



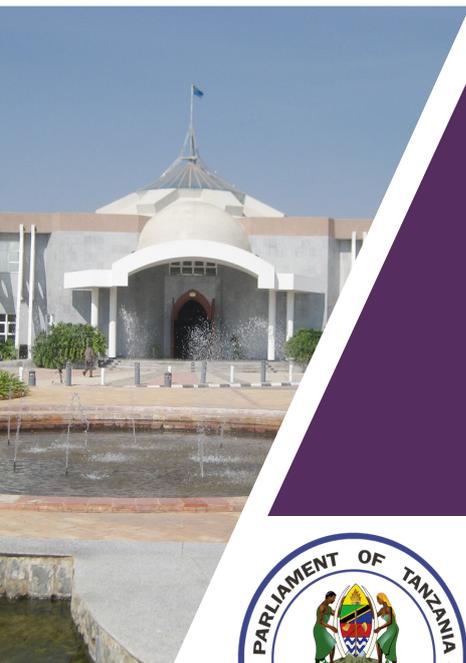
**COMMONWEALTH WOMEN  
PARLIAMENTARIANS**



**CHAMPIONS FOR GENDER  
EQUALITY: ACHIEVING  
EQUAL PARTICIPATION  
IN COMMONWEALTH  
PARLIAMENTS**

**DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA  
SERENA HOTEL**

**6 - 8 DECEMBER 2023**



**WORKSHOP REPORT**



## ABOUT THE CPA

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) connects, develops, promotes and supports parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and the implementation of the enduring values of the Commonwealth. The CPA collaborates with parliaments and other organisations, including the intergovernmental community, to achieve its statement of purpose. It brings parliamentarians and parliamentary staff together to exchange ideas among themselves and with experts in various fields, to identify benchmarks of good practices and new policy options they can adopt or adapt in the governance of their societies.

## COMMONWEALTH WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS (CWP)

The CWP network was founded in 1989 to increase the number of women elected representatives in parliaments and legislatures across the Commonwealth and to ensure that women's issues are brought to the fore in parliamentary debate and legislation. The network provides a means of building the capacity of women elected to parliament to be more effective in their roles: improving the awareness and ability of all parliamentarians, male and female, and encouraging them to include a gender perspective in all aspects of their role and helping parliaments to become gender-sensitive institutions..

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# Workshop Overview

From 6 – 8 December 2023, the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) delivered a three-day Workshop hosted by the Parliament of Tanzania in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The Workshop welcomed Members of Parliament representing 16 Commonwealth national and sub-national parliaments and legislatures. Under the theme, 'Champions for Gender Equality: Achieving Equal Participation in Commonwealth Parliaments', the programme was a continuation of the first CWP Workshop held in Canberra, Australia in December 2022.

By the end of the three-day programme, participants had enhanced their understanding of how to champion the equal participation of women and gender equality in the context of their own jurisdictions. They learned about best practices and case studies from highly experienced experts in the area of gender sensitive parliaments, gender equality, harassment and violence in parliament, gender mainstreaming and the media. Importantly, Members established and strengthened networks and partnerships with other parliamentarians and stakeholders present.

The Workshop was opened by the following:

- Hon. Dr Zainab Gimba MP, the CWP Chairperson and Member of the National Assembly of Nigeria
- Hon. Angellah Kairuki MP, Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism (representing the Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania)
- Hon. Madina Ndingiza MP, CWP Africa Region Chairperson and Member of the Parliament of Rwanda
- Ms Nenelwa Joyce Mwiambi, the Africa Regional Secretary and Clerk of the National Assembly of Tanzania.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg also sent a video message to the members.



# Workshop Summary

This section of the report provides a summary of each day and the Workshop sessions.

## ***Session 1: Introduction to the concept of a Commonwealth Gender Sensitive Parliament***

The opening session allowed attendees to gain an understanding of the concept and importance of having a gender sensitive parliament from Ms Bénite Dibateza, CWP Network Coordinator.

For many years the responsibility of protecting and securing both women's rights and gender equality in parliaments was primarily left with women Parliamentarians, however many parliaments now recognise that the necessary shifting of cultures, behaviours and norms require a whole-of-institution approach. The achievement of gender equality in parliament requires full support from across the political membership and administration of parliament and should not be a task that is solely left to individuals or groups which do not have the necessary resources or influence to bring about transformative change. As institutions that represent the interests of all citizens, parliaments should be gender equitable to offer a positive example to society at large. Parliaments should make sure that there are no barriers that curtail full participation and equality between men and women Members and parliamentary staff.

### ***Definitions of a Gender Sensitive Parliament***

***"A place that responds to the needs and interests of women in its structures, operations, methods, and work and is a workplace that removes barriers to women's full participation"***

*- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association*

***"Institutions that are founded on gender equality, where women and men have an equal right to participate without discrimination."***

*- Inter-Parliamentary Union*



The [CPA Gender Sensitising Parliament \(GSP\) Guidelines](#) defines a GSP as one with the following features:

### **GENDER SENSITIVE PARLIAMENT:**

- Promotes and achieves equality of women and men across all its bodies and internal structures, and mainstreams gender equality throughout all its work, including the work of the parliamentary administration;
- Is founded on gender equality, where women and men have an equal right to participate without discrimination or re-creation;
- Fosters an internal culture that respects women's rights, promotes gender equality, and respects the needs and realities of MPs – men and women – to balance work and family responsibilities;
- Responds to the needs and interests of both men and women in its structures, operations, methods, and work, and has no barriers – substantive, structural, or cultural – to women's full participation;
- Encourages political parties to take a proactive role in the promotion and achievement of gender equality;
- Extends beyond elected members and equips parliamentary staff with the capacity and resources to promote gender equality, and actively encourages the recruitment and retention of women to senior positions, and
- Offers a positive example or model to society at large

Why is having a GSP important?

Firstly, a GSP is one that embraces gender mainstreaming as a key strategy to achieve gender equality. It takes a holistic approach to embedding gender equality in parliament by applying a gender perspective that goes beyond simply looking at the number of women in parliament and helps parliaments both identify and understand gender patterns, sensitivities and insensitivities within their structures, methods, culture and in the design and delivery of its policies and services.

Secondly, a GSP promotes the need for the increased inclusive and equal participation of women and all other under-represented groups within a jurisdiction who in the recent past may have not been involved in a political life when politics was traditionally male-dominated and an all-male business. This makes parliament a more fair, legitimate and democratic institution as it truly mirrors the community that it serves, which in turn means it will be able to debate diverse issues with the full range of views represented. Political equality between women and men is enshrined in the UN Charter, Commonwealth Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, other international treaties, and the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG5 and SDG16.

**CPA Gender Sensitising Parliaments Guideline: Standards and a Checklist for Parliamentary Change**

These guidelines have been created to help Commonwealth Parliaments to become gender sensitive institutions, providing legislatures with an outline of gender sensitising standards that they can look to achieve.



SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

SDG 5 TARGET 5: Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.



SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

SDG 16 TARGET 5: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.



VALUE 12: GENDER EQUALITY

“We recognise that gender equality and women’s empowerment are essential components of human development and basic human rights. The advancement of women’s rights and the education of girls are critical preconditions for effective and sustainable development.”

Ms Dibateza highlighted that, according to research gathered by the CPA Headquarters Secretariat in September 2023, 55 parliaments and legislatures had reached the target, as established by Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1997, of at least 30% representation of women in either their lower or upper house. However, there remains significant political under-representation of women relative to their population across the Commonwealth. The same data gathered by the CPA Headquarters Secretariat also demonstrated that 22 parliaments and legislatures have under 5% representation of women, of which eight have no women parliamentarians at all. Whilst the number of women who participate in politics has broadly increased over the years in parliaments across the world, women are still confronted by the pre-existing cultures, patriarchal attitudes, out-dated structures, informal and formal rules that were created by men that guide how Parliamentarians should behave and shape the parliamentary agenda.

A GSP considers the diverse needs and experiences of women and men. Research indicates that when policies do not consider the needs and perspectives of all women and other under-represented groups, inequality persists as policies, programmes and services cater to the needs of the ‘dominant’ group in society, and are indifferent, inappropriate and even harmful to other groups within society.



## How can parliaments become Gender Sensitive?

### 1) Champion gender equality - the role of gender champions

During a CPA study group in 2001, it was recognised that, despite some exceptions the voices speaking out for women's rights and concerns were predominantly women. This sentiment was also maintained by participants who attended the CWP Workshop in December 2023. As with those Members who attended the 2001 study group, participants concluded that better cooperation between women and men is essential to gender sensitising parliaments and removing all barriers which inhibit the fullest participation by women. Parliaments are to also remember privilege is invisible to those who have it, so it is important to engage with men, women and other genders that make up parliament but also reflect your society.

### 2) Recognise the detrimental role of gender privilege and disenfranchisement (exclusion)

This may look different across jurisdictions. It is about accepting and acknowledging that issues such as parliamentary cultures, governing structures, facilities and institutional resources exist and have the capacity to limit the equal participation of women and other underrepresented demographics.

### CWP Regional Strengthening Funds

The CWP Regional Strengthening Funds are annual grants made available to each of the CPA's nine regions to advance the CWP's mission to 'promote the representation of women in CPA Branches and women's full and equal participation in political and parliamentary leadership at all levels.'

Who can apply?

- CWP International Steering Committee Members on behalf of their respective regions
- CPA Branches via their Regional Secretary

Visit the [CPA website](#) for information on how to apply.

