

50th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

Africa Region Conference

**“E-Parliament, Seamless Platform for Facilitating
Democracy”**

Zanzibar- Tanzania, 30th August – 5th September, 2019

Speech by

Hon. Shandana Gulzar Khan

Member National Assembly of Pakistan

Parliamentary Secretary for Commerce

- H.E. Dr. Ali Mohamed Shein, the President of Zanzibar
- Excellency Justin Bedan Muturi, Chairperson of the Africa Region, Speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya,
- Excellency Hon. Job Y. Ndugai, Speaker National Assembly of Tanzania,
- Excellency Hon. Madam Rebecca Kadaga, Speaker National Assembly of Uganda, President designate of the CPA
- Excellency Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon, Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the CPA
- Excellency, Martin Ngoga, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly,

- Honorable Speakers and Deputy Speakers of CPA Africa Region,
- Representatives of Commonwealth countries and CPA,
- Excellencies, Dignitaries, Distinguished Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen!

Assalam-o-Alaykum and a very good morning

I take this opportunity to convey the greetings and warm wishes of the Honorable Asad Qaiser, Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan to all present. Secondly, I also wish to thank the Honourable Chairperson of the Africa Region, Speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya, to have invited Pakistan to this august forum. It is an honour for me to represent my country today amongst distinguished legislators from the African region

amidst shared aspirations, & further consolidation of parliamentary democracy.

The Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan recently hosted the 5th CPA Asia Regional Conference in Islamabad & we were grateful for the presence as well as meaningful participation by the member branches and officers of the Association. In particular, I would like to thank the Honourable Speaker Kadaga from Uganda and Honourable Speaker Lifaka from Cameroon who also presided over discussions by sustainable development goals taskforce and women parliamentary caucus.

Just two days of their presence in Islamabad provided a vital view into Africa and the kind of cooperation & understanding required among the branches of the CPA to devise new ways for

overcoming similar challenges for the development of our people and our countries.

Two things bring Pakistan to this forum; firstly, the theme of this conference- “E-Parliament, seamless platform for facilitating democracy”; i.e. how do we influence and use the information & communication revolution to better our lives and those of our nations? One way to do this is through innovation and of exploring the idea of ‘Parliamentary Big Data’. ‘Big data’ is not only about the scale or volume of data but also the scale of interconnectedness. I look forward to deeper discussion on the theme in the sessions that are organized for tomorrow and thank the organizers for the timely attention to the topic.

Secondly, and as some of you may be aware, at the 64th Parliamentary Conference to be held in Kampala in three weeks, Pakistan shall be participating in the election of and offering its services for, the position of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Chairperson.

Having met with four of the most inspiring CPA & CWP Members in the last one month alone, today I present before you the journey that brought me here to request the support of all of Africa region for the CWP Chairperson election.

The Founder of my country, also a lawyer, Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah said and I quote: **“There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a great competition and rivalry between the two.**

There is a third power stronger than both, that of the women.

I am the first educated woman & the first legal professional from my village which is 45 minutes away from the Afghanistan border. I have lived through the war on terror in my constituency. My understanding of struggle & universal values and faith comes from my village. And yet, I have been lucky enough to have worked and lived in Europe for over ten years as legal advisor to the Pakistani Government on trade and economic law; thanks to that time, I have dozens of friends I can call family from all parts of Africa.

My story, is of sustained hard work with one simple goal: to make life easier for the people in my village, where after 72 years of independence, there

is no electricity. I have worked hard over the last 22 years as a legal advisor to link growth, trade and jobs on a global scale and at the World Trade Organization (WTO); now I am doing the same in the Parliament of Pakistan and feel that female economic empowerment is as important for other Member states of the CPA.

Pakistan-Africa relations have a deep-rooted emotional bond which dates back to over 70 years of struggle and we have frequently supported each other on international fora. This time, the struggle & main goal of the CWP is increased representation of women in parliament; Pakistan would like to add to that goal-which is to increase policy influence on economic growth and challenges facing our youth and our women. Therefore, Pakistan requests the support of Africa and female legislators in Kampala

for the Chairpersons election to be held in three weeks time.

Ladies & Gentlemen, I end my speech wish to congratulate the organizers on the excellent arrangements, hospitality and kindness for my first visit to Africa. I wish you the best in this endeavor and also expect more such opportunities for meaningful interaction in future inshallah as trade and economic growth are the sole drivers of multilateral unity and shared goal for our youth and our impoverished populace.