

## **Remarks delivered at the opening ceremony of the 42nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference**

16 June 2011, Kigali Republic of Rwanda

Your Excellency Mr. Paul Kagame President of the Republic of Rwanda  
Rt. Hon Prime Minister of Rwanda Mr. Bernard Makuza  
Rt. Hon Ms. Rose Mukantabama Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of Rwanda  
Rt. Hon Vincent Bitura President of the Senate of the Parliament of Rwanda  
Chief Justice of Rwanda Hon Aloysia Cyanzayire  
Chairperson of the Executive Committee of CPA Africa region Hon Mninwa Johannes Mahlangu and  
Members of the Executive Committee  
Hon Marwick Khumalo Vice Chairperson of the CPA  
CWP Representative Rt. Hon Rebecca Kadaga  
Deputy Secretary General for Finance and Economic Affairs of Commonwealth Mr. Ramsfold Smith  
Members of the Executive Committee of CPA Africa Region  
Hon. Speakers and Presiding Officers  
All Legislators in our midst  
Distinguished Delegates  
Clerks and CPA Branch Secretaries  
Esteemed Guests and Observers  
People of the beautiful Republic of Rwanda  
Ladies and Gentlemen

We greet you.

It is an honour and Privilege for me to join you Mr. President and deliver remarks to this Opening Ceremony of the 42nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Association held in the city of Kigali; Rwanda after the historic 41st Africa Region Conference held in Mpumalanga Province; South Africa last year.

This brings a reminder to me that this day in South Africa is commemorated annually in honour of the young people who were brutally murdered by the past apartheid regime on the 16th of June 1976. We pay our tributes to all young martyrs of freedom in South Africa and the continent at large.

Your Excellency Mr. President and Delegates

Allow me to voice our profound appreciation to the Parliament of Rwanda and the Government of the Republic of Rwanda for agreeing to host the 42nd CPA Africa Region Conference and also appreciate the hospitality accorded to us by the people of Rwanda since our arrival. I am confident that our coming here shall leave a lasting legacy in this country and equally accord us with lifetime memories.

Your Excellency Mr. President and Delegates

Like Rwanda the country where I come from and the political party that I belong to has made great strides in according our women leaders their rightful place in strategic positions of influence including administration and parliamentary work.

We therefore wish to take this opportunity and congratulate the people of Rwanda under your leadership Mr. President for being a shining example in our continent by according the women of Rwanda equal status in strategic positions of influence including political office and most significantly parliamentary work.

We congratulate the People of Rwanda for having made great progress and significant breakaway from the difficult past and moving towards an era of rebuilding and developing the country. The sad historical experiences of the people of this country should never occur in our lifetime again.

The story of the people of the Republic of Rwanda affirms that people united in common purpose can achieve greater things together. In South Africa we have adopted a motto that says "Working Together we can do more" I believe that these motto resonates with the success story of this country but it is also more relevant for our continent today. Africans must work together to build a better Africa.

Your Excellency Mr. President and Delegates

The Legacy that you have created for this country shall accord you honour amongst generations to come. The opportunity to visit some of your country`s attractions was a great learning experience and is profoundly appreciated. We hope we will be able to draw best practices from this country and to use them as a source of reference for our individual countries.

We are excited that after the General Assembly held in Nairobi last year agreed to admit Rwanda as a new Member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association; the CPA Africa Region Executive Committee which met on the 14th of June 2011 here in Kigali has recommended that the Annual General Meeting of CPA Africa Region should admit Rwanda as a Member of the CPA Africa Region.

Mr. President and Delegates

This year`s theme "Consolidating Growth and Development" seeks to deal with the thorny issue in Africa. Our Countries have in the good times experienced growth especially in the economic sector. However, there has always been a challenge of balancing the progress between growth and development.

Our approach has been consciously or unconsciously biased to the aspect of growth more than development hence you find that countries that have achieved growth are very rich in financial resources but still confronted by serious development challenges.

Furthermore, many development programmes in various states have been unsuccessful due to failure to manage development itself. Another critical factor is of course the exclusion of people in actively managing their development.

Your Excellency Mr President and Honourable Delegates

Our approaches to growth and development should be people centred, democratic and indeed sustainable. Those are critical factors which have been seen to be absent in most of the growth and development programmes in our states. There is a need to ensure that a reciprocal relationship exist between our countries` economic growth and the development of the country and its people.

It is important for Africa to adopt a growth path which addresses all the structural challenges affecting our countries by pursuing for the creation of decent work, reducing inequality and defeating poverty.

A key response to these challenges is to transform the economy but also ensuring that all people are accorded economic freedom. Both these issues are critical for a better tomorrow and better Africa. When we address our structural problems, we should also put social cohesion at centre of our developing economies.

I hope that we shall at the end of this conference emerge with positive outcomes that seek to present lasting solutions to the problems in Africa and the World

During this 100th year of the existence of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, We must also pursue a common African agenda to transform the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association as an organisation.

It is my firm belief that our vision for the transformation of the CPA to be an International Diplomatic Organisation will be more beneficial to our region.

We must also ensure that we assist our branches to adopt all conference resolution as resolutions of their Legislatures starting with the resolutions of the 41st CPA Africa Region Conference held in Mpumalanga.

Your Excellency Mr President and Delegates

Our Women in the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) are growing in stature and honour, I therefore wish to salute the CWP Africa Region under the leadership of Rt. Hon Rebecca Kadaga for the work they have done in pursuit of the issues of women inside the CPA Africa Region.

We appreciate the recognition accorded to Rt. Hon Rebecca Kadaga by her country as she was elected the first female Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda. Furthermore, we must congratulate the people of Tanzania for electing Rt Hon Anna Makinda a Woman to be the Speaker of their Parliament

We also wish to congratulate all the countries that have held peaceful and successful elections since the 41st conference. We further congratulate all those Members that were elected. Our special words of congratulations also go to those who were part of the CPA bodies and organs and have now been elected in senior positions in their Parliaments like the Hon Job Ndugai who is now the Deputy Speaker in Tanzania Parliament

I wish to thank the Regional Executive Committee, Speakers from Branches and Sub-National Branches, Presiding Officers, Members of the Association, Parliamentary Clerks and Secretaries, as well as Parliamentary staff for the support you have given to me in the discharge of my responsibilities as President of CPA Africa region since last year.

Much as we were placed at a position of leadership, we have found ourselves at a great opportunity of learning and growth. I wish to thank honourable members who served in the Ad hoc Committee on Constitutional Review for the sterling work they have done in processing the proposed constitutional amendments.

Once again I wish to thank you Your Excellency Mr President for officiating this event. Delegates to the 42nd CPA Conference; let me take this opportunity and wish you all the best as we proceed with Conference.

Thank You.