**CPA Gender Sensitising Parliaments Guideline: Standards and a Checklist for Parliamentary Change**

The Guidelines start from the fundamental premise that all Commonwealth Parliaments undertake a GSP self-assessment as soon as possible to establish an initial benchmark against which future efforts and developments can be evaluated. Gender (in)sensitivity is to be measured across four dimensions:

**FOUR DIMENSIONS OF A GENDER SENSITIVE PARLIAMENT**

**DIMENSION 1: EQUALITY OF PARTICIPATION WITHIN PARLIAMENT**

Dimension 1 asks the question of how a diverse group of parliamentarians might be selected for, and elected to, parliament and how, once present, they are enabled to become effective participants across parliament’s core activities: representation an interest articulation, legislative scrutiny, and executive accountability.

**DIMENSION 2: PARLIAMENTARY INFRASTRUCTURE**

Dimension 2 takes a critical look at the way in which parliament facilitates the work of Members and whether this benefits a particular type of parliamentarian - explicitly or implicitly. It covers everything from the buildings and furniture of parliament to the official rules and working practices that underpin the array of Members’ parliamentary activities.

**DIMENSION 3: PARLIAMENTARY CULTURE**

Dimension 3 acknowledges that the official, written-down rules never tell the whole story about how institutions function on the ground - this is what might be thought of as the ‘normal way of doing thing’. It is, admittedly, frequently hard to pin down informal institutional norms, practices and culture. That said... parliamentary culture... is not fixed but an evolving phenomenon, subject to change.

**DIMENSION 4: GENDER EQUALITY POLICY/WOMEN’S SUBSTANTIVE REPRESENTATION**

Dimension 4 subjects the political work of parliament to gendered analysis. These would include legislation, policy, scrutiny and interest representation. It asks whether parliaments acknowledge the perspectives and address the needs and interests of women. Have women’s experiences been taken into account? Are the gendered differentiated outcomes to women’s disadvantage? Do they aim for gender equality between men and women? In so doing, such analysis will frequently be analysing a parliament’s work in holding a government to account for its gender sensitivity.



## *Case Studies establishing GSP across CPA Regions*

### **1) CWP British Islands and Mediterranean (BIM) Region**

Using their 2022 CWP Regional Strengthening Funds, the Region appointed academic Dr Jess Smith (University of Southampton) to undertake a research project on Effective and Inclusive Parliaments across the Region that focuses on the first two dimensions: 'Equality of participation within Parliament' and 'Parliamentary infrastructure'. The aim of the project was to provide a user-friendly, practical briefing for the BIM Region that documents the current state of play regarding gender sensitive parliamentary practices particularly in light of institutional responses to COVID-19. The research recommends 'best practice' reforms for the short term; and for the medium term, lays the groundwork for more comprehensive GSP assessments.

### **2) CWP Canada Region**

Using their 2021 Regional Strengthening Funds, the Region commissioned Dr Jeanette Ashe, gender expert to do a cross-jurisdictional Gender Sensitivity Assessment of Canada's Parliaments using the CPA Gender Sensitising Parliaments Guidelines to provide an initial snapshot into the institutional readiness to undertake a GSP assessment and evaluation of the gender sensitivity within Canada's legislative bodies.

As part of this project, parliamentary clerks from Canada's House of Commons and Senate, and from all but two provincial parliaments and the territories, filled out a GSP 'Checklist'. Over 100 Members from the House of Commons and the Senate and Members from most provinces returned a GSP survey, and 24 Members and staff participated in interviews. From this cross-jurisdictional GSP snapshot, initial recommendations were made for Canada's parliaments to be more inclusive and representative political spaces.

### **3) CPA Gender Sensitive Parliament Self-Assessments**

As part of phase 2 of the CWP Gender Sensitising Parliaments Programme, the CPA conducted its first Gender Sensitive Parliament (GSP) Self-Assessment together with the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly between 28 November and 3 December 2022. The self-assessment was delivered by Bénite Dibateza, CWP Coordinator, and Prof. Sarah Childs, Chair of Politics and Gender, University of Edinburgh. Further self-assessments were undertaken by the Western Cape Provincial Parliament between 8 and 12 May 2023 and the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature from 15 to 19 May 2023.

Members are strongly invited to give consideration to gender sensitisation work within their own legislature and Region, and are encouraged to contact the CWP Network Coordinator, Bénite Dibateza, ([benite.dibateza@cpahq.org](mailto:benite.dibateza@cpahq.org)) for additional information.

## Session 2: Institutionalisation and the Importance of Gender Champions in Parliament

The session drew perspectives from Ms Bénite Dibateza, CWP Network Coordinator; Hon. Lechesa Tsenoli MP, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of South Africa; and Hon. Cecil David Mwambe MP, Member of the Parliament of Tanzania.

It was highlighted by Ms Dibateza that whilst there are numerous examples of women changemakers across Commonwealth parliaments achieving extraordinary progress, the responsibility to gender sensitise parliaments cannot and should not be seen as a burden placed on women parliamentarians alone.

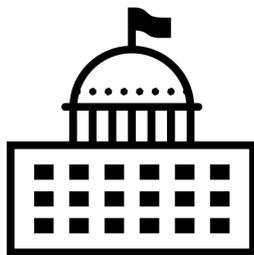
### Definition of Institutionalisation:

*Where gender sensitive parliamentary reforms specific to a parliament are identified as well as the political and administrative actors responsible for implementing and maintaining GSP standards.”*

*- Commonwealth Parliamentary Association*

Recognising the importance of supporting Commonwealth Parliaments in addressing inequities, the CPA Gender Sensitising Parliaments Guidelines: Standards and a Checklist for Parliamentary Change states that **“Successful institutionalisation involves not only determining necessary reforms relevant to a particular parliament and its circumstances but in identifying the actors and means through which reforms are implemented, and GSP Standards maintained”**.

As was also mentioned in the session on GSP, the responsibility to gender sensitise Parliaments can no longer be an additional burden for women parliamentarians, nor to willing women and men parliamentarians; **it is for the parliament as an institution, both political and administrative to enact changes.**



Determine necessary reforms relevant to your parliament and its circumstances



Identify the actors and means through which reforms are implemented, and GSP Standards maintained



## **CPA 2022 Gender Sensitising Parliaments Guideline: A Seven- Step Field Guide**

The [GSP Field Guide](#) supports the key principle of successful GSP ‘institutionalisation’. Developing on the 2020 Guidelines, the Field Guide provides a blueprint for Commonwealth parliaments interested in undertaking a GSP self-assessment of their institutions with the objective of making their parliaments more representative and inclusive. With its 7 steps, the Field Guide provides parliaments with flexibility in approaching a self-assessment, allowing assessors to decide the scope, method, team, and timeline to deliver GSP activities.

**Step 1: Understanding Gender Sensitivity** - Parliaments explore the definition(s) of GSP, why GSP are important, and the various ways in which they can be and have been assessed, using the CPA’s GSP Standards and Checklists. It involves identifying insensitivities, what are possible reforms, how they can be implemented and with what support.

**Step 2: Embracing Gender Sensitive Parliament Principles** - The organisation institutionally and politically commits to embed the principles of a GSP into the parliament’s structures, operations, methods, and work. It is essential that there is an agreement from critical actors to undertake GSP reform and there must be political will. A key part is to identify those with the power, authority, and resources needed to undertake a successful review, and where parliamentary decisions are made to agree, support, and supply resources for the assessment.

**Step 3: Preparing a Team and Strategy** - Assessors set timelines, objectives, and resource levels for a GSP implementation team which can consist of, for example, an internal team of parliamentary members and researchers and/or an external team of academic researchers and organisations.

**Step 4: Performing Initial Diagnostics Assessors** - Assessors explore what gender data are available and what data needs to be generated using a customized GSP Checklist to provide a preliminary ‘snapshot’ by which to assess the parliament’s readiness for a full gender sensitive self-assessment.

**Step 5: Preparing the Review** - Surveys and interviews are developed and tested, then used to collect data. Focus groups and workplace observations of house proceedings, committee work, and use of facility space can also be employed. Data are analysed using statistical, comparative, and multi-year analyses as well as a red-amber-green light (RAG) rating system.

**Step 6: Reporting of Findings and Making Recommendations** - Gender sensitising reform options are generated using data analyses, presented to stakeholders for comment, then finalised. Details of required resources as well as policy and legislative changes are included in the GSP self-assessment, as are key performance indicators and dates for future assessments and reports.

**Step 7: Monitoring Progress** - Data are collected on a regular basis toward key performance indicators and are reported at regular intervals to track progress over time. It is crucial to understand that GSP reform is ongoing and not a tick box exercise. It requires continuous monitoring in order to embed GSP practices and reform in parliament.

### **What successful Institutionalisation looks like:**

#### **1) There is a shared agenda for Change**

GSP reform is not championed by a singular individual but is accepted and embraced by all stakeholders in both the administrative and political sides of parliament. There is a formal agreement in principle to take this forward.

#### **2) Critical Actors**

These are people who are instrumental in facilitating GSP reform. These can be gender champions who can include the Speaker and male allies which are key when there are very few women in parliament and positions of power as they can be additional voices to support. Women caucuses, women coming together across party lines, senior women Members or the 'Mother of the House' can also be considered as critical actors.

