



64th CPC Speech

CPA President and Speaker of Uganda's opening address

Address by RT HON. REBECCA KADAGA, MP
CPA PRESIDENT AND SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

At the 64TH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE
Theme: *Adaption, Engagement and Evolution of Parliaments in a rapidly changing Commonwealth*

Commonwealth Resort Munyonyo
26th September 2019

On behalf of the Parliament of Uganda and on behalf of all Ugandans, I warmly welcome you to the Pearl of Africa. You are welcome to the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, which Uganda is extremely proud to host again. The country last played host to the 13th gathering of Commonwealth Parliamentarians in 1967. Our neighbours Kenya have had occasion to host it three times, so we are glad to finally join that table.

The fact that it has taken 52 years to host this conference again might reflect the struggles Uganda's fledgling democracy faced in the past. But those dark days are long behind us. We have since evolved to become one of the reliable members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), internationally and regionally. I want to believe this is why we have been trusted to host this landmark event again.

As the President-Designate of the CPA 2018-2019, I am excited to welcome delegates and legislators from the Commonwealth regions across the different continents. We have National, State, Provincial and territorial legislatures represented here. We all stand as brothers and sisters with equal say in this body of Parliamentarians, regardless of size or economic strength. But having said this, I not with sadness the absence of The Bahamas, who suffered a disastrous hurricane leading to loss of hundreds of lives. In request us to stand up for a moment of silence in honor of the absence of the Commonwealth family.

In a special way, let me appreciate our host President and Deputy Patron of the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, His Excellency President Yoweri Museveni, for the support towards the organization of this conference. He has supported the Uganda Parliament to host CPA Africa Region Conferences including, the CSPOC Africa Region in 2009, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Africa Region in 2010, the 4th CPA Africa Youth Conference in 2018, as well as the CHOGM in 2007.

The CPA-Uganda Branch is grateful to the CPA Secretariat for the logistical and advisory support in the months leading up to this event.

I want to report that the Uganda Branch Members and Secretariat have worked tirelessly to ensure that everything is in order, and I would like to thank them for their efforts.

Before I delve into the theme of this conference, allow me to heartily congratulate the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians on marking 30 years of great work, raising the voices of women in positions of authority. Thank you for fostering gender mainstreaming in the membership and processes in our Legislatures.



The last time the CPC convened in Uganda in 1967, the CWP was not yet in existence. I also would like to inform the delegates that as part of our history, we have made available pullouts of the 1967 Conference. I believe delegates might be interested to know what the topical issues were raised by your representatives then.

Fellow delegates, the theme of this year's conference is *'Adaption, engagement, and evolution of Parliaments in a rapidly changing Commonwealth'*. A lot is changing in our nations, from the demographic characteristics to the diversities of race, belief and people's needs.

There is a growing focus on greater scrutiny of Parliamentarians, coupled with a demand for accountability and transparency. At the same time, the public trust in Parliaments is flagging in most countries, yet the people increasingly expect more from their representatives.

In truth, it is not only the Commonwealth that is rapidly changing; one just has to read or watch the news to see that the rest of the world is experiencing the same growing pains. With globalization trends, International borders increasingly seem like mere demarcations, and the challenges we face cut across boundaries. We are faced by threats that do not know the colour of our skins, our creeds, our poverty, wealth, or political affiliations.

Some of the major issues we are forced to confront include: climate change, individual and group terrorism, hunger and malnutrition, old and new disease epidemics; local and regional conflicts; and the rising frequency and cost of natural and man-made disasters. These threaten the present and future wellbeing of our citizens. We should not forget the ever-growing numbers of refugees, distressed persons, stateless persons in our countries.

As Parliamentarians, we are the bridges between Government and the people. They, therefore, rely on us to speak for them and to plan for them a future that is better than the present and the past. This conference theme awakens us as elected representatives of the people, to adapt, engage and evolve to match the challenges that we face.

Our workshops, roundtables, TED talks and mentoring sessions will give us opportunity to reflect on how we tackle these problems. How do we maximize our core functions of representation, legislation, oversight and budget appropriation? Our mandate places us in the centre of finding solutions that work; and translating promises, strategies and laws into action.

One of our assignments as national Parliaments towards achievement of the United Nations Agenda 2030, we are expected to promote, plan for and monitor the effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Most of the discussions during this conference fit in with the SDGs. I know that most Commonwealth Parliaments have updated their processes and missions to match this Agenda, and it will be exciting learning from one another's experiences.

The conference topics include the concern about rapid unplanned urbanization; terrorism; the efficacy of Parliament interventions on climate change; science and technology innovations that enable Parliaments to work smarter; our role in facilitating persons with disabilities in politics; as well as sexual harassment in Legislatures. We shall also discuss the updated CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures, which help strengthen Parliaments in light of current commitments, such as the SDGs.

Following the good example set in Bangladesh in 2017, this year we shall again have the youth roundtable, whereby we seek to include young people in decision making, and mentor future leaders of the Commonwealth. They will discuss strategies to deal with youth unemployment, in addition to sharpening their debate skills and building networks with each other.



Through all these deliberations, I urge us to share our key lessons and pick up the best practices to implement, for the good of our people, our nations and indeed our mother planet earth.

Let us remember that, as one of the oldest established organisations in the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association will continue to be an invaluable player in the world's efforts to create a better today and a greater tomorrow for us all.

A lot of work has gone on in the last few years in preparation for the 64th CPC, I want to take this opportunity to thank you, Your Excellency, for the overall security and safety. I also thank the armed forces, the Commander of the Chief of Defence Forces, the Police Officers with the command of the Inspector General of Police, the Director General of Internal and External Security, the Clerk to Parliament and the Staff.

I commend further the tremendous work done by the Members of Parliament through all the Committees that has brought us to where we are today.

I invite you to enjoy your stay in Uganda. Please make the time to explore more and discover why it was indeed named the Pearl of Africa.

Thank you for your attention.

For God and my Country!

ENDS

Information about the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) can be found at the official conference website www.cpc2019.org and for further updates please visit the CPA website www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cpc2019.

Social Media: Twitter #64CPC2019 @CPA_Secretariat | Facebook.com/CPAHQ | Online www.cpahq.org
Images available at www.cpahq.org/cpahq/flickr

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Notes to Editors:

64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, 22-29 September 2019, Kampala, Uganda #64CPC2019

The **Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference** is the annual conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). The **64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference** will take place in Kampala, Uganda hosted by the CPA Uganda Branch and the Parliament of Uganda. For further information visit www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cpc2019.

The **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)** exists to develop, promote and support Parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and to implement the enduring values of the Commonwealth. The CPA is an international community of around 180 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures working together to deepen the Commonwealth's commitment to the highest standards of democratic governance. Visit www.cpahq.org.

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