



PARLIAMENT OF TANZANIA



SPEECH FOR THE OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE PARLIAMENT OF TANZANIA BY HON. EMILIA MONJOWA LIFAKA, CHAIRPERSON OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION AND THE DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF CAMEROON

3RD APRIL 2019

- **The Right Honourable Speaker of the Parliament of Tanzania;**
- **Members of Government here present**
- **The Honourable Members of the Parliament of Tanzania;**
- **Distinguished Colleagues;**
- **Parliamentary Officials,**
- **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

It gives me great honour and pleasure to visit Tanzania after the historic Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference of 2009. I had indeed been looking for an opportunity to revisit this beautiful country and am glad that God has made it possible for me to be here today. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to address the Honorable Members present here today, in this august house.

Before I proceed, permit me to sincerely thank the **Right Honourable Speaker, Job Ndugai** and the Government of Tanzania for the warm welcome reserved for me since I arrived, and for the excellent logistical arrangements made for this visit to take place.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

When I visited Tanzania in 2009, I came as a Cameroonian Parliamentarian to attend the CPC, but this time around I coming as the current Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association thanks to the dream of the Africa Region through its Speakers, who in the Speaker's and Presiding Officers Conference met in Nigeria in 2017, under the Chairperson of Speaker **Job Ndugai**, nominated me as the candidate for Africa to run for this position. I was able to secure a comfortable majority vote in a highly contested election in Bangladesh thanks to the implementation of the slogan '**One Africa, One Voice**'. For this I say Thank you Mr. Speaker and dear colleagues for the support.

I would like to briefly introduce you to the aims of the CPA and its activities, which many of you are already familiar with.

The CPA, now in its 108th year, is a network of over 180 national and sub-national Legislatures across the 53 Nations of the Commonwealth representing a membership of 17,000 Parliamentarians. We are committed to upholding Commonwealth political values, including

the separation of powers, democracy and the rule of law, enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter, signed in 2013 by our patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The CPA engages in standard setting, benchmarking for Parliaments and Parliamentarians, and provides an international platform for peer-to-peer learning and development.

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly talk to you about some of the activities the CPA has engaged in since I was elected as International Chairperson in November 2017.

Status

For more than two decades, the CPA has explored ways and means in which it could change its legal status from that of a UK charity to an international body like the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and 'APF - Francophonie Parliamentary Association'. Significant progress has been made on this change during my time as Chairperson working with the current Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan.

The CPA General Assembly in 2016 asked the Secretary-General to constitute a Working Group to look into the issue of status. The Working Group was established in 2017.

After grappling with this constitutional issue for two decades, this Working Group comprising Members from the nine regions of the Association in which the African Region was represented by the Rt. Hon Speaker Muturi, finally reached agreement that the organisation should be reconstituted as an International Organisation. At the core of this thinking, was that the CPA wanted to ensure that it would retain its mandate which it has had since its founding in 1911 to represent Parliaments and Parliamentarians. In this regard, different models, such as *L'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie*, were looked at as future models for the CPA.

The Working Group's report was unanimously endorsed by the General Assembly in November 2017. The Secretary-General, and myself, opened discussions with Ministers at the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, immediately after the adoption of the report.

Last year, the CPA was invited to submit a business case to the UK Government as to the grounds for reconstitution. This business case was approved by the CPA Executive Committee in November of last year and then submitted to the UK Government in December 2018. The UK Government is currently reviewing the business case and we are awaiting a response. The Secretary-General has this year written to every branch of the Association providing a briefing on what I have set out so that everyone is informed on the reasons for the requested change.

As Chairperson, I am appealing to our respective Parliaments and Governments to get engaged in the process by appealing to the UK Government to deal with the matter as soon as possible.

Programmes review

Another governance-related process that the CPA has engaged in has been the formation of the strategic programmes review group. Established by the CPA Executive Committee in London in November of last year, it set out to review the full range of the CPA's programmatic output and identifying which programme areas should be retained, ceased or modified. The working group, comprising seven of the nine of the CPA's regions, met in London in January this year. It will present its report of proposals to the CPA Executive Committee, meeting next week in Ottawa in Canada.

