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**REPORT OF THE 84TH CPA - AFRICA REGION: KWAZULU NATAL PROVINCIAL
LEGISLATURE, DURBAN, South Africa, 02 - 06 April 2023**

Report of the 84th Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Africa Region

1. Context

The Parliament of the Republic of South Africa together with the Provincial Legislatures is affiliated and participates in the political activities of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association at both Africa Region and International level. This participation fulfils one of Parliament strategic objective premised on deepening and enhancing parliamentary international engagement and cooperation.

Parliament's Strategic Plan places prime importance on increasing its capacity to represent the interests of South Africa in the international arena. It further seeks to promote and facilitate the transformation of undemocratic governance structures and participate in rules based system that seeks to democratize multilateral institutions, processes, building strategic partnerships around mutual interests and promote

internationalism and solidarity through the interconnectedness of challenges amongst African countries in particular and developing nations in particular.

The 84th Executive Committee Meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Africa Region was convened in accordance with Article 28 of the CPA of the constitution of the CPA to afford the Executive Committee Members and Office Bearers of the Association, Secretariat and Branch representatives in different sub-regions of the Association reflect on their activities as they relate to Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, Programming Planning and Finance Committee matters and political developments emerging from Regional Representative Committees. This 84th CPA Africa Region EXCO was organized in South Africa, Kwazulu Natal from the 1st -06th April 2022.

The Sub-committee Meetings were convened from the 4th April to reflect on the state of the organization. Key amongst the pertinent issues deliberated on include the following.

2. Solidary Messages

The official opening session of the 84th Executive Committee Meeting, commence with messages of solidary from the Office Bearers of the Association such as the Speaker of the Kwazulu Natal Legislature. The Speaker appreciated the gesture from the CPA Africa Region Secretariat for granting the opportunity to host the 84th CPA Africa Region EXCO in the South African shores and Kwazulu Natal in particular. She further noted that this meeting takes place during the Freedom month in South Africa characterized by important historical events marking 29 years since the 1994 dispensation that brought about elections which gave birth to the South Africa`s democracy. This opportunity also marked Kwazulu Natal commitment to contribute towards strengthening the CPA as a multilateral voice in pursuing development in Africa, strengthening democracy and ensure arrival at decision in a rules based system. The EXCO also took place during the month to which South Africa lost many struggle stalwarts for liberation of South African freedom. These include President Olive Tambo, and Chris Hani.

The Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly further endorsed the sentiments raised by the Speaker of the National Assembly confirming the appreciation of South Africa in

upholding democratic values and thereby contributing in the transformation of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association mandate of advancing parliamentary democracy through sharing experiences of democratic system with the Commonwealth community and beyond.

The Chairperson of the Executive Committee, who is equally the Speaker of the Parliament of Malawi, reminded the meeting of the objectives to which the organization must be focused on. These included the development of Benchmarks to guide the hosting of the Headquarters of the new Association with the changed legal Status of the Association. The Chairperson of the Executive Committee further appealed to the Members of the EXCO and Branch Representatives to consider Hosting the 53rd conference of the CPA Africa Region to afford the Association platform to thoroughly prepare for the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference to be held in Ghana August 2023. It was also stated that many Branches in the Africa Region have not been able to pay for the 2022 annual subscription fees.

It was further reiterated that the upcoming CPA International Meeting to be held in Gibraltar will be the first International forum to determine the future of the CPA International owing to the fact that all the Regions of the Association are expected to table their Benchmarks for the Hosting of the new Headquarters of the Association. The Chairperson of the Association further reiterated that the CPA International Headquarters Benchmarks are not entirely different to those developed by the Africa Region.

It is against this background the Chairperson of the Executive Committee appealed for unity amongst the delegates and ensure that Africa takes the driving seat in the world affairs that had to do with the development and fundamental transformation of our multilateral institutions off which the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference to be held in Ghana will be the relevant platform to demonstrate that unity.

