



**RESOLUTION OF THE 45TH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY
ASSOCIATION (CPA) AFRICA REGIONAL CONFERENCE HELD
IN ARUSHA, TANZANIA BETWEEN 16TH AND 17TH JULY, 2014**

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ASSOCIATION (CPA) AFRICA REGIONAL CONFERENCE HELD
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Conference Theme: ***Utilizing Commonwealth Parliaments to Combat the Challenges to Socio-Economic Development in Africa.***

The 45th CPA Conference,

concerned that most African Countries are yet to meet their Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targets relating to women and girls, one year before the end of the programme;

mindful that women and girls pursuing a career in science and technology face several challenges;

recognizing that as change agents, the Youth have a critical role to play in championing gender equality and ensuring equal opportunities between males and females;

aware that Parliamentarians have a role to play in addressing the decline in access to and quality of education in Africa;

also aware of the imperative of and urgency for a parliamentary agenda to combat the problem of graft and corruption, and by implication, underdevelopment in Africa;

committed totally to the resolution of the challenges to socio-economic development in Africa through parliamentary measures and mechanisms;

do hereby **RESOLVE** to:

(a) Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals that relate to women and girls; and

The challenges facing women and girls pursuing a career in science and technology

- (i) *urge* Governments in Commonwealth Africa to adopt the concept of gender-budgeting to accelerate the implementation of Millennium Development Goals relating to women and girls;
- (ii) *further urge* Governments in Commonwealth Africa to mainstream gender issues in policy dialogue, formulation and implementation;
- (iii) *also urge* African countries to establish Institutes for Gender Studies to promote academic research into gender issues;
- (iv) *request* African governments to comply with the principles enunciated in International Protocols, treaties and conventions such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Beijing platform for Action and the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which provide for equal access for all, to social, political and economic opportunities;
- (v) *further request* African countries to put in place, policies that address the training needs, recruitment, promotion and retention of women in science and technology fields;
- (vi) *also request* Ministries of Education and other relevant Developments in the various jurisdictions to increase the number of females teaching science and technology courses at tertiary levels, thereby changing masculine

stereotypes associated with science and technology education;

- (vii) *call for* the creation of a network of female role models using the media with the intention of mentoring young women and girls pursuing careers in science and technology;
- (viii) *further call* on Women Groups to facilitate exchange of ideas, experiences and best practices in order to share and learn about interventions that have been successful;
- (ix) *also call* for the introduction of internship programmes in academic institutions as well as provision of scholarships and incentives to encourage more girls and women, particularly the socially disadvantaged, to access training in science and technology fields;
- (x) *encourage* the teaching of gender-oriented modules for the pre-service training of teachers to make them gender-sensitive in every aspect of their professional work;
- (xi) *further encourage* the adoption of science as a compulsory aspect of primary and secondary school curricula;
- (xii) *also encourage* the construction of technical and vocational schools specifically for girls;
- (xiii) *request* Civil Societies, including Faith based Organizations, to embark on sensitization programmes targeting girls, families and schools with the objective of building confidence in females to participate in science, engineering and technology sectors;

(b) The role of the Youth in championing gender equality in

Africa: Equal opportunities between males and females

- (i) *encourage* African Governments to evolve National Youth Policies as well as support the activities of platforms such as Youth/Children's Parliament by promoting dialogue with these Organizations and incorporating their perspectives in socio-economic development and resource management processes;
- (ii) *further encourage* African Parliaments to enact Child Rights Acts which emphasize on the right of children to basic education;
- (iii) *call on* Youths to be more active in propagating the ideals of gender equality at homes, schools and work places, and to especially utilize such platforms as the new social media for the advocacy;
- (iv) *urge* governments and non-governmental organizations in Africa to sensitize African citizens against the obnoxious practice of early child marriage which often leads to higher rates of adolescent fertility and infant mortality, predisposition to poor maternal health and increased vulnerability to HIV/AIDS as well as lower educational attainment for girls;
- (v) *urge* African parliaments to enact laws which criminalize all *harmful* cultural practices;
- (vi) *appeal* to CPA Africa Region to include youth development as an aspect of the organizations fundamental objectives.

(c) How can Africa's electoral systems be reformed to guarantee the conduct of free and fair election?