CWP

I would now like to turn to the valuable work done by the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians network, the CWP. The CWP Chairperson is the Honourable Dr Dato' Noraini Ahmad MP from Malaysia. The CWP celebrates its 30th birthday this year, having been founded in 1989. The CWP emerged from recognising the need to increase women's representation in political institutions and the importance of providing greater support to women in Parliaments. The CWP seeks to encourage women around the Commonwealth to stand for election by removing the barriers to their participation. It seeks to ensure that gender is mainstreamed throughout all of the CPA's activities.

One of the key instruments for this work is the CWP Regional Strengthening Funds. These funds provide each CPA Region with support to undertake activities that strengthen women's

position in politics. The CPA Africa Region is one of the most active CWP regions in the network, and many Parliamentarians will have participated in CWP programmes and activities in the CWP Africa Region.

I am particularly proud to note that here in Tanzania, over a third of the Parliamentarians – **36.7%** – elected into this House are women. This means that you are doing better than 166 other Parliaments in the world in women’s representation. This is something for you to be very proud of. On behalf of the entire CPA family, I congratulate the Government and people of Tanzania for this political will, not forgetting the women who brave the odds to come forward as candidates.

CPA Benchmarks

In November of last year, I attended an event in London to launch the updated *CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures*. These pioneering benchmarks are one of the CPA’s most important pieces of parliamentary strengthening work. The updated version plays a crucial role as we seek to further strengthen Parliaments and Legislatures in line with the aspirations of the Commonwealth Charter, the Sustainable Development Goals and the changing demands of our citizens.

The CPA has embarked on a two-year project to conduct benchmarks assessments on a number of its member Parliaments. I am delighted to be able to say that the National Assembly of Tanzania has agreed to take part in this benchmarking exercise later this year.

Commonwealth Day

I wish to touch briefly on this year’s Commonwealth Day. On the second Monday of March every year, we celebrate Commonwealth Day. This year, I travelled to London to attend the celebrations and to mark this year’s theme: ‘A Connected Commonwealth’. I hosted a roundtable of young people from all around the Commonwealth to discuss one of the greatest global challenges of the day: climate change. I also attended the Commonwealth Service in Westminster Abbey in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Patron of the CPA and Head of the Commonwealth. Finally, I attended a reception marking

Commonwealth Day at Marlborough House with His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, and Commonwealth High Commissioners.

Honourable Members, I hope you will see that the CPA has been extremely productive and busy under my tenure. In order to continue our important work, I will invite all of us as legislators to come on board and be committed. I am delighted to note that the Tanzania Branch is up-to-date in its membership contribution. May I use this opportunity to appeal to the other Branches to emulate your example.

CPC: The Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference:

In September of this year (the 22nd to the 29th), the CPA will host the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference – the CPC – in your neighbouring country, Uganda. The CPC – our annual flagship event – will bring together over 500 Parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and decision makers from across the Commonwealth for this unique conference and networking opportunity. I hope to see many of you there. The CPC offers the prospect of the coming together of the CPA’s global membership to address the critical issues facing today’s Parliaments.

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 Colleagues,

I will not conclude my speech without paying tribute to the late **Dr William Shija**, a bonified citizen of this great country, former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, who was a member of this House from 1990 to 2005 and who contributed enormously to the growth of CPA during the six years he served as the Secretary-General of the CPA.

My dear colleagues, do not forget that as Members of Parliament, we have the mandate of the sovereign people, we are the voice of the voiceless and represent the hope and aspiration for many. We should therefore not lose sight of this when we are voting laws. Our legislation

should be people-centered. We should make sure that international conventions are not just ratified but that the instruments of implementation are put in place in due time.

We should take the front seat in pushing our Governments on the implementation of the **SDGs** as the benefits these goals bring to our populations cannot be over emphasized.

My dear female colleagues keep up the spirit a woman can do just as much as she is determined to do.

To the youths, I bring you encouragement from the CPA Headquarters. You are the hope and future of the Commonwealth.

To my male colleagues, I wish to say there cannot be any meaningful development without the involvement of the women and the youths. Thank you once more for standing by the women without which 37% could not have been attained.

Once again, Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you for giving me the honour to be able to address this House. I look forward to engaging with you all in making the CPA an inspiring platform for Commonwealth Parliamentarians worldwide.

Long live the Parliament of Tanzania!

Long live the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association!

Thank you.

ENDS

Updated 11/09/2019/CPAHQ