



Society of Clerks-at-the-Table (SoCATT) Africa Region

Draft MINUTES

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE SOCIETY OF CLERKS-AT-THE-TABLE (SoCATT) AFRICA REGION

6th June, 2019

Avani Victoria Falls Resort, Livingstone, Zambia

Chairperson: Mrs Cecilia N Mbewe

(Chairperson of SoCATT Africa Region & Clerk of the National Assembly of Zambia)

No	Item
1.	Welcome and Opening <p>The Chairperson welcomed members of the Steering Committee (SC) of the Society of Clerks-at-the- Table (SoCATT) Africa Region and support staff to the meeting. She wished them a comfortable stay in Livingstone.</p> <p>Attendance – Refer to attached attendance register. The meeting had a quorum and proceeded accordingly.</p> <p>The meeting noted apologies from Mr Thabo Mofokeng (Free State Legislature,</p>

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	<p>South Africa), Chairperson of the SoCATT Africa Journal Board and Mr Usman Hamid from the Nigeria sub-national branch of Adamawa State House Assembly.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Welcome Remarks by the Chairperson</p> <p>In her welcome remarks, the Chairperson recognised the presence of Mr Emmanuel Anyimadu, the Clerk of Ghana Parliament, in his capacity as an ex-officio. She acknowledged and appreciated him for being instrumental in reviving and strengthening SoCATT Africa.</p> <p>The Chairperson informed the meeting that Zambia's hosting of the 76th Executive Committee (EXCO) Meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Africa Region, in March, 2019 led to the SC Meeting being moved from March to June, 2019. This enabled the National Assembly of Zambia to focus solely on assisting the CPA Africa Secretariat in arranging the meeting for the parliamentarians.</p> <p>She informed the meeting that Mr Michael Sialai, Deputy Chairperson of SoCATT Africa and Clerk of the National Assembly of Kenya presented the Society's report to the CPA Africa Region EXCO. However, she hastened to mention that the report had not been adopted by the SC during the November, 2018 planning meeting. She, therefore, sought the indulgence of the meeting to have the report adopted alongside the previous minutes.</p> <p>She urged the SC members to participate actively in the deliberations of the meeting in order to meet the objectives of the meeting.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Adoption of the Agenda</p> <p>Resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agenda was amended to include the item, "preparedness report for the 50th CPA Africa Regional Conference." It was adopted upon a proposal by the Parliament of Namibia, and seconded by the Parliament of Botswana.

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4.	Minutes of the previous Steering Committee Meeting held at Avani Victoria Falls Resort, Livingstone, Zambia, 10th -11th November 2018
4.1	<p>Consideration and adoption of the minutes</p> <p>Resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The minutes of the SoCATT Africa Region SC meeting held at Avani Victoria Falls Resort, Livingstone, Zambia, from 10th - 11th November 2018 were adopted as a true record of proceedings on proposal by the Parliament of Namibia, and seconded by the Parliament of Botswana.
4.2	<p>Matters arising from, and consideration of the implementation of resolutions of the SoCATT Africa Region SC meeting held at Avani Victoria Falls Resort, Livingstone, Zambia, from 10th -11th November 2018</p> <p>4.2.1 Submission of SoCATT Report to CPA Africa Region Executive Committee</p> <p>The meeting extensively discussed the practice of submitting SoCATT Reports to the CPA Africa Region EXCO. The meeting was informed that the CPA Africa EXCO rules and guidelines were silent on mandatory submission of reports.</p> <p>Resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SoCATT was not obliged to submit reports to CPA Africa EXCO, however, the submission of reports was necessary for the information of the EXCO especially that CPA Africa Secretariat remained the custodian of SoCATT funds. <p>4.2.2 Perceived difficulty in accessing SoCATT Africa funds and proposal to open separate SoCATT Bank Account</p> <p>The Chairperson informed the meeting that in April, 2019, she had a meeting with the CPA Africa Regional Secretary to discuss the perceived challenges of accessing SoCATT funds, and the need to open a separate SoCATT Bank Account for members to deposit subscription fees, instead of the main CPA</p>

