



64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference

**Official Opening Ceremony
Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort
26 September 2019, 10:00**

**Speech by Mr Jarvis Matiya
Acting Secretary-General
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association**

Allow me to extend a hearty welcome to you all on this auspicious occasion of the official opening of the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference whose theme is *'Adaption, engagement, and evolution of Parliaments in a rapidly changing Commonwealth'*.

I wish to place on record our thanks and appreciation to His Excellency Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda, for gracing this event this morning, and to our host the Speaker of the Uganda Parliament, Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, who is also CPA President Designate; Hon Bintu Lukumu Jalia, MP, the Chairperson of the CPA Uganda Branch Executive Committee; the Clerk of the Parliament of Uganda, Mrs Jane Kibirige and her team for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality accorded to the delegates since their arrival in Uganda.

The host Branch has worked so tirelessly preparing for this Conference and ensuring that all logistical and administrative arrangements were in place so that we have a successful Conference. Indeed, it has been a total pleasure to enjoy the warm hospitality of the people of the Pearl of Africa.



The CPC was last here in Uganda 52 years ago. So this conference is a significant moment in the history of Uganda as well as the CPA.

The CPA is a force for good on democracy, good governance and development. It represents and connects national and provincial assemblies, presidential and Westminster systems, unitary and federal states, large and small nations.

The CPA develops and supports its Members and parliamentary staff to promote knowledge and best practice in enhancing the work of Parliaments. Through its activities, the CPA reaches out to its membership to support the implementation of programmes aimed at upskilling its Members and staff in order to strengthen the institution of Parliament and democratic governance.

At this Conference, we will be launching online programmes for parliamentary staff which were developed in collaboration with King's College of the United Kingdom and McGill University of Canada. This programme is very much in line with the theme of this Conference - *'Adaption, engagement, and evolution of Parliaments in a rapidly changing Commonwealth'*.

As part of benchmarking, in 2006, the CPA developed the CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures. These Benchmarks reinforce the belief that effective Parliaments are one of the principal institutions of any functioning democracy, and provide a minimum standard and a guide on how a Parliament should be constituted and how it should function in line with values and principles of the Commonwealth Charter on the development of free and democratic societies.

The CPA also enables its Members to exchange views, make connections and deepen understanding of their roles and responsibilities as representatives of the people. The 64th



Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference being inaugurated today, provides a platform for such conversations to take place.

In the next two days, Members will participate in ten workshop sessions as part of learning and development as endorsed at the 63rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference which was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh in November 2017. The thematic focus of these workshops will be on wide ranging subjects such as disability rights, the role of Parliaments in tackling climate change, innovation and ICT in Parliament, youth unemployment, urbanisation and rural decline just to mention a few.

Commonwealth Heads of Government have recognised that Parliaments and Legislatures are essential pillars of democratic governance and have endorsed the efforts and initiatives of the CPA as the parliamentary partner of the Commonwealth's governmental and non-governmental sectors. Within the Commonwealth family, we all commit ourselves to shared values and principles, and these shape both our collective goals and our collective responsibility in our pursuit of development.

These include free and fair elections, human rights, the rule of law, separation of powers, and tolerance, respect and understanding. Deep-rooted in the Commonwealth approach is the ideal of learning from one another. That is what Commonwealth conferences like this are all about: to strengthen networks, to share, to exchange, to be mutually supportive.

Indeed, parliamentary links, forged and continually strengthened through the work of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association over many decades, can be seen as among the most powerful practical illustration of Commonwealth nations joining together freely and voluntarily in an enduring relationship.



As I conclude, allow me to thank sincerely the CPA Chairperson, the CPA Coordinating Committee, the CPA Executive Committee and, of course, my colleagues at the CPA Headquarters Secretariat who worked so hard collaboratively with the staff of the Uganda Parliament in preparing for this Conference.

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