### Gender Champions

Members were given insight into what makes an effective Gender Champion. Members were also informed of activities male Parliamentarians as allies and champions of gender equality are doing across the Commonwealth to engage Members on gender positive initiatives and policies.

Members gained insight from the perspective of a Speaker of Parliament who stressed that Presiding Officers have a duty to change the culture of parliament and transform policies, rules and systems that subjugate women, perpetuate patriarchy and prejudices or encourage a gender insensitive environment. It was emphasised that women have been and continue to be effective leaders in society and that South Africa is evidence of this, as all but one of the nine provincial legislatures have a female Presiding Officer.

As a means to actively champion gender equality in parliament and beyond, Members were informed that the Parliament of South Africa holds a Men's Parliament which "advance[s] a positive social, behavioural change among men that subsequently results in socio-economic development and support the fight against violence directed at women and children". The Men's Parliament which brings together leaders across all government, labour, business, Parliament, and civil society, coordinates a 'Men Championing Change programme' to reach men's and boys' across the country. It has built strategic partnerships and alliances with stakeholders and development agencies on gender-based violence, social cohesion, crime, substance abuse, and men's health.<sup>1</sup>

It is essential that Gender Champions work closely with women parliamentary caucuses to promote gender mainstreaming within parliament. It was shared that to broaden the support base for legislative efforts, the Tanzanian Women Parliamentarians Group (TWPG) can include male Members of Parliament as its honorary members.

***"further work needs to be done to ensure that Commonwealth Parliaments embrace the idea of having inclusive parliaments"***

- Hon Lechesa Tsenoli, Deputy Speaker, South Africa

<sup>1</sup> [National Mens Parliament D15 Double Page Spread 6.pdf](#)



Actively involving men in gender equality initiatives encourages a participatory approach to dealing with challenges that affect women as it is only when stakeholders of all genders unite that Parliament is able to achieve gender equality for all.

***“co-operation between women and men is essential in any attempt at gender sensitising parliaments and removing all barriers which inhibit the fullest participation by women”***

- Members from CPA Study Group on Gender Sensitising Commonwealth, 2001

Outside of Parliament, Gender Champions can increase awareness of specific gender-related issues and act as ambassadors and role models to the wider communities.

Members should be aware of the following key international commitments and gender-transformative declarations that engage men:

- [Delhi Declaration and Call to Action](#) (2<sup>nd</sup> MenEngage Global Symposium)
- [Kinshasa Declaration](#) (Men’s Conference on Positive Masculinity African Union)

The following were key takeaways from the session:

- Male Parliamentarians and the parliamentary institution should increase the support they give to women’s parliamentary caucuses by working closely with them and acting as ambassadors of gender equality in society as this can further strengthen their work.
- Successful gender sensitivity requires adequate funding therefore parliaments must ensure that there is sufficient budget is given to gender transformation.
- It is only when all stakeholders, regardless of gender, unite, that social and economic development for all is achieved.

### **Session 3: Combatting Harassment and Violence in Parliament and Navigating Mental Health of Parliamentarians**

This session allowed participants to consider the various forms of harassment they and/or their peers may have experienced during their term(s) and the impact of harassment on the mental health of Parliamentarians.

The session drew perspectives from Dr Lulu Mahai, Director at the Institute of Gender Studies, with the discussions on the mental health of Parliamentarians receiving data and experiences from Kimberly McArthur, Chief Operating Officer at the Apolitical Foundation and Hon. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau MP, Member of the Parliament of Canada.

#### **Members were invited to self-reflect on their experiences of harassment and violence in parliament and answer the following questions:**

- What is your position on harassment and violence in parliament?
- Do you share your views on combatting harassment and violence in parliament?
- Do you fear to talk about it?
- Do you know your rights?
- Are resources available to help you in parliament?
- Have you ever reported any cases? If so, what happened? Where did you get the resources?
- Who are the perpetrators of violence?

#### **Definition of Harassment**

Harassment can be identified as “unwanted behaviour directed at an individual with the purpose or intent of humiliating, disrespecting, intimidation, hurting or offending them.”

This unwanted behaviour could include but is not limited to:

- **Discriminatory:** unwanted, harmful and unfair treatment towards an individual that is based on the grounds of age, disability, gender, language, nationality, political view, religion, race, sexual orientation or other status.
- **Sexual:** unwanted sexual advance or request directed at an individual such as inappropriate physical contact or remarks about a person’s body or clothing, unwanted messages, calls, gifts or advances;
- **Physical:** unwanted physical contact or action directed at an individual, such as direct threats with the intent to harm, physical attacks such as hitting, kicking and pushing;
- **Psychological:** unwanted behaviour or actions that can negatively impact an individual’s mental wellbeing, such as spreading rumours, belittling comments or discrediting, opposing or challenging an individual’s proposals. Harassment could also include some bullying behaviour, such as verbal or written abuse, threats, rude jokes, facial expressions and gestures, amongst many other actions.

Additionally, coercion, the action of forcefully persuading or threatening an individual to do something that includes behaviours such as blackmail, extortion, threats or physical and sexual assaults can also be considered a form of harassment. Harassment can be experienced online via the internet, emails, and social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, as well as remotely through text and calls.



Harassment and violence against Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff is a complex problem that requires **multiple, complementary** approaches. Therefore, parliaments, legislatures, parliamentarians and parliamentary staff across the Commonwealth should be aware and able to understand the concept of harassment, violence and the negative role it can play.

The causes and underlying issues behind harassment may vary across one country to another. However, most commonly, harassment is present because of:

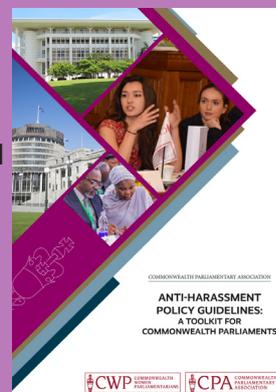
- Abuse of power and environments which enable and overlook such abuses
- The predominance of political masculinities (ideas about and practices of masculinity that shape and are shaped by political actors, processes and institutions)
- Limited knowledge, skills, competencies and time dedicated to developing or implementing anti-harassment policies
- Gender stereotypes and discrimination
- Unfavourable or nonexistent laws/policies/regulations
- The existence of certain social norms, myths and beliefs
- Cultures of silence and fears about repercussions if/when reporting harassment

There are various ways legislatures can combat harassment and violence in parliament:

- Create a gender-sensitive, discrimination - and recrimination - free parliament
- Be a role model in the fight against harassment and engage men in leadership roles
- Provide well-established forums where women members of parliament may talk about the issues they face, including harassment of any kind, and work out solutions
- Invest in capacity building and resource sharing to assist parliaments in their efforts to prevent harassment
- Develop and strengthen frameworks and policies that support women's participation and engagement in politics
- Develop strategic measures to control online space, remove inappropriate content, and uphold the right to free speech

### CPA ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY GUIDELINES TOOLKIT

The structure and content of the [CPA Anti-Harassment Policy Guidelines](#) is designed to help legislatures, regardless of their experience, to promote and maintain an internal working environment that has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of harassment. Using a wide range of policies from parliaments across the CPA's membership as case studies, these guidelines take a step by step approach that offers practical methods that can and should be incorporated in respective policies and strategies.



## Mental Health in Parliament

Parliamentarians face unique challenges because of their public role, high levels of scrutiny and accessibility by the media and the public. Parliamentarians have to manage high workloads which includes balancing their role as legislators and being accessible to constituents for casework which may include sensitive and distressing topics.

Members were informed of some of the challenges Parliamentarians have faced in the House of Commons of Canada such as stress and burnout when struggling to maintain a work-life balance. Specific focus was given to women who, through biases and norms in society, feel pressure to meet certain expectations. Stakeholders, both male and female, have a responsibility to challenge and remove patriarchal conditions and expectations that may worsen the mental health of Parliamentarians.

Members were also given some insight into work the Parliament of Canada is doing to promote and protect mental health within parliament including the provision of a [Mental Health Toolkit for Parliamentarians and Staff](#). Created at the request of the Parliament of Canada's All Party Mental Health Caucus, the Handbook seeks to help Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff understand mental health concepts and integrate them into policymaking and everyday practices. Education on positive mental health and well-being policies, strategies and practices can equip Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff with the relevant knowledge and skills needed to better cope with the normal stresses and daily challenges of life.

## What is Mental Health?

Mental Health can be understood as "having the capacity to be able to successfully adapt to the challenges that life creates for people" [2] It is our brain that learns, recalls and executes these capacities through its enablement of our emotions, thinking and behaviours that help us adapt to these life challenges and opportunities. Too often, mental health has been considered to mean "feelings happy" or "feeling good". Mental health is not about feeling good all the time. It consists of a wide range of situationally appropriate states that include negative, neutral and positive emotions and thoughts. For example, feeling upset after a conflict with a friend is not a sign of poor mental health. It is a situationally appropriate response, which is a part of good mental health.

Good 'mental health' is essentially 'good brain health'; the brain and the rest of the body cannot be separated. Understanding this connection and supporting mental health through paying attention to our physical health, and vice versa, is essential. Remember that mental health is not the opposite of mental illness. Individuals with a mental illness still have mental health. In fact, many individuals with a mental illness may have better mental health than those without. They have had to learn coping skills that may make them more adaptable to life's challenges than those who have not learned such skills.

It is important to consider the 4 interrelated categories illustrated in the diagram below.