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	<p data-bbox="289 275 1440 415">Africa Account. The Regional Secretary clarified that the Regional Secretariat was only the custodian of SOCATT funds which could be accessed easily, as long as requests for release of funds followed laid down procedures.</p> <p data-bbox="289 449 448 478">Resolutions</p> <ul data-bbox="337 506 1440 821" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="337 506 1357 535">• The meeting resolved not to open a separate SoCATT Bank Account. <li data-bbox="337 575 1440 821">• Requests for funds to follow laid down procedure by writing to the SoCATT Africa Chairperson; stating the purpose, activities and total amount requested for. The request should also indicate the budget line in the SoCATT approved budget from which the amount should be drawn, as well as Account details of the receiving Parliament. <p data-bbox="180 877 764 907">4.2.3 SoCATT Journal- Editors Report</p> <p data-bbox="289 942 1440 1241">The meeting was informed that the journal that should have been published by March, 2019, was not yet ready but was in its final stages. It was heard that the delay in publishing the journal was due to the general elections that were taking place in the Republic of South Africa. However, the meeting was informed that the journal would be ready for circulation at the Zanzibar 50th CPA Africa Conference in August 2019.</p> <p data-bbox="289 1278 1440 1367">Further, the Chairperson stated that in her meeting with the Regional Secretary, the Society was advised to:</p> <ul data-bbox="337 1402 1440 1745" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="337 1402 1440 1488">(i) widely advertise its call for papers to allow for more parliamentary staff to submit papers for the journal; <li data-bbox="337 1526 1440 1612">(ii) put guidelines for submission of papers for publication on the website to help those interested in writing; and <li data-bbox="337 1650 1440 1745">(iii) allocate a page in the journal for a message from the CPA Africa Regional Secretary. <p data-bbox="289 1782 1440 1871">With regards to the work of the Editorial Board, it was reported that the team had been working well and that all regions had submitted their papers.</p>

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	<p data-bbox="289 275 451 306">Resolutions</p> <ul data-bbox="337 344 1446 800" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="337 344 1446 432">• Guidelines for submission of papers for publication in the journal to be circulated to Parliaments and uploaded on the website. <li data-bbox="337 468 1446 556">• Request for papers for the next journal to be issued before the next publication. <li data-bbox="337 592 1446 680">• Mr Julius Kampamba from the Parliament of Zambia was nominated to serve on the Editorial Board of the journal. <li data-bbox="337 716 1446 804">• A page in the journal to be reserved for the CPA Africa Regional Secretary's message. <p data-bbox="180 842 816 873">4.2.4 Payment of SoCATT Observer Fees</p> <p data-bbox="289 915 1446 1272">In line with the implementation of the Strategic Plan (2015 – 2020), the Society discussed ways of raising funds through the introduction of an observer fee for additional delegates outside the branches' entitlement when attending SoCATT Professional Development Seminars (PDS) and other SoCATT Africa meetings. It was heard that many branches and sub-branches were ready to send more delegates and participants to meetings but were restrained by the numbers set by the host branch.</p> <p data-bbox="289 1308 451 1339">Resolutions</p> <ul data-bbox="337 1377 1446 1707" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="337 1377 1446 1465">• The meeting resolved to introduce an observer fee for additional staff brought to the PDS and other SoCATT meetings. <li data-bbox="337 1501 1446 1589">• The fee to be paid and all other modalities would be agreed upon at the next SoCATT Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be held in August, 2019. <li data-bbox="337 1625 1446 1713">• The observer fee would be shared between SoCATT Africa and the host branch. <p data-bbox="180 1749 899 1780">4.2.5 Increase of SoCATT Annual Subscription</p> <p data-bbox="289 1818 1446 1850">The Chairperson informed the meeting that due to challenging economic</p>

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	<p>factors such as high inflation and exchange rates, compounded by non-payment of subscription by some members, it was proposed that SoCATT increases its annual subscription in order to enable it implement its planned programmes. The meeting heard that the annual subscription of \$2500 had not been raised since 2011.</p> <p>Resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was resolved that the technical team should conduct an income and expenditure analysis to help inform the proposal to adjust the annual subscription fee. The matter would be tabled for discussion and decision at the next SoCATT AGM scheduled for August, 2019 in Zanzibar.
<p>4.2.6</p>	<p>Annual Subscription Payment Debtor’s List</p> <p>The meeting was informed that there were huge amounts of outstanding subscription fees; especially from some Nigerian sub-branches.</p> <p>Resolutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting resolved that there was need to continue encouraging and reminding members to pay subscription fees through phone calls, emails and visitations by the Chairperson and Treasurer of the Society. The meeting also resolved that the Chairperson of SoCATT should visit Nigeria to engage the sub-branches on the activities of the Society and remind them on the need to pay their subscription fees. The Regional Secretariat committed to facilitate the Chairperson's visit to Nigeria.
<p>4.2.7</p>	<p>Establishment of a Permanent SoCATT Africa Secretariat</p> <p>The meeting discussed the need for a permanent SoCATT Secretariat with dedicated staff. It was heard that this would help retain institutional memory, manage SoCATT documents and implement the activities of the Society effectively, alongside local staff from the Parliament of the incumbent</p>

