



# CPA News

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2nd Edition



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# Editorial



Editor, Momelezi Kula.

This year is slated as the Year of Action for Africa, and there has been no shortage of action thus far in the developmental agenda.

The action has shifted to Mpumalanga where the Africa Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is hearing from various speakers how our beautiful continent

should go about planning for a new and stronger third millennium. Successive speakers on the first day of the CPA Africa Region Conference referred to the conclusive role played by women in securing learning, language, law, liberty and life itself. The overall thrust of the Conference is to revitalize the struggle for democratization, and to ensure that the roles played by women and the contribution they make, is recognized for what it is.

The first day of the Conference went without any hiccups setting the pace for the next three days.

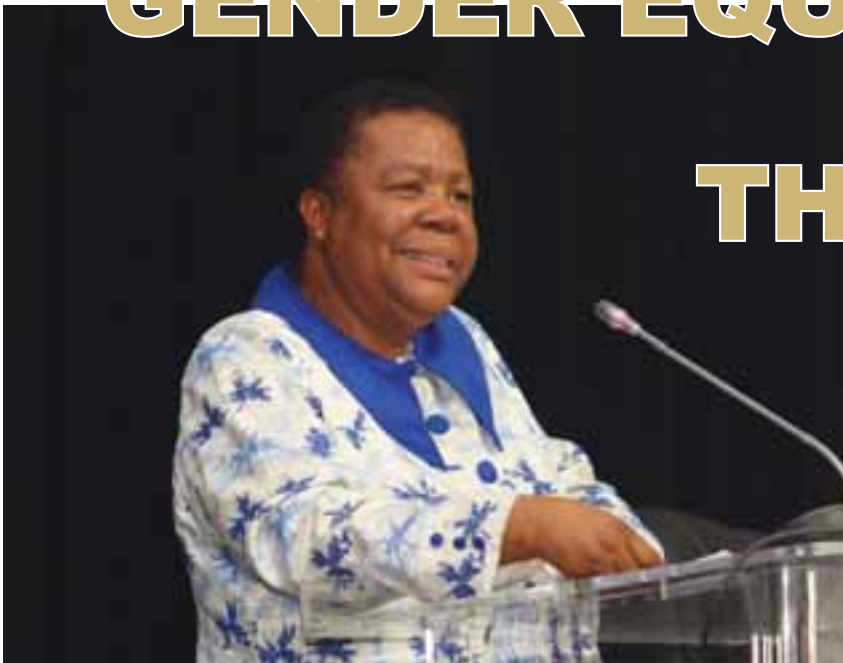
And not least, our visitors seem to have brought with them some good summer weather in winter, providing the dancers with plenty of energy.

Enjoy the read!



Siyeta Production

# GENDER EQUITY IS THE KEY



South African Minister of Science and Technology,  
Ms Naledi Pandor

“South Africa has had a long and emotional connection with the Commonwealth. The emotional side is deeply bound up in the trinity at the heart of the Commonwealth: those three things that tie us together are language, learning and law,” said Ms Naledi Pandor, Minister of Science and Technology, in her keynote address at the 41st CPA Africa Region Conference.

She singled out education as the golden thread that has held members of the Commonwealth together since its inception in 1911, as she witnessed during her stint as South Africa’s Minister of Education. “Education is a Commonwealth priority. Indeed, its infrastructure for co-operation is better developed in education than any other sector.”

She said Commonwealth countries still needed to use education to work actively, intentionally and proactively in addressing gender equity.

“In most contemporary contexts, this calls for special support for the education of women and girls, who have often been deprived of opportunities for personal development through learning.”

She stressed the challenges posed by climate change and poverty. “The Commonwealth’s most pressing current global challenges are climate change and poverty. Poverty and climate change are intimately

linked. We cannot eliminate poverty without increasing the use of energy. As development countries take their people out of poverty, there has been a strong growth in greenhouse gas emissions. We cannot stop development in the developing world, but we can control the emission of greenhouse gases.”

