

CPA News

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1st Edition



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Editorial



Editor, Momelezi Kula.

South Africa is pleased and honoured to host the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Africa Region Conference so shortly after another major event, the FIFA World Cup. The facilities created for that event are being put to good use by the delegates from the 18 countries, comprising our four sub-regions. Thanks in part to the deadlines created

for the World Cup, we have completed a range of projects on time, and the Mbombela Stadium which is the venue for the Conference is one of the most impressive regional stadiums in our land, inspired by Giraffes and Zebras that roam the Kruger National Park. Our hosts, Mpumalanga Legislature have done us proud, hosting the CPA in this beautiful work of art.

We are particularly delighted by the combination of this event again with the deliberations of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP). For the next four days, a wide range of issues will be discussed by delegates: from how we should be dealing with natural disasters, Africa's response to global economic problems, and our response to health and social issues, among other matters. There is also a strong lead from the women delegates on increasing representation in Parliaments and cabinets. Far too few women have been called to take office in the highest echelons of our continent, and that situation is set to be rectified.

Hard-working officials worked until late at night putting the final touches in preparation for this conference, and we are optimistic that the fruits will be plentiful. The pre-conference meetings have already produced several highlights, as illustrated on page 8.

This is a debut edition of four editions that will be published in the next three days of the Conference.

Enjoy the read.

WELCOMING REMARKS BY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMON- WEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSO- CIATION (CPA) AFRICA REGION, MNINWA MAHLANGU

On behalf of the CPA Africa Region and the Mpumalanga Legislature, let me thank you for responding to our invitation to brief you about the 41st CPA Africa conference scheduled to take place from 27 - 30 July 2010 at the Mbombela Stadium, Mpumalanga.

It is for the first time that a South African Provincial Legislature as a branch hosts a CPA Africa Regional conference of this magnitude, but I am confident it will be a success as everyone, including other provincial legislatures and Parliament, has been hard at work with preparations to ensure that Mpumalanga Legislature indeed hosts a successful conference.

This type of a regional conference is held annually and rotates among the branches, which include provincial legislatures, to pursue and achieve the aims and objectives of the Africa Region of CPA, which are to:

- o Promote the interests and perspectives of Africa within the Commonwealth and beyond
- o Promote knowledge and education on social, economic and cultural systems
- o Promote gender equality and equity at all levels
- o Promote respect for fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual
- o Promote peace, democracy and good governance in all member countries and
- o Do all that is necessary for the realisation of the aims and objectives of this constitution.

The CPA Africa Region seeks to achieve the above tasks through embarking on activities which include regional conferences, study groups, seminars and sporting and cultural events.

The conference creates a platform where representatives from different African countries have an opportunity of bringing to the fore necessary solutions to fight against poverty and under-development in Africa. Topics for discussions will cover social, economic, political, gender, parliamentary/legislative and climate change issues.

Honourable Speaker Lubisi will elaborate more on these topics and objectives as well as how this Conference will



Mr MJ Mahlangu, Chairperson of CPA Africa

pursue or deal with them.

In attendance will be different African countries who are members of the CPA, including all nine provincial legislatures as well as representatives from the Parliament of RSA.

Once again a very warm welcome to you all and I hope all members of the media will further assist us in disseminating information to all South Africans

'Africa's time has come'

The decision by the Regional Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) - Africa Region, to accord the South African sub-national branch of Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, the honour of hosting the 41st CPA Africa Regional Conference, could not have come at an opportune time. 2010 is a year of action for the advancement of an African Agenda. Our country is also hosting the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup Tournament. There is no doubt that "Africa's time has come".

South Africa's foreign policy is by and large interpreted as the externalisation of its domestic policy i.e. a better South Africa, a better Africa and a better world. Multilateral and global engagement, like the CPA 41st Africa Region conference, involves a complexity of issues with strong political overtones.

The hosting of the conference provides the province and the country with political, economic and social space necessary to highlight and elevate the fight against poverty, under-development and marginalisation of Africa.

The conference will in addition, further the following strategic objectives of the South African government:-

- Improve efforts aimed at marketing of South Africa and Mpumalanga on the continent; and
- Promote and expand multilateral partnerships that are aimed at advancing the economic interests of South Africa through parliamentary mechanism.

The ideals that buttress South Africa's foreign policy include, among others, democracy, human rights, human dignity, non-racialism, non-sexism and prosperity to all. "Progress and Challenges of Democratisation in Africa" is an appropriate theme for the 41st CPA Africa Region conference as it accords delegates the honour to take stock of progress or lack thereof in the advancement of an African agenda during this 21st century. These political, social and economic imperatives make up the setting and context within which the organisation of the event will be carried out.



Speaker of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, Mr Siphso Lubisi.

But this "time" comes not only with opportunities but also with responsibilities. This truism is also pertinent to our hosting of the 41st CPA Regional Conference in July 2010. We are therefore required to strike a fine balancing act as we collectively galvanise our efforts for the successful hosting of the CPA Africa Regional Conference by the Mpumalanga Sub-National Branch in particular and South Africa in general.

I believe that we will rise to the occasion and meet the expectations of our honoured CPA guests from the length and breadth of Africa. I am equally optimistic that South Africa will host the best FIFA Soccer World Cup Tournament on behalf of all of us in our beautiful Continent, Africa. This is indeed, an African century, "Africa ke Nako".

We want to take this opportunity to wish all the participating people and structures, success as they prepare for the 41st CPA Africa Region Conference to be held on 27 July 2010, Mbombela, Mpumalanga Province, Republic of South Africa.

Commonwealth countries meet in Mpumalanga

Parliamentarians from African countries under the Commonwealth are gathered in Mpumalanga, South Africa, to review the progress and challenges of democracy in the continent.