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	<p>Chairperson.</p> <p>Resolutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting resolved to have a hybrid system of Secretariat comprising one permanent representative from each sub region and selected technical local staff from the Parliament of the incumbent Chairperson. • Staff from the past Secretariat should help incoming Secretariat to transition and manage SoCATT documents, programmes and activities.
5.	<p>Key Issues from the Brainstorming Meeting between CPA Africa Regional Secretary and the SoCATT Africa Chairperson held on 24th and 25th April, 2019, Dodoma, Tanzania</p> <p>According to the Chairperson, the brainstorming meeting held with the CPA Africa Regional Secretary provided an opportunity for SoCATT Africa and CPA Africa to discuss issues pertaining to the two entities away from the busy schedule of CPA Africa meetings. Following the brainstorming meeting, the Regional Secretary appointed Ms Nesta Kawamala, a CPA Africa Secretariat official to be the SoCATT Africa focal point person in the CPA Africa Secretariat.</p> <p>Resolutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be regular interactions between the SoCATT Africa Chairperson and the CPA Africa Regional Secretary. • SoCATT Africa would submit the Tracking Register for CPA Africa Resolutions to the Regional Secretariat. <p>6. SoCATT Africa Sub Regional Reports</p> <p>The sub-region representatives reported on the activities for their regions.</p> <p>6.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Africa <p>The representative of SoCATT Central Africa sub-region and Clerk of the</p>

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	<p>Parliament of Botswana, Ms. Barbara N. Dithapo, presented the report, which highlighted the following, among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity building programmes for the region: the Malawi Chapter had been identified as the host of the regional seminar; and sub-region members were encouraged to undertake visits and benchmarking initiatives among themselves to facilitate exchange of best practices and further strengthen the Chapters. Accordingly, members were encouraged to be more open to such requests and to promote cooperation within the sub region and beyond; - The sub-region submitted the names of Mr. Henry Njolomole from Malawi Chapter and Mr Redman Josiah from Botswana Chapter to serve on the Editorial Board and Editors' Forum, respectively; and - All Chapters of the sub-region had accordingly paid their subscriptions for 2018, and were also encouraged to pay subscriptions for the new financial year upon receipt of invoices.
6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Africa <p>Ambassador Jeanine Kambanda, Clerk of the Rwanda Parliament and East Africa sub-regional representative reported that her sub region had not met to discuss their programme of work but were hoping to do so before the 2019 CPA Africa Conference.</p> <p>She informed the meeting of the following activities lined up for the sub-region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zanzibar Parliament was scheduled to host the CPA Africa Conference in August, 2019; - Uganda would host the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in September, 2019; and - Rwanda Parliament will be the host for the 2019 CPA Africa Youth

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	<p data-bbox="435 275 594 302">Parliament.</p> <p data-bbox="228 352 621 380">6.3 • Southern Africa</p> <p data-bbox="289 422 1442 558">The Southern Africa sub-region representative, Mrs Lydia Kandetu, Secretary to the National Assembly of Namibia committed to availing a full report to the Committee at a later stage as it was not ready at the time of the meeting.</p> <p data-bbox="228 611 560 638">6.4 • West Africa</p> <p data-bbox="289 680 1442 764">The Clerk of Ghana, Mr Emmanuel Anyimadu, reported on behalf of the sub-region.</p> <ul data-bbox="386 806 1442 1341" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="386 806 1442 953">- The meeting was informed that the former and retired Clerk of Gambia had died and a new Clerk, who used to be the Deputy Clerk, had since been appointed as Clerk of the Parliament of Gambia. <li data-bbox="386 995 1349 1022">- It was also reported that Senegal had a new Clerk of Parliament. <li data-bbox="386 1064 1442 1201">- Capacity building: Ghana and a number of other branches had been collaborating on benchmarking visits, in the interest of sharing ideas and best practices. <li data-bbox="386 1243 1442 1341">- It was reported that Gambia would be admitted as a full member of the CPA Africa region.
	<p data-bbox="228 1386 1125 1413">7. 2019 SoCATT Africa Professional Development Seminar</p> <p data-bbox="289 1472 1442 1661">The Chairperson told the meeting that Zambia was ready to host the 2019 PDS and that all preparations were in place. The Rt. Hon Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia, Dr Patrick Matibini, SC., MP would officially open the Seminar.</p> <p data-bbox="289 1713 1442 1850">The Chairperson also informed the meeting that the Zambian Parliament had partnered with some cooperating partners to successfully host the 2019 PDS, which included Oxfam Zambia, the United Nations Development Programme</p>