Source: House of Commons Canada Mental Health Handbook for parliamentarians and staff



## CPA MENTAL HEALTH TOOLKIT FOR COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTS

This [CPA Mental Health Toolkit](#) has been designed to give advice, guidance and to provide education on how parliamentary institutions can improve their response to mental health matters, and to support member Branches to create better mental health policies and practices in our parliamentary workplaces.



Trends show that increased harassment against Parliamentarians, particularly women online – increased levels of stress and vulnerability.

Below are the Top 10 insights from research conducted by the Apolitical Foundation on [‘The State of Politicians’ Mental Wellbeing and Why It Matters’](#), where surveys and interviews were conducted with current and former politicians from across six continents:

1. Politicians surveyed had worse mental wellbeing than emergency-service employees.
2. The stress of the job could impact decision-making and our democracies.
3. Violence and harassment deter emerging leaders and drive away existing politicians.
4. Financial barriers keep some aspiring leaders away.
5. There is public misconceptions of political leadership is very few people have an accurate idea of what politicians do day to day.
6. There is untapped potential of political leadership development. Most politicians globally seem to have little-to-no access to formal mental wellbeing support through parties or legislatures.
7. It’s time for a 21st-century upgrade and need to redefine the job of a politician, not just more individual wellness programs.
8. Mentoring, training and peer networks are at the top of politicians’ wish lists.
9. Against all odds, Politicians are overcoming challenges and doing their jobs.
10. Politicians see serving as a privilege. It remains to be a rewarding job for them.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Below is a list of recommendations from the Apolitical Foundation's which Parliamentarians can implement to ensure that they are proactively keeping mental health at the forefront of conversations within parliament.

- \* Speak to your peers about mental wellbeing and strategies to support it.
- \* Consider speaking publicly about your mental wellbeing and how your job impacts it positively and negatively.
- \* Work on reforms that would make being an effective politician more sustainable.
- \* If you can, act to improve or better support your mental wellbeing. Being mentally well is an act of service, as it is likely you will better represent your constituents.
- \* Foster the mental wellbeing of colleagues and staff. [The Compassion in Politics initiative](#) has examples of how modern politics can be done without resorting to unhealthy behaviour.
- \* Familiarise yourself with your legislature's code of conduct. If there is not one, learn from existing examples, including the [Parliamentarians for Global Action's Global Parliamentary Democratic Code](#) and the [New Zealand Parliament's Behavioural Statements](#) for the parliamentary workplace.



## Session 4: Deepfakes: A New Online Gender-Based Violence?

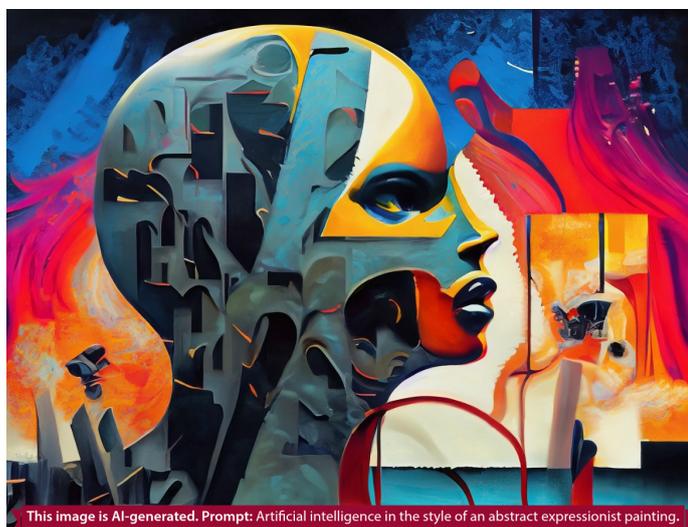
In this session, Members joined the CPA Virtual Conference on the 4th Industrial Revolution during a session on 'Deepfakes: A New Online Gender-Based Violence'. The purpose of the session was to provide attendees with an approach to deepfake content framed as tech-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV). The session further outlined the challenges in detection and regulation for policy makers and offer a gendered approach to addressing the negative effects of Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV).

During this session, Members heard research, trends and statistics from expert panellists Suzie Dunn, Assistant Professor at Dalhousie University's Schulich School of Law; Dr Kiran Hassan, Co-ordinator of Freedom of Expression and Digital Rights at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies; and Varaidzo Magodo-Matimba, Grants and Growth Coordinator at POLLICY.org.

### Definition of a 'Deepfake'

Deepfake refers to the 'full range of hyper-realistic digital falsification of images, video, and audio' (Citron and Chesney, 2019). It can also be thought of as the video equivalent of a photoshopped picture, the technology behind which is complex, however access to this technology is becoming increasingly accessible and more widely marketed. For example, as user interfaces develop, an average Windows user without too much computer expertise can create them. The software required to produce deepfakes can now be downloaded by an individual using an app, and disseminated via the internet, resulting in untraceable and widely shared content that can be indistinguishable from reality.

There is a growing awareness of the devastating personal and reputational damage that deepfake content can inflict. The impact of this is deeply linked to broader issues of gender inequality and misogyny online. The effects of deepfakes are compounded for those already marginalised groups who may experience discrimination based on gender, sexuality, or racial difference. Recent research highlights a silencing effect where individuals choose to withdraw from online spaces to avoid this abuse. The consequence of this effect is a stifling of freedom for many women to participate freely in politics online for fear of harm.



This image is AI-generated. Prompt: Artificial intelligence in the style of an abstract expressionist painting.

This image is AI-generated

## CPA PARLIAMENTARY HANDBOOK ON DISINFORMATION, AI AND SYNTHETIC MEDIA

The CPA has developed this [Disinformation, AI and Synthetic Media Handbook](#) to provide a comprehensive overview of disinformation, including its different forms and the various techniques used to spread it. It also covers the basics of AI and synthetic media, including their potential applications and implications for democracy, within and beyond the electoral cycle.



### Direct Impacts of Deepfakes

- Embarrassment
- Diminished credibility
- Loss of support
- Humiliation
- Exploitation (e.g., financial/political)
- Inciting other forms of violence
- Cost of removing online content
- Sexual and bodily autonomy and integrity

### Structural Impacts of Deepfakes

- Silences women online as they retreat from online spaces
- Career dissolution
- Political disenfranchisement of women and minorities
- Stress and mental health impact comparable to physical sexual violence
- Reinforces sexist entitlement to women's body



Women Parliamentarians are increasingly becoming the target of misogyny, violence and sexual abuse online. Research shows that deepfakes are a new form of gender-based violence as this type of online abuse and harassment disproportionately affects women. Parliaments across the Commonwealth and beyond struggle with dealing with deepfakes and synthetic media but when they do, this is done in a reactive manner in response to something that has occurred.

For example, following a report on the rise of antisemitic and Islamophobic rhetoric on X (formerly known as Twitter), the Australian Government has begun the process of updating [The Online \(Basic Safety Expectations\) Determination 2022](#). Likewise, following the increase of high-profile deepfake scandals, the House of Commons of Canada has introduced the [Online Harms Act](#), that addresses the issue of deepfakes being used as sexually explicit intimate content that is communicated without consent.

Parliamentarians now more than ever need to be proactive in thinking about how they can mitigate the negative effects of deepfake content for themselves and their peers.

Here are some legal and practical reforms parliamentarians can consider to mitigate the negative effects of deepfake content:

- Regulate technology and social media platforms requiring the deletion of non-consensual content
- Regulate the creation, distribution and possession of deepfake content
- Create and make available effective tools to counter and support victims of deepfakes and synthetic media
- Advocate for a contextualised definition of deepfakes and other key terms to ensure that parliaments, legal agencies, civil society and all other key stakeholders have an understanding of what these terms mean
- Provide a platform for women Parliamentarians to speak about the harms of online abuse, harassment, violence including impact of deepfakes.

## Session 5: Support and Action: Parliamentary Networking Session

In many countries, relevant Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) play a critical role in working towards achieving gender equality and advancing the rights of women. They represent, support, and defend vulnerable groups of women and keep gender equality, women's rights and other related issues on policymakers' agendas, whilst also gathering and disseminating research. CSOs can be a key avenue to holding governments, parliaments, and other stakeholders to account over their implementation of gender-related commitments and serve as a dynamic source of ideas, policy perspectives, partnerships, and support.



The fourth dimension of a GSP, as outlined in the Gender Sensitising Parliaments Guidelines: Standards and a Checklist for Parliamentary Change, indicates that parliaments should have formal, routine, and substantial links between Members, parliamentary staff, and women's civil society organisations. This is a means of maintaining ongoing dialogue with gender experts whilst also ensuring that the voices of those impacted by gender insensitivities are not ignored.

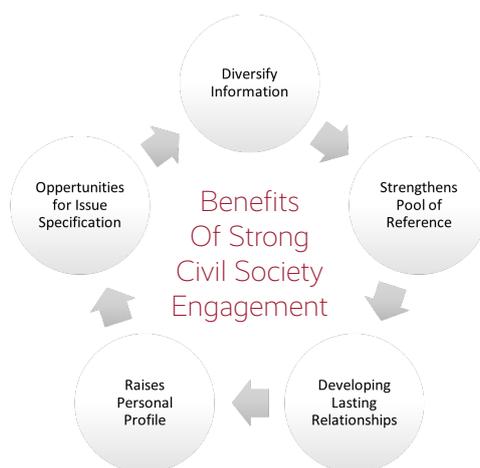
This networking session provided Members with an opportunity to gain insight into the work that organisations within Tanzania are doing to promote gender equality. During the session, Members had the chance to engage in one-to-one discussions and network with representatives from these organisations to ask questions, exchange information and share insights from their parliament. The purpose of this networking session was to explore avenues of engagement between elected representatives and CSOs which can result in mutually beneficial relationships.