- (i) *urge* African governments which have not ratified African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance to do so and to strictly adhere to the principles and provisions of the charter;

- (ii) *further urge* African citizens to condemn, oppose and reject unconstitutional change of governments;
- (iii) *encourage* African governments to develop a clear code of conduct for candidates and political parties during elections;
- (iv) *also encourage* governments to ensure that Electoral Commissions and other Institutions charged with conduct of elections in Africa attain financial and operational independence and autonomy;
- (v) *further encourage* Electoral Bodies to computerize their processes by ensuring electronic voter registration, *maintenance* and digital databases of all electoral records and the attainment electronic systems;
- (vi) *call on* all stakeholders in the electoral process to design *electoral* systems that are open, transparent, simple and inclusive- i.e. where women and minority communities are given access to representation;
- (vii) *further call* on Parliaments in Africa to pass legislations which criminalize excessive use of money and vote-buying by candidates for political offices and provides for funding limits for individuals and organizations to political parties;
- (viii) *also call on* the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to create a special department for election *monitoring* and observation;
- (ix) *advise* African politicians to desist from the use of violence and thuggery before, during and after elections;
- (x) *further advise* governments to prescribe stiff and punitive *sanctions* for electoral malpractices;

- (xi) *request* Electoral Bodies to adopt secret balloting to enable citizens to cast their votes according to their conscience and without fear;
- (xii) *further request* Electoral Bodies to create opportunities for African citizens living abroad their countries to vote during elections;

(d) The role of Parliaments in addressing the decline in the access to and quality of education in Africa

- (i) *urge* African governments to institute continuous capacity building for education instructors at all levels;
- (ii) further *urge* African Parliaments to make significant budgetary provisions to the education sector;
- (iii) *call on* governments to adopt an affirmative education policy for disadvantages groups;
- (iv) *further call on* African governments to recognize education as a precondition for socio-economic development;

(e) Corruption and underdevelopment in Africa: Finding a Parliamentary agenda to combat the problem of graft in Africa

- (i) *Urge* Africa countries that are yet to ratify the 2003 United Nations convention against Corruption and other international protocols on anti-corruption to do so and to domesticate these conventions/protocols as part of their national laws;
- (ii) *also urge* African Parliaments to enact legislations which protect Whistle blowers and anti-corruption Crusaders;
- (iii) further *urge* African Parliaments to enact “right-to-know” or Access to information from all government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs);

- (iv) promote Press freedom throughout Africa;
- (v) *also* promote partnership between Parliaments and the Media, Community based Organisations (CBOs), Faith based Organisations well as Non-Governmental Organisations in the crusade against graft;
- (vi) *encourage* capacity-building for law enforcement Officials like the Police, anti-graft Agencies, Office of the Auditor-General and Ombudsman bodies through training and retraining programmes;
- (vii) *further encourage* financial and operational independence and autonomy for the Police, anti-graft Agencies, Office of the Auditor-General and Ombudsman bodies;
- (viii) *call on* Parliaments to adequately make budgetary provisions for funding anti-graft Agencies as well as Ombudsman bodies and to place these establishments on the first line charge of the consolidated revenue fund of the various Africa countries;
- (ix) *also call* on Parliaments to intensify their oversight responsibilities to ensure that government projects and programmes achieve value-for-money;
- (x) *further call* on Parliaments to enact Fiscal Responsibility Acts to guide all concerned on the due process involved in the formulation and implementation of Annual Budgets/Appropriation Acts;
- (xi) *urge* Parliaments to pass Public Procurement Acts which emphasise international best practices in public procurement in Africa;
- (xii) *also urge* Parliaments to prescribe stiffer sanctions for corrupt practices;

- (xiii) *further urge* Parliaments to champion the strengthening and repositioning of the Judiciary to enhance the independence of that branch of government as well as promote strict enforcement of a rule of law regime;
- (xiv) *encourage* private initiatives like the Mo Ibrahim Foundation which honours past African Leaders that distinguished themselves in terms of honesty and integrity;
- (xv) *also encourage* African governments to adopt African Union's Peer Review Mechanism where countries have the opportunity to assess the achievements, challenges and successes of other countries, using the Millennium Development Goals as standards;
- (xvi) *further encourage* African governments to institutionalize Monitoring and Evaluation system in Ministries, Departments and Agencies for government projects and programmes;
- (xvii) Call on Parliaments in Africa to adopt a Code of ethical conduct for members of Parliament and other Public Officials to regulate their conduct especially in respect of conflict of interest situations;
- (xviii) *also call on* Parliaments to promote legislative accountability by encouraging public participation in the law-making process through public hearings and public access to Plenary and Committee sessions;
- (xix) *further call on* Parliaments to spearhead the process of reforming tax collection systems in their various jurisdictions to eliminate areas of leakages and illicit financial flows in key economic areas such mining;

- (xx) *educate* and sensitise citizens across Africa to hold their governments to account by asking critical questions regarding public expenditure, projects and programmes;
- (xxi) *re-orient* the citizenry in Africa away from honouring or celebrating corrupt Public Officials and persons with questionable track records; and
- (xxii) *entrench* a culture of anti-corruption into the minds of young persons by making it a compulsory aspect of civic education in our school curriculum.

**Adopted on 26th July, 2014
in Arusha, Tanzania**