

# PAP legislature a shambles, host SA says

## Pan-African Parliament is 'dysfunctional'

By **MZILIKAZI wa AFRIKA, ANDISIWE MAKINANA and THABO MOKONE**

● Pan African Parliament president Roger Nkodo Dang has been living large at the Michelangelo Hotel in Sandton after he turned down accommodation offered by the South African government.

The Sunday Times can reveal that Dang has been staying at the up-market hotel and at an exclusive Pretoria estate at cost of R80 000 since he took over as PAP president in 2015 because the Waterkloof home where most South African ministers reside, did not meet his standards.

Dang has been staying at the Michelangelo Hotel at Mandela Square in Sandton, where he books eight rooms at a time for his guests. Many of his guests are from Cameroon, his home country.

The costs are all carried by PAP.

Dang is driven around Gauteng in a Mercedes-Benz ML sport utility vehicle. He found the E-Class allocated to him substandard, PAP officials said this week.

He has two chefs and two cleaners, paid for by the African Union.

Vipya Harawa, PAP's clerk of parliament, confirmed that Dang booked himself at the luxurious hotel "for the better part of 2015 and 2016".

"After 2016, he moved to an exclusive residence in Waterkloof. This after the ministerial residence offered by Dirco was rejected by Mr Nkodo as being substandard," Harawa said in a written reply.

These revelations come as the SA delegation expressed shock at the state of PAP under Dang's watch, with the head of the institution being accused of failing to account for the mess.

The institution is also under attack for failing to fulfil its mandates of acting as an advisory body to the AU and holding African countries accountable by ensuring good governance and peace on the continent.

International Relations spokesman Ndivhuwo Mabaya yesterday confirmed that the South African government "has offered accommodation for the president of the PAP as a courtesy", since its inception in 2004.

Mabaya also admitted that Dang has been staying at a hotel since his appointment as PAP president in May 2015, instead of the house the Department of Public Works allocated to him in Waterkloof, Pretoria, "due to ongoing renovations".

"Honourable Dang never stayed at the property in Pretoria upon assumption of his term as president of . . . [PAP] in May 2015 as the property was in need of renovation," Mabaya explained.

"It was decided that the president should be accommodated elsewhere until the renovations were completed.

"In this regard, hotel accommodation was the most suitable option during his visits to South Africa," he added.

It also emerged that whenever Dang booked himself at the Michelangelo, he demanded eight more rooms for his entourage.

Harawa confirmed that Dang's "special guests" enjoyed "the same presidential privileges as him".

Thandi Modise, National Council of Provinces chairwoman and head of the PAP South African delegation, raised concern about the lack of accountability from Dang.

Modise told the Sunday Times her delega-



**PAP president Roger Nkodo Dang**

tion was unhappy because Dang, who was standing for re-election and was supposed to give a report about the institution and on the state of the continent, did not do so.

"We felt that we didn't really get the chance, for somebody who is standing for re-election especially that it was important. But also if you have any government institution or even a business institution, you must give account," said Modise.

Modise said the institution was in such disarray that the delegation was left wondering what it was doing there.

"The rules of procedure are something else. The speaking times are something. The committee system is nonexistent, so we were worried about what we were walking into," she said.

"What aggravated things is that we couldn't even have good discussions because we were divided along languages – as soon as an Anglophone spoke, then the Francophones would shut them down."

South Africa contributed more than R80-million between 2014 and 2015.

The institution has been reduced to a talk shop since inception and has not made an impact on the continent.

South Africa first pledged to offer "dedicated, equipped and furnished premises" to house PAP in 2005.

Modise complained that, despite South Africa footing the institution's bill, very few staff were locals.

"And the big question that South Africa is asking is if we are hosting you, why is it that the only South Africans we see among yourselves are the ushers and cleaners?"

Reports by the audit and public accounts committee of PAP for 2016, 2017 and 2018 paint a grim picture of the state of the continental legislature's finances.

The reports make clear that PAP has not been disclosing the financial contribution of the South African government in its financial statements. As a result, South Africa did not release funds to PAP in 2016.

The reports also show that the institution has had some of its VAT refund claims rejected by the SA Revenue Service owing to the submission of invalid tax numbers and incomplete tax invoices.

Staff also helped themselves to salary advances and loans to the tune of \$99 000 (about R1.3-million), with the bulk of them going unpaid for more than 20 months instead of the six months allowed by the rules of PAP.

Of that amount, only \$52 000 was paid back in 2014, a recovery rate of 53%.

Dang – who returned to his home country of Cameroon on Friday after he was re-elected as PAP president this week – could not be reached for comment.