### CSO Contributions:

**UN Women Tanzania** Ms. Stella Manda, Senior Gender Advisor

UN Women Tanzania works with the Government and partners to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in various domains, such as leadership, economics, health, and education. It delivers various local level programmes that seek to mitigate acts of violence against women and establish a legal framework for the judiciary and police to address women's issues of equality and justice. UN Women Tanzania also works to promote women's participation and leadership to develop gender-inclusive and responsive institutions.





**Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA)** Dr. Rose Reuben, Executive Director

TAMWA is a non-profit, non-partisan and human rights NGO that supports journalists to write about issues related to gender equality. TAMWA has been working through partnerships to highlight initiatives for women in decision-making places, financial capital, and freedom. In recognising the power of the media to communicate and educate, they give exposure to Parliamentarians who make policies that empower women on issues such as combatting gender-based violence (GBV) and on violence against women online. This is important as it serves to inspire young girls to think about political careers.

**Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA)**

Advocate Mary Richard, Head of Programs

TAWLA is an NGO supporting access for women to the legal profession and to legal services, often assisting women in cases who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. It also targets issues of inequality that are compounded by gender through channels such as paralegal services, advocacy, women’s access to resources, and economic empowerment. TAWLA also work to collaborate with the government on the expedition of cases in court and support other activities.

**CSO in focus: TAWLA**

In September 2021, Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA) held a session with newly elected female Members of Parliament which focused on leadership and the importance of mainstreaming gender in parliament sessions.

**Equality for Growth Tanzania (EFG)**

Ms. Jane Magigita, Executive Director

EFG is a rights-based NGO seeking to empower women within the informal sector. The targeted beneficiaries include self-employed women workers, in both the formal and informal sectors. EFG recognised that due to increased geographical and social mobility, when women move from private to public spaces, they find these spaces are already occupied by men and often lack opportunities for them to access the right information. Market committees are male-dominated platforms that often misrepresent women’s position in the market sphere; therefore, EFG aims to work with parliament to put systems in place that address all gender issues, such as GBV in a public marketplace.

**CSO in focus: EFG**

To develop and maintain dialogues on gender and public policy, EFG Tanzania hosts semi-annual meetings with Local Government Authorities (LGAs), the police and Market Committees in nine regions including Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Mbeya, Shinyanga, Lindi, Mtwara, Tanga, Iringa and Mara. These dialogues engage at least 105 MPs to increase their awareness regarding GBV issues and inadequate working spaces at the council markets.

## Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) Ms. Catherine Kasimbazi

TGNP emerged through a collective process of critical reflection by leaders of key women's and gender organisations for women who are the exploited and oppressed within the labouring classes. TGNP works towards gender equality, equity, and social justice through participatory research and analysis of local and national policies. TGNP is a hub of support and knowledge for capacity-building movements such as the Gender-Responsive Budget Alliance, Gender Development Series, and Youth Feminist Forums. They work together with political leadership to influence changes at both the district and national level through a guideline of gender-responsive budgeting.

### CSO in focus: TGNP

TGNP, in collaboration with COADY International Institute have facilitated conversations with policymakers in Tanzania around their work to empower women in vulnerable situations with skills that have helped them transform the challenges facing them into opportunities. As part of this collaboration, women have been trained to recycle waste products, which for a long time have been a substantial challenge to the environment and transform them into fertilizer. The training also teaches women how to make alternative charcoal by using discarded boxes, charcoal dust, soil clay, and cassava flour.

By maintaining a strong and consistent relationship with councillors and local bodies, the initiatives and challenges become more visible to policymakers, offering opportunities for positive change and support.

## Institute of Gender Studies, University of Dar es Salaam Dr. Lulu Mahai, Director

The Institute of Gender Studies (IGS) is mandated to develop undergraduate and postgraduate courses on gender and gender-related programmes, as well as competencies in gender analysis, basic and applied Gender research, applicable to various aspects of society. Additionally, the IGS in collaboration with the Department of Political Science and Public Administration established an Information Laboratory on Women's Leadership and Political Participation to research and address GBV in politics.

## Omuka Hub / Agri Thamani Foundation Ms. Viola Julius, Coordinator on behalf of Hon. Neema Lugangira

Omuka Hub and the Agri Thamani Foundation work to bridge the gap between men and women in the marketplace through a focus on empowerment, health and nutrition, and budgeting. The Agri Thamani Foundation aims to support and empower youth advocacy projects focusing on rural areas. The Omuka Hub offers capacity building through digital skill training, support for women political leaders, and health and digital rights. Both organisations believe that female Parliamentarians must be visible to the next generation with a digital presence, a prerequisite that the online space should be a safe place for them

### CSO in focus: Omuka Hub

In October 2023, the joint Omuka Hub held a joint Women in Politics forum with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) which offered an opportunity for citizens to engage and provide feedback to government officials and parliamentarians on the realities of women's political participation and the current political reform process. Founder of Omuka Hub, Hon. Neema Lugangira moderated the session during which participants discussed key challenges women face in political participation at the local and national levels. These centred on cultural norms and perceptions, as well as violence against women in politics.



## Session 6: Gender Quotas

This session aimed to build upon the conversations held during the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Accra, Ghana 2023 where participants had an open discussion about the effectiveness and desirability of quotas. Members learnt from the experiences and success stories of parliaments across the Commonwealth whilst also gaining knowledge of alternative strategies for furthering women's representation in parliaments. Attendees heard firsthand experiences from fellow Parliamentarians, Hon. Rosemarie Bangura MP, Member of the Parliament of Sierra Leone, Hon. Talita Monnagotla MP, Member of the Parliament of Botswana and Stella Manda, Senior Gender Advisor, UN Women Tanzania.



***“The CWP network endorses [that]... Parliaments of the Commonwealth, with less than 30 percent women, should implement a percentage of gender quotas through legislative means or via political party candidate selections ... and strongly urges parliaments to be proactive in implementing gender quotas and to actively report to the CPA on their efforts, successes, and challenges in increasing women’s representation in parliament”.***

**Hon. Zainab Gimba, CWP Chairperson at the 66<sup>th</sup> CPC Workshop**

Gender equality and freedom from discrimination is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of sustainable development. For parliaments and legislatures to function as truly representative institutions and safeguards of democracy, gender equality must be advanced.

Barriers to women's political participation and representation often include:

- Structural issues (e.g., political parties are the gatekeepers, lack of financial resources for campaigning).
- Lack of political will (e.g., politics is historically dominated by men, resistance to changes).
- Harmful norms and violence (e.g., gender-based violence against women politicians, harmful stereotypes).

Despite progress made in many areas, women's representation in most parliaments remains inadequate. To address this disparity, gender quotas have emerged as a promising strategy. Gender quotas create opportunities for women to enter politics, breaking the barriers that hinder their participation. They lead to inclusive governance and gender diversity in parliaments, leading to better decision-making, and bringing a broader range of perspectives, experiences, and expertise. This diversity fosters innovative solutions and more comprehensive debates on crucial societal issues.



Gender quotas are intended to be temporary mechanisms; the goal is to normalise women’s participation and create an equitable political landscape. Parliaments across the Commonwealth have implemented gender quotas in one of two ways. The first is through legislative measures: Governments can enact legislation that mandates gender quotas in parliaments, thereby creating a legal framework for gender equality in politics. The second is through voluntary party mechanisms: Political parties can adopt internal policies, voluntarily committing to gender quotas in their candidate selection processes.

### Case Study: Gender Quotas in Legislation, Sierra Leone

- The Parliament of Sierra Leone passed a law in 2022 requiring public and private entities to reserve 30% of their jobs for women in a bid to tackle gender imbalances. The Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Act 2022 also assures women at least 14 weeks of maternity leave, equal pay, and training opportunities.
- Additionally, the Public Elections Act 2022 prescribes that “for every candidate nominated, one of them shall be female” (Article 58).
- Most recently, the Gender Empowerment Act 2023 outlines that in public elections, 30% of constituency seats in each district shall be reserved exclusively for female candidates contesting parliamentary elections (Article 2).

Members were informed of the benefits and challenges of implementing gender quotas in Sierra Leone. It was shared that the journey to achieving 30% was not an easy one, but that 30% seats are now exclusively for female candidates. Furthermore, the contribution of male gender champions, strong political will, and influence from neighbouring governments such as Rwanda and Kenya led to the policy changes.

Electoral gender quotas can be used to increase participation so that qualified women are no longer denied positions. Measuring the effectiveness of quotas should not only be evaluated in numbers but also in policy influence and in political discourse within society. The [United Nations Population Fund \(UNFPA\)](#) reports that whilst there are some improvements in women’s participation, there is still much to be done to combat the continuation of gender disparity in the political sphere.

In Stella Manda’s assessment of the quotas system in Tanzania, it was shared that there can be a difference in experience between elected Members and those elected to hold special seats. Members with special seats do not have constituency funds or development funds and unlike other Members they cannot put themselves forward to become Prime Minister. As a result, they sometimes struggle to gain the necessary influence to become members of strong committees.