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	<p>(UNDP), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and some Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).</p> <p>The Chairperson thanked the CPA Secretariat for the financial and logistical support rendered towards the hosting of the Seminar.</p> <p>Resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Seminar presentations and report to be circulated to members after the completion of the Seminar.
8.	<p>SoCATT Africa 2020 Budget</p> <p>The meeting considered and adopted the SoCATT Africa 2020 Budget on a proposal by Namibia, and seconded by Rwanda.</p>
9.	<p>SoCATT Africa 2019 Calendar of Events</p> <p>The meeting noted the SoCATT Africa 2019 Calendar of Events, whose activities had partly been implemented and resolved to proceed with the remaining events, in particular the SoCATT Africa AGM.</p> <p>Resolutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting agreed on the following topics and presenters for the SoCATT AGM: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Utilising evidence based decision making in Parliaments – the role of Parliamentary Administrators (Southern Africa). ii. Communicating parliamentary efforts (East Africa, Kenya): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - amidst emerging threats and opportunities of social media. - enhancing visibility of the oversight of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063.

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10.	<p data-bbox="289 338 1019 373">Hosts for 2020 and 2021 SoCATT Africa Meetings</p> <p data-bbox="289 411 1442 604">The meeting deliberated on the host country for the 2020 SoCATT Africa PDS. The members noted that all sub-regions had hosted the PDS; East Africa (Kenya) in 2014, West Africa (Ghana) in 2015; Southern Africa (Namibia) in 2018, and lastly, Central Africa (Zambia) in 2019.</p> <p data-bbox="289 642 435 678">Resolution</p> <ul data-bbox="337 711 1442 800" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="337 711 1442 800">• It was agreed that the Kenya Parliament would host the 2020 Professional Development Seminar.
11.	<p data-bbox="289 909 1320 945">State of preparedness for the 50th CPA Africa Regional Conference</p> <p data-bbox="289 982 1442 1392">The meeting heard that Tanzania would host the CPA conference in Zanzibar from 30th August to 5th September, 2019. Arrangements were underway, with preparatory meetings held with the Speaker of Zanzibar. The meeting was informed that the official guest would be the President of Zanzibar. It was further mentioned that SoCATT meetings would be held at the Parliament of Zanzibar. Delegates were expected to meet their own accommodation and travel costs, while the Parliament of Zanzibar would provide ground transportation for delegates.</p> <p data-bbox="289 1430 435 1465">Resolution</p> <ul data-bbox="337 1499 1442 1640" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="337 1499 1442 1640">• The SoCATT Africa Steering Committee meeting and the AGM would be held on the sidelines of the CPA Conference. To this effect, Notices for the two meetings would be issued to the members.
12.	<p data-bbox="289 1686 581 1722">Any Other Business</p> <p data-bbox="289 1759 1442 1848">The meeting offered condolences to the Kenyan delegation on the death of Mr Justin Bundi, former Clerk of Kenya Parliament who died in May, 2019.</p>

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13.	<p data-bbox="289 283 540 317">Closing remarks</p> <p data-bbox="289 369 1443 615">The Chairperson thanked the SC members for attending and participating in the meeting. Whilst appreciating their unity of purpose she also acknowledged their efforts in implementing the SoCATT Africa Strategic Plan. She ended her remarks by informing the members that a short meeting would be convened on Saturday, 8th June, 2019 to adopt the SC report.</p> <p data-bbox="289 663 1443 747">There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 13:15 hours on 6th June, 2019.</p>

Cecilia N Mbewe (Mrs)
CHAIRPERSON

E Simpamba (Ms)
SECRETARIAT