



**CPA Technical Assistance Programme for  
the Parliament of Zambia  
19-20 June 2019**

**Opening Remarks**

**Mr Jarvis Matiya**

**Commonwealth Parliamentary Association**

**Director of Operations**

**Representing the CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan**

- **First Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia, Hon. Catherine Namugala, MP**
- **Clerk of the National Assembly of Zambia, Mrs Cecilia Mbewe;**
- **Honourable Ministers and Members of Parliament;**
- **Distinguished Members of the Resource Team:**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

***Mwauka bwanji***

*[good morning in the local dialect]*

I am sorry that due to other prior commitments I am not able to join you in Zambia for this workshop on the role of Parliaments in ratifying international agreements.

It is always a privilege for me, as CPA Secretary-General, to visit a CPA Branch within our Commonwealth family. So, it is sad that on this occasion I am unable to be with you. I last visited the Parliament of Zambia in November 2016 when your Parliament held a very successful Post-Election Seminar. Afterwards, I had the privilege of delivering a CPA Roadshow with the Right Honourable Speaker at the University of Lusaka to many of the young people of Zambia.

**Honourable Members,**

On behalf of the CPA, I would like to acknowledge and thank the Right Honourable Speaker, the Clerk to the Legislature, Mrs Cecilia Mbewe, and her team who have worked diligently to make this workshop possible.

This workshop demonstrates our collective commitment to promoting and ensuring that Commonwealth values of democracy – enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter – are upheld, nurtured and maintained to the highest standards.

**Honourable Members,**

We at the CPA understand that democracy is a continuously developing concept that requires nurturing. We recognise that no single country or Parliament can provide a source of best practice in all areas of governance but believe that all

parliaments can be sources of vital transformation and influence regardless of how young, old, big or small they are.

Bearing this in mind, the Commonwealth can be seen as a laboratory of innovation and experience for promoting parliamentary development where countries can share and learn from each other through knowledge transfer.

In this context, this workshop will provide the opportunity for you to engage with your colleagues from across the Parliaments of the Commonwealth and to learn from their experiences to be able to carry out your duties as Parliamentarians even better than before.

**Honourable Members,**

The substance of this workshop revolves around a new oversight duty that the Parliament of Zambia was given in its new constitution in 2016: to approve international agreements and treaties before they are acceded to or ratified.

Parliaments around the world play different roles when it comes to the ratification of international treaties. In Australia, for example, the all-party Joint Standing Committee on Treaties can inquire into treaties already when they are being negotiated and give non-binding recommendations against ratification.

In the United Kingdom, only since 2010 has the Government been required to lay before Parliament most treaties it wishes to ratify. These changes are happening in the context of the legislative branch exercising its oversight powers over the executive branch, giving Parliaments and parliamentarians more powers. We will, through the resource team, have the opportunity to delve deeper into these topics in the workshop today and tomorrow.

**Honourable Members,**

The CPA firmly believes in the benefits of ‘peer to peer’ learning to maximise the development of parliamentarians and the broader parliamentary community. It is in this spirit of mutual learning and partnership that this workshop takes place with the support and presence of the highly experienced and dedicated resource persons sourced by the Parliament of Zambia.

The resource team has kindly taken time away from their busy schedules this week to best show their dedication to this Workshop.

**Honourable Members,**

I would like to say a few words about the upcoming Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. From the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> of September, the CPA will host the 64<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference – the CPC – in Uganda.

The CPC is our annual flagship event and will bring together over 500 Parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and decision makers from across the Commonwealth for this unique conference and networking opportunity. The CPC offers the prospect of the coming together of the CPA’s global membership to address the critical issues facing today’s Parliaments. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

You will be able to find more information about the CPC on the CPA website as well as in our quarterly journal, *The Parliamentarian*.

**Honourable Members,**

I wish you the very best in your deliberations today and tomorrow. I am certain that we will see many positive contributions and firmly believe that the workshop will fortify relationships and the CPA in the region and beyond.

Thank you.

**-ENDS-**