However, if Africa could embrace scientific innovation and technology it could help create new possibilities. “One of the major sources of economic growth and job creation, which is often overlooked by developing countries, is international co-operation in renewable energy technology. Not only does this new industry present opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it also presents new job opportunities.”

She said South Africa’s bid to host the Square Kilometre Array was an excellent example of scientific innovation. The Square Kilometre Array (SKA) will be the world’s most powerful radio telescope and will help consolidate Africa’s role as an astronomy hub in the world. “We are showing that Africa’s contemporary intelligentsia can emulate their forebears, who built what is possibly the oldest solar observatory at Nabta Playa in southern Egypt, besides constructing the pyramids and establishing scholarly institutions in Timbuktu, all of which have contributed immeasurably to modern scholarship,” she says.

She urged the CPA members to work towards building a humane world. “We believe that meaningful engagement through multilateralism can contribute significantly to the building of a more humane world, where the colour of one’s skin, one’s creed, language, ethnic affiliation or geographic location will not impede your right to dignity. It is our sincere belief that the CPA can bring us closer to realizing this and we urge you to pursue this vision with vigour and certainty.”

# RETHINKING THE FUTURE

A major political challenge in Africa is the peaceful transition between one government and the next, and another is to sustain a people-centred development process. But, says the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Dr William Shija, it applies anywhere in the world that sustainable development must include food security, and provide basic rights of education, shelter and individual freedom. In his opening address to the Africa Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) at Mbombela Stadium in Mpumalanga, Dr Shija said over the past 50 years, the CPA's post-60s CPA activities in Africa had been able to strengthen the politics of democracy in Africa, "to the extent of influencing constitutional changes, and peaceful transitions in governments and Parliaments. We have been able to establish coalition governments and parliamentary reforms, and achieve conflict resolution where there was internal continental strife."

Dr Shija said with a history of almost 100 years, the CPA was well due to re-examine how to improve its activities and programmes. With the formation of an Eminent Persons Group, the Heads of State had signalled their intention to revitalise the Commonwealth. He referred to the landmark appointment in Swaziland last May of a group to examine the role of the CPA in the 21st century. The group, which must report progress in London next July, includes two delegates from Africa, and the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentary Association (CWP), Ms Kashmala Kariq.

"In a world in which we share the resources of this planet, we are all vulnerable to global health hazards, financial breakdowns, and changes in the climate and environment, just as we are all touched by international migration and terrorism. The question is how the CPA is to serve its members locally, regionally and in the international arena. That is what we should suggest to bring about progressive reform in our century-old organisation," Dr Shija said.'



Dr William F. Shija, Secretary General CPA



CPA Africa Region Executive with Naledi Pandor, Minister of Science and Technology centre: From left: Demetrius Mgalami, Deputy Secretary General; Dr William Shija, Secretary General; Request Muntanga, Deputy Treasurer; Max Sisulu, NA Speaker (SA); Mninwa Mahlangu Chairperson; Siphso Lubisi, Vice President; Lindiwe Maseko, Treasurer; Bethel Amadi, Deputy Chairperson

# Look back in joy

The 41st CPA African Region Conference takes place against the looming shadow of the 2010 World Cup, and its official opening must therefore reflect on what was a successful event by all accounts. In his opening address Mr Siphso Lubisi, Vice-President of CPA Africa Region, said the 2010 World Cup was more than just about soccer, it showcased the advancement of the African Developmental Agenda. "Africa has aptly demonstrated to the whole world that it possesses the willingness, the capacity and ability to organize and host world class events. South Africa's envisaged bid for the next Olympic games can only be seen as a logical sequence to the capacities shown to the world by Africa," he said.

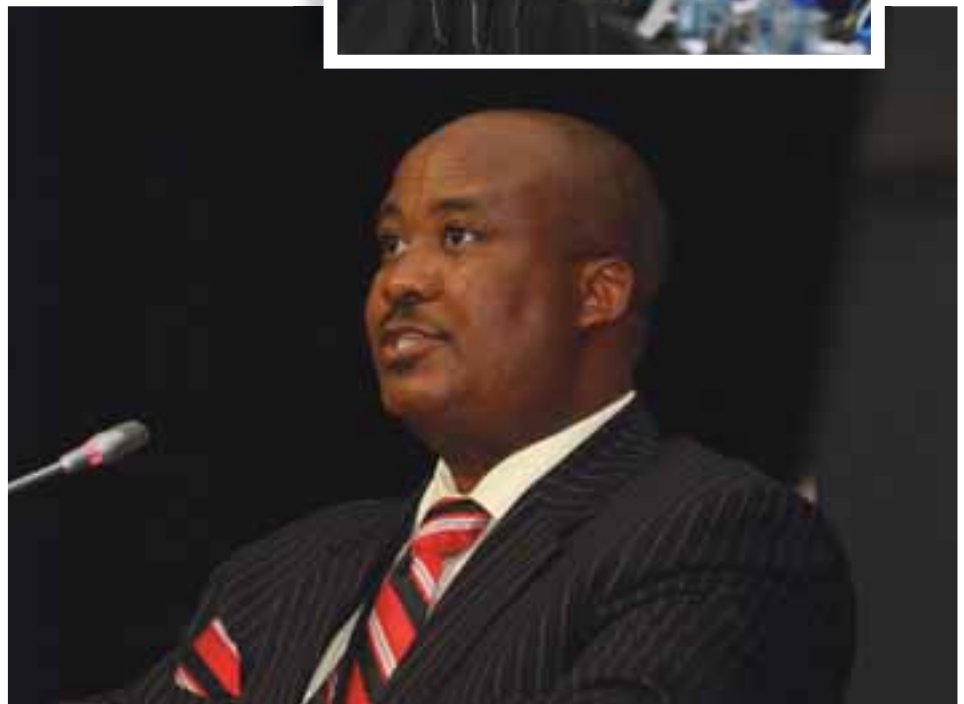
The conference theme is in line with Africa's declaration that the 21st century is an African century. "It is befitting that the 41st Conference of the CPA African Region has assembled here in Mbombela under the broad theme of 'Progress and Challenges of Democratization in Africa.' This theme focuses our attention on the task we set ourselves when we, as Africans, declared the 21st Century an African century, the year in which to advance Africa's developmental agenda."

At the heart of the developmental agenda is democracy and good governance, "Together we share an understanding that our people can only acquire the space to express their extraordinary talents, and give free reign to their ingenuity and creativity in an environment liberated from the choking chains of oppression, autocratic and dictatorial government systems."

Democracy could determine the political future of the continent, but climate change posed a catastrophe for humanity, especially the poor. "We must acknowledge that it is the poor who inhabit the informal settlements, often built in marginal areas with natural faultlines. Floodplains and unstable hillsides make them vulnerable to floods and

natural disasters. This requires our decisive intervention in mitigating and managing disaster better and faster."

According to him the greatest challenge facing parliamentarians is to ensure that their voices are heard on issues such as climate change. "The challenge that faces African parliamentarians is how to seize the moment created by various debates such as those at this Conference and to begin to oversee their implementation by our governments. We need to make our voices heard by our governments. We are public representatives and our constitutions are expecting us to work together and do more, better and faster."



Siphso Lubisi, Speaker of Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature



Rolson Moropa, Secretary to the Mpumalanga Legislature and Mninwa Mahlangu, Chairperson of CPA Africa

# We can do it

**T**he Secretary of the Mpumalanga Legislature, Mr Rolson Moropa, said a conference of this magnitude was always going to have its own set of challenges. “But we have done well thus far to ensure that it gets underway without any glitches. Here we are, we have set the stage for what will hopefully be a milestone occasion, and we are happy for that,” he said.

Mpumalanga felt greatly honoured to have been chosen to host the event. “We indeed feel honoured to be the host to the 41st CPA Africa Region Conference. This will go a long way towards boosting the image of our province, and showcasing our logistical capabilities and human resource capacity.”

But what would benefit most was the province’s tourism sector, which is hugely underrated.

“This conference’s impact on tourism is immeasurable. It gave us a rare chance to showcase our tourism attractions to a broad pool of people, a privilege we would not have had without this,” he said.