3. Key Issues Emanating from the Regional Representatives Sub-Committee Meetings:

3.1 Activities undertaken by Regional Representatives

THE 66TH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE: The 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) will be hosted by the CPA Ghana Branch in Accra, from 30th September to 6th October 2023. The Sub-Committee noted that preparations for the 66th CPC are at an advanced stage with the Secretariat working closely with the Branch. The Mid-Year Executive Committee Meeting shall consider and approve the proposed programme, theme and topics after which formal invitations will be extended to Branches. The Executive Committee will also consider a report of the working group on CPC Modalities, containing the recommendations on how future CPCs would be held. The Sub-Committee calls upon all Branches to attend the 66th CPC.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CPA INTERNATIONAL: The Executive Committee Meeting of the CPA International shall be held in Gibraltar from 17th – 21st April 2023. Invitation letters have already been sent to Members of the Executive Committee and Regional Secretaries by the CPA Secretariat.

THE 67TH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE: The 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) will be hosted by the CPA New South Wales Branch in Sydney, Australia in November 2024.

3.1.1 Workshops, Seminars and Conferences

- Branches from the CPA Africa Sub-Regions attended the 2nd Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) Africa Region Conference hosted by CPA Tanzania Branch in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania from 14th – 18th November, 2022. The theme of the Conference was “***Parliamentarians and Persons with Disabilities as champions of inclusion and accessibility to the public and private sectors***”.
- The CPA Africa Sub-Regions participated at the CWP Africa Region Sensitization Workshop held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania from 19th – 22nd October 2022. The theme of the Workshop was “***Women Parliamentarians in Leadership and Politics***”.
- The Southern Africa Regional Representative participated in the Global Science Forum in which a declaration was developed whose aim was to encourage and

support organizations of the World Science Forum, United Nations, Education, Scientific and Cultural Organizations. **The declaration is attached hereto as Annexure II.**

- The Southern Africa Regional Representative participated in the Annual Judicial Report Session delivered by the Chief Justice of South Africa. The Session reflected on the complimentary role of other organs of the State through legislative and other measures aimed at promoting the Courts to ensure the independence, impartiality, dignity and effectiveness of Courts.
- CPA South Africa Branch had a bilateral engagement with the CPA United Kingdom Branch which was aimed at strengthening the relations between the two Branches.
- CPA Namibia Branch in collaboration with the CPA SoCATT Africa Region hosted the 6th Professional Seminar from 1st – 6th August 2022 in Windhoek. The theme of the seminar was ***“Re-engineering parliamentary service delivery: An opportunity to enhance and sustain performance of parliaments”***. The seminar was attended by Parliamentary officials from Africa Branches and Sub-Branched.
 - The Branch also held a seminar on International Parliamentary Bodies (IPBs) on 20th February 2023 to introduce the aims and objectives, structures, statutes and related documents of the IPBs. Further, the Branch participated in the 71st Westminster Seminar on Effective Parliaments held from 13th – 17th March 2023 at the UK Parliament.
 - The Chairperson of the National Council of Namibia attended the 26th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) held from 3rd to 6th January 2023 in Canberra, Australia.
- The National Assembly of Kenya organized a Post-Election Seminar from 29th January to 4th February, 2023 for Members of the 13th Parliament. In addition, the Branch commemorated the Commonwealth Day on 15th March 2023.
- **Visits to National and Sub-national Branches**

- The Regional Representative from Southern Africa presented a brief to the Southern Africa Speakers Forum on the outcomes of the CPC International Conference held in Canada and the implementation of its resolutions which amongst others included the development of the Benchmarks relating to the implementation of the Legal Status.
- iii) The Regional Representative for Southern Africa is engaging the Lesotho Branch to nominate a representative; following the conclusion of the country's national elections. In addition, efforts are being made to have Eswatini Branch to re-ignite their participation in the activities of the Association.

3.1.3 Update on International Issues

Change of the Legal Status of the CPA: The CPA Africa Region a meeting on 21 August 2022 during the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. The Meeting resolved to constitute an Adhoc Committee to discuss the implementation of the resolution to change the legal status of the Association from charity to under the United Kingdom law to an international Organization. Understanding, other related the resolutions of the CPA Africa Region that if the United Kingdom is stalling to implement the resolutions of the General Assembly, a consideration of the decision to relocate the Headquarters of the CPA to a country that will be will to host a transformed to organization with no charitable laws and policies linked to a particular country was endorsed.