It was also highlighted in Manda's analysis that of the 141 female Members in the Parliament of Tanzania, 112 hold special seats and most women enter politics through political parties. All parties in Tanzania have women's wings which is an affirmative action, but political party arrangements do not always support their breakthrough into party or parliamentary leadership as Members who hold special seats cannot participate or be appointed to the position of Prime Minister, Speaker or other key roles. It was also highlighted that there remains inequitable power relationships that are sometimes biased and based on negative stereotypes in Tanzania. Despite quotas being effective in increasing the voices of women in parliament, Manda stressed that capacity building, promotion of women's political ascendancy, budgetary intervention, and acceleration are all central to the achievement of gender equality. Although the 30% quota stipulated by the constitution can and should be reached, it was her view that there is a tendency to think this would be the end of the struggle in Tanzania.



### ***Key Takeaways from the Group Discussion***

- 1.** When parliaments have successfully implemented a quota system, the next question is how to support youth, and specifically to continue encouraging young women to participate in politics.
- 2.** Members collectively agreed on the importance of young women's mentorship at the local level.
- 3.** Gender quotas should be seen as an important avenue for women to enter decision-making positions and parliaments must develop and pass legislation accordingly that supports gender equality. Where the law provides for minimum representation to get gender parity, they have often lacked punitive measures for ensuring adherence.
- 4.** An issue raised with many quota interventions was the lack of systematic support for new members beyond gaining a special seat such as capacity building and proper protections from discrimination. Members highlighted the responsibility of political parties to push these agendas and take ownership of quota mandates.
- 5.** Further discussion is needed around alternative strategies such as funding or training for women candidates to further promote women's representation in parliaments.

## Session 7: Strategic Media Communications

Being a strong and confident voice in local and national media is an important step in ensuring the representation of women members in both the media and in politics. This means being an effective communicator and providing a greater platform for women parliamentarians to advocate for gender equality. The better and more confident a communicator a Member is, the more likely they can grow a platform to advocate from.

This session informed parliamentarians of methods to develop their media capabilities and increase their confidence and ease in fielding questions from journalists. Members heard first hand from expert presenters on how to engage with local and national media most effectively to promote gender equality and greater women's representation through their engagements.

### Tips for how to engage with the media

**Ms. Zamda George**, Public Relations Officer, University of Dar es Salaam

Parliamentarians use and engage with the media. It is important to think about how and when they establish media engagement skills, and how the media can assist the success of the work of a Parliamentarian.

It is important to consider how various media outlets and journalists differ such as the target audience and their deadline schedules.

It is advised that individuals actively seek opportunities to connect by **attending press events** and building a network to **foster long-term relationships**. It is also useful to consider stakeholders and media consumption to **identify individuals and groups with a vested interest**, such as a district council, at the forefront of decision-making. In addition, it is crucial to think about the influence these stakeholders have on public perceptions.

In terms of one-to-one interviews, it is key to **prepare thoroughly** and understand non-verbal communication. This can be achieved by adapting to handling tough questions, **anticipating potential questions**, staying composed under pressure, and **redirecting difficult questions to key messages**

**Dr. Rose Reuben**, Executive Director, Tanzania Media Women Association

As well as ensuring that engagement with the media is a positive experience for Parliamentarians, it can also be a valuable tool for Parliamentarians to support and **highlight advocacy initiatives** by themselves or other organisations, by connecting with them to mainstream gender equality and political discourse. Publicity also serves to **draw attention to positive diversity and inclusion** and discuss the significance of maintaining it.



There are many different techniques and ways of using the media positively. Parliamentarians can lead by example in **using empowering language to avoid reinforcing stereotypes**, and focus on the skills, qualifications, and achievements of colleagues. Again, it is important to allow space to focus on **success stories of women leaders breaking barriers** in different fields and contributing positively to society. When addressed within an appropriate context and with clear and concise articulation, these messages can be better received and understood by audiences of diverse demographics.

Continuing from the previous session, Members applied the practical knowledge gained from the experts and collaborated in a fictional role-play exercise where they took on the role as a journalist fielding questions to a politician or a Member of Parliament addressing a doctored video that made the rounds on social media of a woman Parliamentarian from the fictional parliament of Commonwealth Land, in which she appears to be drunkenly slurring her words during a speech to Parliament. Participants split into teams across break-out rooms before coming back together to debate the topic as if they were either members of the media or a politician defending themselves or a colleague to the press. The communications experts supported the groups with the exercise helping Members to understand the skills and tactics used by journalists, prepare for questions but also know how to frame difficult situations to their advantage. This was a lively and engaging session, not only consolidating what the Members had learned but also providing the opportunity to share experiences of media interactions and learn new skills from each other.



## Session 8: Establishing a Successful Women's Caucus

This session allowed delegates to hear first-hand about the importance of establishing a women's caucus, its function, impact, and how the caucus can feed into the parliamentary agenda.

Hon. Virginia Alice Camealio-Benjamin MPL, Member of the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature; Senator Hon. Elena Smith, Member of the Senate of Belize; and Hon. Madina Ndangiza MP, CWP Chairperson of the Africa Region and Member of the Parliament of Rwanda, opened discussions by sharing the experiences, remit, successes and challenges of their women's caucuses.

Successful women's parliamentary caucuses are important mechanisms for empowering women Parliamentarians. They help to build parliamentary working environments that advocate for equality between male and female Members and parliamentary staff. It has been recognised that caucuses can advance the equal and meaningful participation of women in parliaments and encourage gender sensitisation of the institution. Currently, just under 100 parliaments around the world have functioning women's parliamentary caucuses.

It was shared that the Eastern Cape Legislature's Multi-Party Women's Caucus is a standing committee that works outside of party lines to identify various focus areas relating to women, children and society under the auspices of Sustainable Development Goal 5. The standing committee devised terms of reference covering a variety of focus areas such as enhancing the participation of women and encouraging the training of young men and boys in gender analysis and mainstreaming. Insight was provided that a prominent challenge of the standing committee was budget allocation. It was also shared that despite women being in leadership positions, desired gender transformations were not being enacted within the parliament and often undone when women were not in positions of leadership.



### Example remit of a caucus:

"The Women Parliamentarians Caucus of the National Assembly of Belize is a space created by women parliamentarians from the government, the opposition, and social partners in the National Assembly to strengthen women's voices in parliament, to encourage gender perspectives in the day-to-day operations of the parliament, and to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality and inclusion in the parliament."



As a means to champion women's empowerment and uniting cross-party members, the National Assembly of Belize established its Women Parliamentarians Caucus in February 2022. Members were informed that a key driving force of the women's caucus was the exemplary support received from the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the National Assembly, who ensured the Caucus was established with the support of the CPA and the CWP network. It was shared that Members of the Caucus seeks consensus in the work it pursues. Among other work highlighted, the Caucus has explored how Parliamentarians can increase visibility in society and to mitigate the challenges of women's representation in all sectors.

Members were also informed of alternatives to caucuses that some parliaments have.

Insight was shared from the National Assembly of Nigeria, which has a Standing Committee on Women in Parliament. The Standing Committee collates data and research on women at the national and state level, educates and represents themselves in international conferences, seminars and workshops. It was shared that in aligning their work to the parliamentary agenda, the standing committee conducts round table discussions and local town hall meetings so that women can comment on the agenda, outside of party lines.

As a second part of the session, Members were invited to share experiences of the work their women's caucuses have or are currently engaged in.

Examples of some successes and activities of caucuses included increasing the number of special seats and actively encouraging more women to enter politics and to stand as candidates to increase women's meaningful participation. Other parliaments had utilised likeminded ministries to support and empower the role of caucuses. For example, in the Parliament of Kenya, the Women, Children and Youth ministries are often called on by a caucus to highlight areas of improvement and foster collaboration across the parliamentary institution. Women's caucuses also aid political parties in ensuring that nomination and appointment of candidates includes and supports women to stand. This is particularly important in jurisdictions that have party selective caucuses focusing on the preselection of women.

Some jurisdictions are in a more advanced position where the women's caucus functions as a driving force of existing gender mechanisms within the parliamentary institution which includes monitoring data from a national and local level, is accounted for within budget hearings and is an agenda pursued by male and female Parliamentarians alike. The majority of parliaments present at the workshop shared that they work and partner with civil society and partner organisations, particularly for training, advocacy and lobbying purposes. It was highlighted that membership of Presiding Officers within caucuses was a great support in pursuing avenues for gender mainstreaming and women's representation.



Similarly, other parliaments have achieved gender parity and so work is being undertaken to maintain and ensure the parliament is prioritising gender mainstreaming in the budget for health, education and other issues.

Some parliaments face more immediate challenges such as the low number of women Parliamentarians which hinder their ability to effectively gender mainstream. New and existing caucuses also may not have a defined strategy to pursue and so there is little follow up on activities and desired results are not always achieved. Several institutions have implemented gender quotas which in turn has strengthened women's caucuses.

The shared experiences, contributions and reflections from Members demonstrated that whilst the methods of advancing gender equality and women's representation differed across jurisdictions, there is a real need and desire for effective women's caucuses/committees.

#### Example remit of a caucus:

The Parliament of Mauritius has a Parliamentary Gender Caucus of female and male parliamentarians. It was established within the Standing Orders in 2016.

“The Parliamentary Gender Caucus shall consist of the Speaker as Chairperson, the Deputy Speaker as Deputy Chairperson and not more than 15 Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection.”