Through its economic spinoffs, “we have been able to spread the hospitality benefits to local entrepreneurs involved in bed and breakfasts establishments, and the selling of art and craft, created many business opportunities. Although they may not be permanent, they will certainly provide a good start for future development. That is something we are grateful about,” he said.

The event was also a learning curve. “Before, we never knew the extent of our capabilities to host such a big event: Now, we certainly do! We know what skills we need to harness, and will be able to tailor our expectations as a host province. Without this test we would not have known that.”

Logistically, Mbombela Stadium, one of the nine stadiums that hosted the 2010 World Cup, was chosen to show that it was more than just a soccer facility, and was indeed at core of the 2010 legacy project that would enhance the infrastructural capacity of the province.

“The hosting of this conference is a showcase of the 2010 legacy and its contribution to our country’s infrastructural development. This stadium has an infrastructure that can host international and continental events such as this conference.”

Above all, the conference showcased South Africa’s legislative synergy. “The involvement of Parliament and its resource contribution to this conference is testament to our legislative synergy. We cannot thank it enough. This is a result of a strong political consensus that prevails under our President and it has given us a strong base of good co-ordination and made provinces feel that they are part of the whole.”

# Women lead the way

**M**pumalanga's Deputy Speaker, Ms Violet Siwela, says increasing the participation of women in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) ensures that the gender agenda will be the centre of discussion and allows women parliamentarians to pursue conference resolutions that address challenges confronting women within the region and the world, "for example when Nigeria resolved to boost its budget for social spending in 2009."

The Chairperson of the CWP, Ms Rebeca Kadaga highlighted key issues arising from a report on the 3rd CWP conference that was held in Cameroon, in October 2009. The first concern arising emanated from the report was the continuous absence of the Chairperson of CWP International, Ms Kashmala Tariq, at all conferences of CPA and CWP Africa Region. Another concern about her was not responding to an invitation to attend the CPA (Africa Region) conference in Port Harcourt in Nigeria. Other issues raised were the adoption of the CWP Anthem and a motion that the draft rules of the CWP meetings should be discussed and adopted by the plenary.

Ms Kashmala Tariq apologised for not attending the 3rd CWP conference and cited a shortage of funds as the main reason for not attending the conference. The Chairperson also tabled a report of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee that was held on 22nd and 23rd July 2010. The objective of the meeting was to develop a work and activity plan for the final quarter of the financial year and preparing for the 4th CWP conference scheduled to take place in Kampala, Uganda in October.

Ms Kadaga said that one of the key tasks of the CWP Steering Committee was to target the West Africa Region, which had the least number of women in Legislatures. Nigeria will be the first country in the region to be visited and participants will be drawn from Ghana, Gambia, Sierra Leone and Cameroon. The objective of the visit would be to sensitize and influence policy changes regarding increased greater representation for women in their Parliament and Cabinet.

The sub-committee observed that the Constitution of the CPA Africa Region should be amended to meet the strategic objective of 40% of the women representatives in the CPA structures and activities. The sub-committee said there was an urgent need to engender the Constitution of the CPA.

The CWP Steering Committee supports the motion that Ms Aleix Boyd-Knights of Dominic in the Caribbean isles should be supported by the Africa Region as Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentarians (international). It was recommended that Ms Boyd-Knights should to brief the CWP steering Committee meeting at the CPA conference in Nairobi.

A CWP anthem developed in Cameroon was adopted as the official anthem by the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians. The anthem was sung at the meeting to show full support.



Ms Rebeca Kadaga, Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians



Ms Kashmala Tariq, Chairperson CWP International

# Through the lens



Mr O Gaborone, Botswana and Ms L Shope-Mafole, Gauteng Legislature



Ms Kashmala Tariq, Chairperson CWP International



Ms Jacqueline Mofokeng, Gauteng Legislature and Mr Gervais Henrie, Seychelles



Prince Jerome Isangedighi, Nigeria and Mr Momodou Touray, Gambia



Rev. Maria Yamareh, Sierra Leone and Ms Beatrice Leyada, Uganda



Mpumalanga Legislature choir