

(b) human rights, democracy and the rule of law; and

(c) equity, balance and mutual benefit;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING that SADC and Member States have committed not to discriminate against any person on grounds of gender, religion, political views, race, ethnic origin, culture, ill health, disability, or such other ground as may be determined by the Summit;

NOTING that Albinism is a rare, non-contagious, genetically inherited condition, which is present at birth and affects people worldwide regardless of race, gender or ethnicity;

FURTHER NOTING Resolution 28/6 adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council on 26 March 2015 on the Enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism and Resolution 46 adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council on the mandate of the Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of Human Rights by persons with albinism on 23 March 2021;

AWARE of Resolution 263 of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights of 5 November 2013 on the Prevention of Attacks and Discrimination Against Persons with Albinism and Resolution 373 on the Regional Action Plan on Albinism in Africa (2017-2021) of 22 May 2017;

NOTING that in the SADC Region, persons with albinism are often victims of organised crime syndicates, kidnapping, abduction, grievous bodily harm, trafficking and murder as a result of erroneous beliefs, myths and superstitions regarding persons with albinism;

CONCERNED with the psychosocial effects and/or trauma that persons with albinism and their families go through resulting from acts of crime syndicates against them;

FURTHER CONCERNED that persons with albinism in the SADC Region have faced prejudice and stigmatisation, as well as multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination on the basis of visual impairment, colour, gender or age, which affect the exercise of their political, economic and social rights;

NOTING that **persons** with albinism are susceptible to the harmful effects of exposure to sunlight in the absence of sunscreen protection;

FURTHER NOTING that persons with albinism in the SADC Region as in the African continent are at higher risk of developing skin cancer than the rest of the African population;

ACKNOWELDGING that the challenges being faced by persons with albinism in the SADC Region can be addressed through concerted and coordinated efforts by Member States;

REALISING the need for the Member States to take effective preventative, protective, accountability, equality and non-discriminatory measures, in partnership with all stakeholders including the civil society, cultural and faith based organisations, traditional health practitioners, political leaders, the private sector, international organisations and cooperating partners, to ensure the security and safety of persons with albinism and accountability for crimes committed against persons with albinism,

THEREFORE

1. **COMMIT** ourselves and our respective countries to meet the challenges faced by persons with albinism by taking necessary measures at the regional and national level; and

2. **DECLARE** the following as priority areas of action:

(a) Preventative measures

WE UNDERTAKE to continue to sustain efforts to:

(i) conduct public education and awareness-raising campaigns, in cooperation with all stakeholders, to clear out traditional beliefs that perpetuate the discrimination of persons with albinism to ensure that they live without any fear of being victimized, kidnapped or killed;

(ii) support and strengthen the capacity of Governments, law enforcement agencies, national human rights institutions and civil society organisations, including associations or organisations of persons with albinism, to protect and promote the human rights of persons with albinism; and

(iii) develop short, medium and long-term national legal and policy frameworks with specific measures for persons with albinism, based on evidence-informed research addressing the root causes of attacks on persons with albinism.

(b) Protective measures

WE UNDERTAKE to:

(i) continue providing effective law enforcement in response to attacks and violations against persons with albinism;

(ii) review legislative frameworks relating to trafficking in human body parts, witchcraft and traditional medicine, and recognition of skin colour as a ground of discrimination;

(iii) train all health-care workers of all kinds on all issues relevant to the human rights of persons with albinism;

(iv) put in place social schemes or services that address economic, psychosocial, education, and healthcare needs of persons with albinism; and

(v) ensure that sunscreen lotion is on national lists of essential medicines and ensure that it is available to persons with albinism in the remotest regions or areas.

(c) Accountability measures

WE UNDERTAKE to:

(i) continue to sustain efforts in holding accountable those that violate the rights of persons with albinism by, amongst others, prioritizing prosecution of cases involving criminal attacks against persons with albinism and protection of witnesses of cases in which persons with albinism are victims;

(ii) support to rebuild the lives of persons with albinism and their families directly involved in the criminal attacks;

(iii) promote mainstreaming of albinism issues in all national development structures, policies and strategies; and

(iv) build the capacity of persons with albinism including through their representative organisations to lobby and advocate for their rights.

(d) Equality and non-discrimination measures

WE UNDERTAKE to ensure that:

(i) there is reasonable accommodation at all levels of education for children and adults with albinism; and

(ii) persons with albinism have equal access to national health care services.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, WE the Heads of State or Government, or our duly authorised representatives, have signed this Declaration.

DONE AT **HARARE, REPUBLIC OF ZIMBAWE** on this_____day of _____2024 in three originals, in the English, French and Portuguese languages, all texts being equally authentic,

REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

UNION OF THE COMOROS

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

KINGDOM OF ESWATINI

KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR

REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE