



COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

AFRICA REGION

**STATEMENT BY HON ANGELA THOKOZILE DIDIZA, MP - CWP
CHAIRPERSON, AFRICA REGION AT THE COMMEMORATION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2019**

THEME: THINK EQUAL, BUILD SMART AND INNOVATE FOR CHANGE

A non-sexist society is what all women of the world wish for and will strive for no matter how long it takes. As women in the Commonwealth Family of Nations, we have ensured that through programs of advocacy as well as working with the women's movement in our countries we make our contribution in creating a better world.

Building a better and an inclusive world requires us to think about the challenges that our societies today face as well as opportunities that are before us. The changing nature of the world of work exacerbated by information and technology poses both a threat and an opportunity for women. Women have acknowledged that re-skilling of workers and introduction of ICTs at an early age in school curriculum is one of the ways in which countries can better prepare themselves and women in particular.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE AS CWP AFRICA REGION

As the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians in Africa, we held a gender sensitization workshop where we examined the fourth industrial revolution and its impact in the world of work. We also looked at the regulatory environment which will facilitate as well as

protecting citizens given the threat of cyber insecurity. In the Botswana Women's Business Meeting we further examine the issues of ICT especially cyber security. On all of these, we resolved that advocacy work must be done on ICT looking at its opportunities and threats. A strong call for regulatory frameworks to facilitate and protect citizens was agreed to.

As we mark the 30 years anniversary of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians we need to use our influence in pushing for a legislative frameworks and programs that will address concerns of women and ICT. We call on our governments to ensure that resources are put in place in the re-skilling of our educators on ICT in order to prepare them for knowledge dissemination to our learners. Governments must ensure that it provides learning materials such as tablets, computers and laptops for students from an early age. We call on Governments to lay the necessary infrastructure to support ICTs. We call upon the private sector in particular mobile telephone companies and others to reduce their internet costs for accessibility, as well as develop rural ICT infrastructure for educational and small and medium enterprises #Data must fall

During this thirty year journey, we look back and applaud the pioneers of this movement who broke the barriers and stereotypes about women's participation in politics. In their smart thinking, they did not only create a platform, but ensured that CWP is a recognised constitutional structure of the Association, whose work is funded equally like any other programs of the CPA.

Moving forward we need we to ensure that as legislatures we influence the budget allocation on research and development as well as invest in training educators who will specialise in mathematics and science given their relevance in ICT.

Our challenge is to continue to build and innovate better ways in which the parliaments and legislatures of the Commonwealth become reflective of our societies not only in representation, but the tools of trade that we use and facilities.

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