To this end, Adhoc- Committee met in Johannesburg, South Africa on the 1st September 2022 to develop Benchmarks to guide the hosting of the Headquarters of the New Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The Sub-Committee also reported that discussions on the Status with the United Kingdom Government through the Commonwealth Minister are ongoing. To this end, a meeting has been scheduled with

the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office on the 5th April 2023 to discuss the matter further. At the same time, as mandated by the General Assembly in Halifax, Canada, the Secretariat is progressing with plans for relocation and the Headquarters in an event that the discussions stall. Africa Region continues to discuss and formally engage Countries will be willing to host the Secretariat of the Headquarters of the CPA, these include Malaysia, Botswana and possibly Rwanda.

Executive Committee Meeting of the CPA International: The CPA International scheduled to take place in Gibraltar on the 17th -21 April 2023 will be the first platform to table the report on the Benchmarks developed by the CPA International Governance Committee and well as reports on the ones developed by all the regions of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. It was further reported that there are a lot of similarities on the form and content of the Benchmarks developed by the CPA International as well as the ones developed by Africa Region. It is therefore expected that the Executive Committee of the CPA International will be the precursor towards the ultimate ratification of the resolution of the General Assembly in the upcoming 66th of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference scheduled to take place in Ghana in September 2023.

Host for the 53rd CPA Africa Region Conference: Following the unavailability of the country to host the 53rd Africa Region conference, it was further emphasized that the conference must be understood from the significant point of view that it will provide a platform that will better coordinate Africa Region before its International conference and strengthen its resolve on the preparedness of changing outlook and character of the programmes of this Association for future. To this end, compromises were made to meet halfway the financial commitments of the countries willing to host the conference. It is against this background that the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda had promised to give consideration on hosting if the Association is able to meet its financial obligations.

4. Matters Emanating From Programming Planning and Finance Sub-Committee

Update on Payment of Annual Subscriptions Fees by National and Sub-National Branches: The Sub-Committee on Planning Programming and Finance noted that a few

Branches had paid 2023 subscription fees. Note should be taken that with exception of the National Parliament, all the Sub-National Branches have already paid their annual subscription fees for the year 2023.

4.1 PROPOSAL ON HOSTING OF 53RD ANNUAL REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The Sub-committee noted that one major activity in the Calendar of Events for the Association for the year 2023 is the 53rd Annual Regional Conference to be held between the months of July and August. Unfortunately, the Association has not received offers from any of its Members to host the Conference despite appeals from the Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Association.

The Sub-committee noted that per the provisions of Article 29(h) of the Constitution, the Executive Committee may convene and transact business of the Annual General Meeting where the Annual General Meeting is unable to convene provided that the business shall not relate to policy matters of the Region.

The Sub-committee is also aware that in 2019, the Association could not find a volunteer to host the 50th Annual Conference. The Executive Committee accordingly directed the Regional Secretariat to host the conference which was held in Zanzibar. The Conference was funded by the Association.

The Sub-committee is accordingly recommending as follows:-

- That the Executive Committee should provide Branches a final opportunity to volunteer to host the Conference;
- That in the event that no Branch volunteers to host the Conference, the Executive Committee should to consider the above two (2) options and to make consequential directives on the recommended option for implementation by the Regional Secretariat.

4.1.1 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT : The CPA Africa Region at its Annual General Meeting in Gaborone, Botswana directed the Secretariat to continually develop programmes to build the capacity of Members of Parliament. Pursuant to the above directive, the first capacity development seminar was held in March, 2022 and was hosted by Tanzania Branch in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

In accordance with the decision of the AGM in Gaborone, the Sub-committee proposes the following two (2) topics for the 2023 Seminar:-

- Land Tenure System in Africa and its Impact on Development;
- Impact of Climate Change on African Economies; and

It is proposed that two (2) Resource Persons should be selected for each topic with the Host Branch providing one of the Resource Persons.

The Sub-committee is further recommending that a third topic “*Socio-economic Interventions by African Governments for Persons with Disabilities*” should be considered at the 3rd Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disability (CPwD) Conference scheduled for Seychelles in November, 2023.