The 41st Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Africa Region conference is taking place at Nelspruit's Mbombela Stadium, one of the 2010 World Cup venues. Hundreds of parliamentarians from all over the continent have converged on this provincial capital for five days of discussion under the theme "Progress and Challenges of Democratisation in Africa".

Topics to be discussed during the conference include:

- enhancing the capacity of Parliaments in Africa to combat natural disasters
- the effectiveness of African countries in response to the global financial crisis
- the sustainability of donor funding of HIV/Aids programmes in Africa
- whether constitutional democracy can guarantee smooth succession of governments in Africa.

The conference will also deliberate on the role of Parliaments in addressing teenage pregnancies, the return of the girls to school and termination of pregnancy legislation and practices in Africa.

The vice-president of CPA Africa Region, and also speaker of the Mpumalanga Legislature Mr Siphso Lubisi, believes hosting the conference provides the province and South Africa with political, economic and social space necessary to highlight and elevate the fight against poverty and marginalization in Africa.

"Progress and Challenges of Democratisation in Africa is an appropriate theme for the 41st CPA Africa Region conference as it gives delegates the opportunity to take stock of progress or lack thereof in the advancement of an African agenda during this 21st century," said Mr Lubisi.

During the weeklong conference, CPA Africa Region will

also have its annual general meeting with the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) holding a business meeting convened by the Deputy Speaker of the Mpumalanga Legislature, Ms Violet Siwela.

Uganda tragedy remembered

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Africa Region will send condolences to the government of Uganda and the families of the victims of the bombing on 11 July that killed 76 people in that country.

The Regional Executive Committee said a minute of silence will be observed at the opening ceremony of the 41st CPA Africa Region Conference in honour of those who lost their lives.

The Regional Executive Committee, chaired by Mr Mninwa Mahlangu, who is also chairperson of the National Council of Provinces in South Africa, decided this during a meeting in Mpumalanga just before the start of the 41st CPA Africa Region Conference in Mbombela (formerly Nelspruit).

The meeting recommended that letters of condolences be sent to the families that were affected by the blast, and to members and the government of Uganda.



Call for more say for women in Africa

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) from the Africa Region will campaign for increased representation for women in the Parliaments and executives of governments in Africa. There have been improvements in this sector, but women are still substantially under-represented in most cabinets.

In a meeting to prepare for the 4th CWP Conference to take place in Uganda in October, the CWP Steering Committee agreed that the campaign would mainly target West Africa, as it has the fewest women in legislatures.

Nigeria is to be the first country visited, to sensitize and influence policy changes regarding increased representation for women in Nigeria's Parliament and Cabinet.

The CWP also recommended that the Constitution of the CPA Africa Region be amended to meet the objective of 40 percent in all structures and activities of the organization.

It was recommended that as a matter of urgency the Constitution of the CPA should be amended to make it more gender sensitive.

The theme of the Uganda conference will be *"Reducing maternal and infant mortality by 2015: is Africa on track?"*

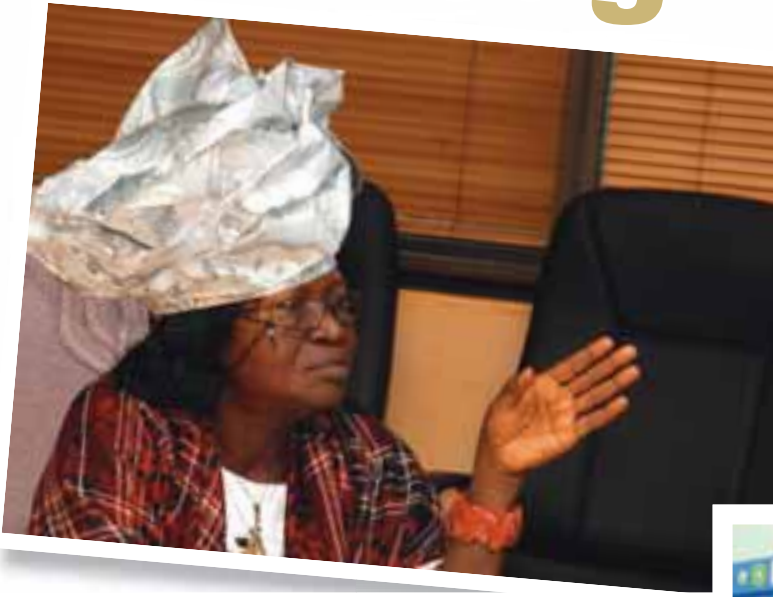
This theme is drawn from the Millennium Development Goals that countries of the world have committed to address by the year 2015.

During the conference, women parliamentarians will also discuss the liberation of women on the continent, both economically and politically.



Deputy Speaker of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, Ms Violet Siwela and Ms Rebeca Kadaga.

Through the lens



Pre-Conference highlights

Programme for Tuesday 27 July

Among the highlights of the pre-conference meetings so far have been

- A call for the Secretary General, Dr William Shija, to be re-elected when his current term expires next year. The regional representatives will lobby other regions that have cordial relations with Africa to support Dr Shija's re-election
- A call to change the status of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to become a fully-fledged diplomatic entity.
- A call for Ms Alix Boyd Knights, Speaker of Dominica in the Caribbeans, to be elected chairperson of CWP international. Her candidacy will be supported by the Africa regions.

10:00	Official opening
11:00 – 11:30	Regional meetings
11:30 – 13:30	CWP Business meeting
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch Break
15:00 – 17:00	Annual General Meeting
17:00	Departure
18:30	Welcoming Dinner to be hosted by Premier of Mpumalanga Province Mr David Mabuza

Venue: Casterbridge Museum

