COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

SECOND SOCATT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

AFRICA REGION

ACCRA, GHANA

1 – 5 MAY 2016

OPENING REMARKS

MR JOE OMORODION
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION
A Very Good Morning To You All!

I would like to warmly thank you Mr Speaker and Mr Clerk of the Parliament of Ghana for inviting the CPA International to this SOCATT Professional Development Seminar hosted by the CPA Ghana Branch.

I am most delighted to be here again; I warm-heartedly remember I was in this beautiful city of Accra some five years ago at the official creation of this SOCATT for the Africa Region.

The CPA International, for those of you who are not familiar, was established in 1911. It is an Association that aims to advance parliamentary democracy by enhancing knowledge and understanding of democratic governance. It seeks to build an informed parliamentary community that is able to deepen the Commonwealth’s democratic commitment and further co-operation among Parliaments and legislatures.

Our work doesn’t end at supporting the capacity of Parliamentarians; we seek to go further than that. The CPA is wholeheartedly committed to the development of well-resourced Parliaments as institutions. With a firm belief in Parliaments having sufficient and expert staff members that are able to provide impartial support to members
across a vast array of parliamentary matters, the CPA is keen to continue to support the development of Parliamentary Staff to reach their full potential.

The CPA recognises that a deficit in support staff with the necessary skills will inevitably result in a limitation to the effectiveness of Parliament. The better resourcing of Parliaments and expert staff is absolutely crucial to a successful parliament, and consequently, a healthier democracy. We will, therefore, be most delighted to receive your Parliament's staff development needs proposals at the CPA Headquarters in London.

The Theme of this Seminar – “Towards realising the Africa Agenda 2063 and SDGs: The role of Parliamentary Administration” – is most appropriate, timely and very well considered. This is especially so as it seeks to strongly promote, amongst the beautiful nations of this great Continent, a sense of unity, self-reliance, integration and solidarity that was a highlight of the triumphs of the 20th century. We continue to see for ourselves the transformational changes taking place across the globe: from Asia to North America; South America to Central America; Eastern Europe to the European Union; the Middle East to the Caribbean; and the Pacific. We read about these changes and watch our television sets to confirm them for ourselves. And the question therefore arises, what can the Administrators of Parliament do to contribute to the realization of the Africa Agenda 2063 and SDGs? We believe that the Administrators of Parliament can do quite a lot indeed – for we know that a house that is not built on a good foundation is bound to collapse sooner or later! So is a Parliamentary Institution without an effective administrative system.

And therefore, it is timely and appropriate that over the coming days, you will be receiving very well informed Papers from distinguished professionals on such important
issues as: Response of Parliamentary Administration to Fiscal Responsibility; Retooling Parliaments for the Provision of effective support to members; safeguarding and projecting the integrity of Parliament; role of Parliamentary Administration in promoting democracy, peace and national cohesion; and ensuring the safety and security of Parliament in an era of threats and terrorism, to name but a few.

I am sure you will all appreciate that the success of the Seminar is dependent upon your input, commitment and dedication. I urge you to participate as actively as you can; share your experiences with others; encourage your peers to share their knowledge with you; be proactive in your engagement; take as much as you can from this programme and most importantly, put your newly acquired knowledge into practice in your own Parliaments.

As head of the permanent administration of your Parliaments, national and sub-national, we rely on you to pay us your membership fees. We are most grateful to the vast majority of you who, year-on-year, promptly pay your Branch Fees. For those who are yet to put permanent payment arrangements in place, we humbly call on you to please do so as soon as you return to your respective Parliaments.

As a global membership organisation, the CPA cannot function without its membership paying their Branch fees promptly. And of course, you know that with the prompt payment of your Branch fees, you become entitled to benefit from the range of programmes and services the CPA International offers; exercise your voting rights; and shape the future direction of your Association.

We thank you very much for your continued positive engagement with the CPA International through your good offices.
Distinguished Delegates, I mentioned earlier that you should share your experiences and knowledge with others. This is not only coming from me: on May 24th 1963, the 1st Prime Minister of Nigeria, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, in his speech at the Addis Ababa Conference in Ethiopia to mark the creation of the OAU said, and I quote: “I think the way by which we could achieve understanding among ourselves as Africans is to be frank with ourselves. It is important that when we meet on an occasion like this, we try to tell each other the hard facts, the truth about matters. It is most important that we become frank in Africa.”

So, Distinguished Delegates, when you share your experiences and knowledge over the next two days, let us remember these words of wisdom from one of the visionary leaders of Africa and founding fathers of the OAU. For the benefit of all, we remember that this was during the era of the great visionary of this great country, and Pan-Africanist, Dr Kwame Nkrumah.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, with these remarks on behalf of the Secretary-General (Mr Akbar Khan), the CPA Secretariat and myself, I wish you the very best in your deliberations.

Thank you.