#### ***Parliamentary Academy Course: Effective Women's Parliamentary Caucuses***

This course offers support to Members and Branches who might be looking to establish a caucus or strengthen an existing caucus. Drawing on the experiences of Parliaments across the Commonwealth and beyond the course explores the process of establishing a women's parliamentary caucus, covering key issues such as how institutions can garner support, challenge resistance, and take advantage of a window of opportunity to successfully establish their caucus.

It also offers insight on setting clear goals, establishing partnerships, remaining viable and engaging with male allies. Whether your Parliament has a caucus or not, it is a valuable resource in gaining expertise in how to run an effective caucus.

Click the link below for more information on the CPA Parliamentary Academy.



**THE CPA PARLIAMENTARY ACADEMY**  
A Centre of Excellence for Commonwealth Parliamentarians



Following this session, Members participated in an interactive activity on women's caucuses. They assumed the role of Members of a fictional cross-party women's caucus and delegates were tasked with identifying one new initiative from the caucus that would improve the impact and reach of their caucus within parliament. Once the initiative was determined, one member of the fictional caucus then presented that initiative to the wider room and the two groups discussed and chose the one they would take forward .

The exercise highlighted the importance of strategic planning, negotiation and cross-party collaborative working. Parliament should be a reflection of the diverse perspectives and society it represents.

## Session 9: Gender Mainstreaming

The final session of the Workshop allowed Members to gain a concrete understanding of gender mainstreaming and it being a core element of a gender sensitive parliament.

### Definition of Gender Mainstreaming

“Gender Mainstreaming is the strategy of assessing gendered impacts and implications throughout all phases of planning and policy development.

It can include an intersectional approach to gender analysis, thereby avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach and recognising the full variety of experiences within a population.”

[CPA Gender Mainstreaming Poster](#)

There are many benefits of gender mainstreaming such as encouraging a critical understanding of the full impact and implications of policymaking and reform, increasing public trust in government and parliamentary democracy, remedying and/or mitigating existing discrimination in certain sections of society, avoiding creating new and unnecessary disadvantages, and allowing for more robust and effective legislation.

It is the responsibility of parliament to ensure that it does not subscribe to constructed stereotypes that perpetuate gender inequality. Gender blind policies can be ineffective as they do not address the diverse needs and experiences of communities which are not always the same.

### GENDER MAINSTREAMING

This session marked the publication of the CPA's new [Gender Mainstreaming Poster](#).

Members were introduced to the new resource and the facilitators offered some scope for its use:

- Definitions for key terms
- Case studies from the CWP Network
- Reference material
- An educational and advocacy tool
- Digital and/or physical sharing



To facilitate learning, external expert speaker, UN Women Senior Gender Advisor, Ms. Stella Manda, spoke to the session providing the below expertise, knowledge and insight into gender mainstreaming.

### Concepts for Understanding Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming:

- Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that aims to redress gender imbalances to achieve gender equality.
- Nationally, gender mainstreaming cannot be achieved unless and until policies, laws, development programmes and all processes of the government, parliament, and judiciary consider gender equality with all activities designed accordingly.
- Gender mainstreaming aims to ensure that men, women, boys, girls, and all vulnerable populations benefit equally from development.
- Gender mainstreaming in parliaments ensures that women's and men's concerns, needs, experiences, and aspirations are taken fully into account in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all activities.

### Parameters for Gender Analysis & Scrutiny:

- When successfully implementing gender mainstreaming, parliaments must consider basic needs, practical gender needs, and strategic gender needs. The latter of which refers to what women or men need to improve their position or status in relation to one another.
- Analysis must be made of the differential vulnerabilities people experience in situations according to their gender to ensure that appropriate, and perhaps differing, initiatives can be actioned. For example, women may partake in a larger proportion of unpaid responsibilities in the home alongside formal employment, resulting in differing conditions of security.



### Actions and Targets for Commonwealth Parliaments:

- Carry out a comprehensive parliamentary gender assessment/audit to serve as a baseline to gauge progress in future Parliaments to review and evaluate the institutional structure, operations, rules, regulations, and procedures.
- Establish a clear direction for the pursuit of gender equality through a comprehensive Gender Strategy and corresponding Implementation Plan. This should be launched by the highest levels of government and supported universally.
- Laws should be passed that actively promote gender equality in line with gender mainstreaming by integrating gender perspectives into all components of the legislative process, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

### **Case Study: Parliament of Tanzania's Gender Mainstreaming Journey**

- In 1992 the National Constitution was amended to recognise affirmative action for women.
- The year 1995 saw the development of a national gender policy and by 2000, the number of female MPs increased by 6.2 %.
- A gender quota system was introduced in the National Assembly in 2005, granting women special seats that are allocated to political parties as per the proportion of constituencies.
- In 2018, the Tanzania National Assembly introduced a strategy requiring gender mainstreaming across all three of its core functions; legislative, representation, and oversight.
- The Political Parties Act was amended in 2019 to prohibit any type of discrimination in registering members.

### **KEY CWP WORKSHOP 'LESSONS LEARNT'**

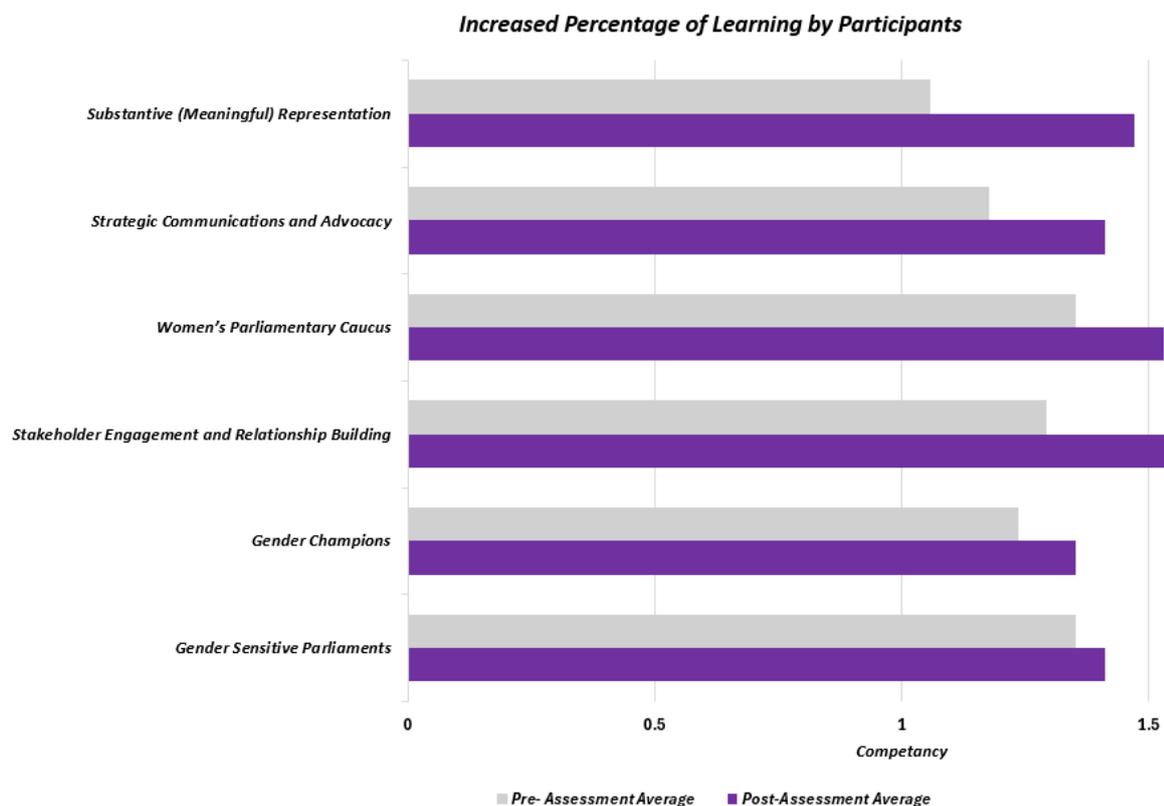
- **Break away from the idea that gender equality is a women's issue**
- **Look beyond numbers and towards the meaningful participation of women in parliaments**
- **Build a community of gender champions to advocate for equality**
- **Create impetus for change in parliaments with low numbers of women**
- **Advocate for more young women to be politically active**
- **Effectively identify and engage with key stakeholders who can support the efforts of gender champions**
- **Work collaboratively, across political spectrums, party affiliations and beyond with other parliaments to share practices and engage in mutual learning**
- **Build a relationship with the media which can be mutually beneficial**
- **Mentor young girls and women**
- **Parliaments should enact gender sensitive policies and endorse gender mainstreaming throughout the institution**
- **Support women parliamentarians across jurisdictions and share best practices**



# Monitoring and Evaluation Report

During the week, Members were provided with the opportunity to give ongoing feedback on the sessions and recount any expectations and insights. Members were also invited to complete pre-and post-workshop forms and their results can be found in the graph below. These graphs were created with a random sample of 17 delegates.

The feedback provided is extremely positive. Prior to the workshop and once it finished, Members were surveyed on their levels of knowledge in the areas covered by the workshop and as presented on the graph, there was an 18% increase in Members' level of knowledge and learning.



Members were satisfied with the format of the workshop and pleased with the quality of panellists and expert speakers. In providing verbal feedback about the workshop, several Members praised the interactive, exercise-based sessions which enabled critical thinking within a collaborative setting.