The Sub-committee recommends that the Seminar be hosted by The Gambia Branch in line with the decision of AGM that programmes and activities of the Association should as far as practicable be rotated among Sub-regions and Branches. The previous Seminar was hosted by Tanzania from East Africa Sub-region.

The estimated participants for the Seminar are hundred (100) with Branches allotted two (2) Members each, one of whom should be a woman, and Sub-branches allotted one (1) Member each. Sub-branches are advised to give fair

consideration to women in their selection. It is recommended that two (2) Office Bearers participate in the Seminar to observe and guide the discussions.

The proposed date is 7th to 10th May 2023 (inclusive of arrival and departure dates) and the estimated budget is **US\$80,000.00**.

4.1.2 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP FOR SECRETARIAT STAFF AND SCHEDULE OFFICERS

The Sub-committee noted that the Secretariat of the CPA Africa Region and schedule officers from Member Branches play important role in the effective and efficient work of the CPA and its Organs and Members.

These officers provide technical and administrative support and other information needs to the CPA and Members. It is therefore imperative that the Association builds the capacity of these officers to enable them deliver on their respective mandates.

The Sub-committee therefore recommends that a Capacity Development Workshop be held for the above-mentioned officers. The training will focus on team building, work coordination, developments within the CPA and other related organizations, report writing and research, among others. The Workshop should be facilitated by three (3) Resource Persons.

5. Key Issues Emanating From the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP)

The CWP Sub-Committee was convened to reflect on the activities relating covering the period of July 2022 to date. Equally, the sub-committee deliberations included the planned activities for 2023. These include the following;

- **Sensitization Workshop;** The Committee noted that in October, 2022, the CWP Africa Region hosted the Regional Workshop in in Tanzania under the theme

“Women Parliamentarians in Leadership and Politics”. The workshop was attended by 11 National Branches and 3 Sub-Branched. The Committee commended the CPA Africa Region for successfully hosting the Workshop which played a pivotal role in operationalizing the CWP Strategic Plan which sought to respond to the objective increasing women`s representation in Parliament, conduct advocacy on gender related programmes aimed at dismantling patriarchy and uphold women participation.

- **Development of the CWP Africa Region Communication Strategy:** The Executive Committee noted with satisfaction the status on the development of Communication Strategy for CWP Africa Region. The Committee was informed that the Consultant embarked on the task in March 2023 and is expected to present the 1st draft of the communication strategy before the Steering Committee for the consideration and inputs of Members of the CWP. The Executive Committee further endorse workplan of the activities comprising of the gender sensitization workshops to be conducted in the 2023 financial year.
- **Consideration for CWP Planned Activities for 2023:** Members Urged the Secretariat to assist Branches to embark activities constituting, **Election Sensitization Workshops** before primary to enable interventions with political parties at an earlier stage. Exchange visits should be included in the CWP Annual activities, this is crucial for knowledge exchange and experience sharing especially on issues regarding women participation in political leadership. The 2024 CWP Annual work-plan should include visits to Parliaments with the lowest numbers of Women MPs.
- **The CWP Roaster for Leadership:** Members noted that four Sub-Regional Representatives as well as the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson will rotate out during the Annual General Conference in August 2023. The Incoming Sub-Regional Representatives for the period of 2023-2026 are-
 - Zambia Central Africa
 - Kenya: East Africa
 - Ghana : West Africa
 - Eswatini: Southern Africa

6. Proposed Theme and Sub-Themes for the 53RD Africa Region Annual Regional Conference

Main Theme: African Parliaments at the forefront of Addressing Existential Global Challenges: Food Security, Climate Change and Youth Employment

a. Gender: Beyond Numbers, Re-examining the Contribution of Women in Parliaments

b. Economic: Harnessing Abundant renewable energy sources in Africa to speed up Industrialization: Opportunities and Challenges

c. Political: Reforming the Education system in Africa to address a Mounting crisis of mistrust in Political Institutions

d. Youth: Reforming Education System in Africa to Address Youth unemployment on the continent

e. Social, Health, Education and Environment: An assessment of preparedness to cope with the effects of climate change and African Parliaments