



Speech by Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP

Chairperson of the Executive Committee

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon

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- **The Premier of the Province of Quebec,**
- **The Lieutenant Governor of Quebec,**
- **The President of the APF,**
- **The Honourable Speakers of various Parliaments here present,**
- **The Secretary General of the APF,**
- **Heads of Delegations,**
- **Distinguished Delegates,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I feel really honoured to have been invited in my capacity as the Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) to attend this 44th Session of the APF General Assembly and address delegates.

On behalf of the entire CPA that I am representing here, I wish to take this opportunity to **thank, Honourable Jacques Chagnon, the President of APF,** for inviting me to this meeting holding in this beautiful Province of Quebec. Your kind invitation to the CPA is an eloquent testimony to the excellent relations existing between our brotherly associations and the wish of the APF to work in collaboration with other inter-parliamentary bodies to ensure the maximum contribution of parliaments to the advancement of the world.

I therefore bring you warm greetings from the CPA family and our wishes for a very successful conference.

Let me also seize this opportunity to sincerely thank the Canadian authorities for the warm reception accorded me and to praise the authorities of Quebec for the excellent logistics put in place for the organization of this Conference.

My presence in this meeting will undoubtedly enable the CPA to observe how the APF conducts its business as well as draw from its rich experience in parliamentary affairs. We are delighted to note that the APF and the CPA pursue similar goals which include the promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law as well as the capacity building of Parliamentarians in order to enable them to be more efficient in their role. I perceive the APF and the CPA as excellent avenues for information and experience sharing as well as a platform for the learning of best practices.

The common denominator among the vast majority of us here gathered is that we are Parliamentarians and by extension the people's representatives, the voice of the voiceless, the hope of the hopeless, the voice of the weak and of the strong. We have the sovereign mandate of the people. With the constant evolution of the world and increasing aspirations for a better life and better living conditions, the populations therefore look up to us as bearers of their hopes and aspirations. We are therefore faced with these challenges which are in line with our traditional role of legislating, voting Bills and exercising oversight over the governments in our respective countries.

We have a verbal contract with our electorates who have placed their trust in us. The public's expectations of what we could and should be doing are very high and any failure to meet these expectations means considerable disappointment from those who gave us their mandate.

Indeed, as one scholar once said, *"those elected to public office are expected to possess indefinable qualities to accomplish an indescribable job."*

Such are the challenges that we all have and should strive to meet. We need to ensure that governments formulate and implement good and sustainable policies that will better the lot of the people we represent. In order to achieve this, we will need to translate our resolutions into effective actions and push our respective government to move from adopting resolutions to real implementation.

There is no doubt that as Parliamentarians, we have an opportunity, and a constitutional responsibility, to play a significant role in supporting and monitoring the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the UN.

The Agenda 2030 Declaration acknowledges the essential role of national parliaments through their enactment of legislation and adoption of budgets that meet the Development Goals, and their role in ensuring accountability for the effective implementation of the commitments. As Members of Parliament we are uniquely positioned to act as an interface between the people and state institutions, and to promote and adopt people-centered policies and legislation to ensure that no one is left behind.

I cannot end my remarks without thanking our respective governments for the efforts made to ease legislation that has brought in more women in the decision-making arena. However, in most of our jurisdictions, we have not yet attained the 30% quota. My fervent call is that, as we go back we should hold our respective governments to task to do more so that the female Members *in* Parliament will improve as this will make the world a better place.

The French philosopher and writer Frantz Fanon once said, *“Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission and fulfill it or betray it.”*

Ours my fellow colleagues is to pave the way for the next generation and I urge that we fulfill it.

The CPA is therefore looking up to this conference with a lot of hopes for major recommendations and resolutions.

On this note, I wish the APF total success in its deliberations.

Long live the excellent relations between the APF and the CPA.

Thank you for your kind attention.

ENDS