The Post-Assessment form also included a question for Members to pledge a commitment following their attendance at the workshop. Some examples include:

*"I commit to encourage young women to venture into active politics"*

*"I pledge to have a greater understanding of cultural issues facing female parliamentarians"*

*"I shall try and influence others on the importance of helping our female MPs to achieve gender equality"*

*"I pledge to learning more about deepfakes"*

*"I pledge to mobilising girls and women across the political divide"*

# Workshop Programme

TIME	SESSIONS
	<p><b>OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP</b></p> <p>Opening remarks will include:</p> <p><i>Tanzania National Anthem and CWP Anthem</i>  <i>Hon. Dr. Zainab Gimba, Chairperson of CWP</i>  <i>Hon. Angellah Kairuki, Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism</i>  <i>Stephen Twigg, CPA Secretary-General (video remarks)</i>  <i>Hon. Madina Ndongiza, CWP Chairperson of Africa Region</i></p>
09:00-10:00	
10:00-10:15	<p><i>Group Photo</i></p> <p><b>INTRODUCTION TO THE CONCEPT OF A COMMONWEALTH GENDER SENSITIVE PARLIAMENT</b></p> <p>This session will introduce participants to the work the CPA Headquarters Secretariat has been conducting through the CWP network on Gender Sensitive Parliaments (GSP). Participants will explore the four dimensions of a CPA GSP and engage in group discussions about experiences and gender sensitive practices in their respective jurisdictions.</p> <p><b>Speaker:</b>  <i>Bénite Dibateza, Programmes Manager and CWP Coordinator</i></p>
10:15-11:30	

## DAY 1 - 8 December 2023

TIME	SESSIONS
	<p><b>INSTITUTIONALISATION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER CHAMPIONS IN PARLIAMENT</b></p> <p>“Successful institutionalisation involves not only determining necessary reforms relevant to a particular parliament and its circumstances but in identifying the actors and means through which reforms are implemented, and GSP Standards maintained” – CPA Gender Sensitising Parliaments Guidelines: Standards And A Checklist For Parliamentary Change.</p>
11:45-13:00	<p>This session will look at institutionalisation as a crucial principle of a GSP and offer participants guidance on how to engage and ensure buy-in from those in leadership positions within their respective parliaments.</p> <p><b>Speakers</b>  <i>Bénite Dibateza, Programmes Manager and CWP Coordinator</i>  <i>Hon. Lechesa Tsenoli MP, South Africa</i>  <i>Hon. Cecil David Mwambe MP, Tanzania</i></p>
13:00-14:00	Lunch break
	<p><b>COMBATTING HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE IN PARLIAMENT AND NAVIGATING MENTAL HEALTH OF PARLIAMENTARIANS</b></p> <p>In this session, participants consider the various forms of harassment parliamentarians experience during their term, referring to the CPA Anti-Harassment Policy Guidelines, and touch on the mental health of parliamentarians referring to the CPA Mental Health Toolkit.</p>
14:00-15:15	<p>Participants will engage in Think – Pair – Share discussions where they will engage in peer-to-peer mutual learning of their experiences and consider how their parliaments provide support to tackle this and recommend other forms of support.</p> <p><b>Speakers</b>  <i>Dr Lulu Mahaj, Director, Institute of Gender Studies, University of Dar Es Salaam</i>  <i>Kimberly McArthur, Chief Operating Officer, Apolitical Foundation</i>  <i>Hon. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau MP, Canada Federal</i>  <i>CPA Headquarters Secretariat staff</i></p>
	Refreshment Break



TIME	SESSIONS
15:30-16:45	<p data-bbox="427 208 1211 271"><b>DEEPFAKES: A NEW ONLINE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE? (VIRTUAL SESSION)</b></p> <p data-bbox="440 315 1217 551">This session will provide attendees with a foundational knowledge of Tech Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) including awareness raising for those in public office. It will also outline the challenges in detection and regulation for policy makers and offer a gendered approach to research and project design which targets the negative effects Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV) in an increasingly tech-centred environment.</p> <p data-bbox="440 595 568 624"><b>Speakers</b></p> <p data-bbox="440 633 1217 730"><i>Suzie Dunn, Senior Fellow at CIGI, Ph.D. candidate, University of Ottawa and Assistant Professor of Law &amp; Technology, Dalhousie University</i></p> <p data-bbox="440 739 1217 801"><i>Dr. Kiran Hassan, Coordinator of Freedom of Expression and Digital Rights, Institute of Commonwealth Studies</i></p> <p data-bbox="440 810 1217 873"><i>Varaidzo Faith Magodo-Matimba, Grants and Growth Coordinator Policy, POLLICY</i></p> <p data-bbox="440 882 962 904"><i>Sophie Compton, Director of 'Another Body'</i></p>
<b>END OF DAY 1</b>	

## DAY 2 - 7 December 2023

TIME	SESSIONS
	<b>RECAP OF DAY 1</b>
09:00-09:15	<p>This session will begin with reflections of discussions and activities that were held in Day 1.</p> <p><b>Speaker</b> <i>CPA Headquarters Secretariat staff</i></p>
	<b>SUPPORT AND ACTION: PARLIAMENTARY NETWORKING SESSION</b>
09:15-11:30	<p>Participants will interact and learn from stakeholders and organisations engaged in promoting gender equality.</p> <p><b>Attendees</b> <i>Stella Manda, Senior Gender Advisor, UN Women</i> <i>Dr. Lulu Mahai, Director, Institute of Gender Studies</i> <i>Dr. Rose Reuben, Executive Director, Tanzania Media Women Association</i> <i>Tike Mwambipile, Executive Director, Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA)</i> <i>Hon. Neema Lugangira, Omuka Hub / Agri Thamani Foundation</i> <i>Lilian Luindi, Executive Director, Tanzania Gender Networking Programme</i> <i>Jane Magigita, Executive Director, Equality for Growth Tanzania</i></p>
10:30-10:45	Refreshment Break
	<b>GENDER QUOTAS</b>
11:30-13:00	<p>The session will continue the conversations undertaken during the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference and offer participants the opportunity to have an open discussion about the effectiveness and desirability of quotas. The session will allow participants to learn from the experiences and success stories from parliaments across the Commonwealth whilst also gaining knowledge of alternative strategies for further promoting women's representation in parliaments.</p> <p><b>Speakers</b> <i>Hon. Rosemarie Bangura MP, Sierra Leone</i> <i>Hon. Talita Monnakgotla MP, Botswana</i> <i>Stella Manda, Senior Gender Advisor, UN Women</i></p>
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break



TIME	SESSIONS
14:00-15:00	<p data-bbox="411 208 1054 237"><b>STRATEGIC MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS PART 1</b></p> <p data-bbox="411 277 1177 450">This session will allow participants to hear from expert presentations on how to engage with local and national media to most effectively advocate for gender equality and greater women’s representation. The session is timed to provide ample time for questions to be put to the experts in attendance.</p> <p data-bbox="411 490 531 519"><b>Speakers</b></p> <p data-bbox="411 524 1139 622"><i>Dr. Zamda George, Lecturer, University of Dar es Salaam</i> <i>Dr. Rose Reuben, Executive Director, Tanzania Media Women Association</i></p>
15:00-15:15	Refreshment Break
15:15-16:45	<p data-bbox="411 719 1050 748"><b>STRATEGIC MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS PART 2</b></p> <p data-bbox="411 788 1182 927">Continuing from the previous session, participants will apply practical knowledge learnt from the experts in an interactive exercise in a collaborative role-play exercise, either presenting or fielding questions pertaining to specific topics.</p> <p data-bbox="411 967 555 996"><b>Facilitators</b></p> <p data-bbox="411 1001 831 1030"><i>CPA Headquarters Secretariat staff</i></p> <p data-bbox="411 1081 608 1111"><b>END OF DAY 2</b></p>

TIME	SESSIONS
	<b>RECAP OF DAY 2</b>
09:00-09:15	<p>This session will begin with reflections of discussions and activities that were held in Day 2.</p> <p><b>Facilitators</b> CPA Headquarters Secretariat staff</p>
	<b>ESTABLISHING A SUCCESSFUL WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS</b>
09:15-10:30	<p>Participants will hear from colleagues who have been active members of their women's caucus and understand the importance of women's caucuses, their function, impact and how they can feed into the parliamentary agenda.</p> <p><b>Speakers</b> Hon. Dr Zainab Gimba, CWP Chairperson, Nigeria Senator Hon. Elena Smith, Belize Hon. Virginia Alice Camealio-Benjamin, Eastern Cape CPA Secretariat Headquarters staff</p>
10:30-10:45	Refreshment Break
	<b>INTERACTIVE EXERCISE SESSION ON WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS</b>
10:45-12:45	<p>A fictional scenario-based exercise in which participants assume the role as Members of a women's cross-party caucus and identify, discuss, negotiate and work together to decide on one new initiative the caucus that will improve the impact and reach of the caucus.</p> <p><b>Facilitators</b> CPA Headquarters Secretariat staff</p>
12:45-14:00	Lunch Break
	<b>GENDER MAINSTREAMING</b>
14:00-15:00	<p>Participants will gain an understanding of gender mainstreaming and it being a core element of a gender sensitive parliament. Participants will understand how it is implemented and what it means in practice within the parliament.</p> <p><b>Speaker</b> Stella Manda, Senior Gender Advisor, UN Women</p>
	<b>END OF DAY 3</b>





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