



**THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA  
OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT**

**SPEECH BY H.E. DR. PHILIP ISDOR MPANGO, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE  
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE  
53<sup>RD</sup> COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION REGIONAL  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**GRAN MELIA HOTEL, ARUSHA, TANZANIA  
3<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER, 2024**

- ***Hon. Dr. Tulia Ackson, MP. Speaker of the Parliament of URT and President of IPU;***
- ***Hon. Paul Christian Makonda, Arusha Regional Commissioner;***
- ***Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas, MP. (Sierra Leone), President of CPA Africa Region ;***
- ***Hon. Catherine Gotani Hara, MP. (Malawi), Chairperson of CPA Africa Region Executive Committee and Speaker of the Parliament of Malawi;***
- ***Hon. Jatta Fabakary Tombog, MP. (The Gambia), Vice - President CPA Africa Region;***
- ***Hon. Arthur Holder, MP (Barbados), Acting Chairperson of the Executive Committee CPA International;***
- ***Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps;***
- ***Hon. Members of the Parliament of the URT;***
- ***Mr. Stephen Twigg, Secretary General, CPA;***
- ***Mr. Baraka Idelphonse Leonard, Regional Secretary of CPA and Clerk of the National Assembly, URT;***
- ***Distinguished Delegates & Invited Guests;***
- ***Members of the Media Fraternity;***
- ***Ladies and Gentlemen.***

On behalf of H.E. Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, I wish to extend a very warm welcome to all our guests. **Karibuni sana.** The President, had intended to personally officiate the 53rd CPA Africa Regional Conference, but could not be here due to other equally pressing national commitments. Hence, H.E. sent me to stand in for her and wishes all of you a memorable stay in Tanzania and a very successful conference.

### ***Distinguished Delegates;***

I understand that this conference is a platform that brings together Parliamentarians from across the Africa region, to foster dialogue, share best practices, and strengthen parliamentary democracy. I do hope that delegates will effectively use this opportunity to do exactly that and connect with peers. I have also been informed that the CPA Africa Region also aims at promoting peace, unity, democracy, good governance and stability in all Member States. In view of that, the choice of the theme for the 53<sup>rd</sup> conference, which is ***"African Parliaments at the Forefront of Addressing Existential Global Challenges: Food Insecurity, Climate Change, and Youth Employment"*** is both pertinent and timely. Indeed, food insecurity, climate crisis and Youth unemployment pose serious threats to socio-political and economic stability of the continent, thus requiring immediate and coordinated action. Therefore, Parliaments in Africa, as key actors for promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, have a crucial role to play in tackling the said main global challenges, by leveraging their legislative powers, budgetary control and oversight functions.

### ***Distinguished Delegates;***

**Food Insecurity** stands out as one of the most pressing challenges facing our continent. Despite Africa's vast agricultural potential, millions of our people still go hungry! The continent, lags behind in attaining SDG 2 targets on food security and nutrition, as well as the Malabo Agreement on ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition come 2025. It is estimated that the proportion of the population in Africa that is facing both moderate and severe food insecurity stands at 61%, which is more than twice that of the global level, estimated at 29.6%.

In this regard, the strategic role of Parliaments is to urge and vote for enhanced public investments in agriculture and supportive sectors, in terms of budgetary resources for increased supply and access to farm inputs, infrastructure and services. They include irrigation infrastructure and feeder roads, farming equipments, access to credit, quality seeds, pesticides, extension services, storage facilities and access to markets, particularly to rural communities. In other words, Parliaments are responsible for enacting legislations that support food security and facilitate investment in the agriculture and allied sectors.

In Tanzania, through the Parliament, various laws have been enacted to address food insecurity, in line with the National Agriculture Policy, which aims at enhancing agricultural growth and productivity and ensuring food security. Our priorities include improving access to agricultural inputs, promoting sustainable farming practices, and supporting smallholder farmers to access credit and markets. Tanzania has also implemented a number of agriculture and livestock development initiatives, including what we call in Kiswahili as *Kilimo Kwanza (Agriculture First)* and more recently *Building a Better Tomorrow (BBT)*. *Kilimo Kwanza* focused on targeted financing of agriculture activities and programs, while BBT focuses on job creation for the youth and modernizing agriculture through investment in the requisite infrastructure (rural roads, irrigation, storage, communication facilities), research and extension services. We also established the Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank (TADB) specifically to extend credit to smallholder and middle-level farmers and investors in agriculture at affordable interest rates.

### ***Distinguished Delegates;***

**Climate Change** is another serious threat that is already impacting adversely our continent. As a result, we are increasingly experiencing severe and long-term droughts, crop failures and famine. Similarly, intense and unpredictable rains, flooding and sea-level rise are now recurring phenomena. Although Africa contributes less than 5% of GHG emissions, which are responsible for global warming, climate change has adversely affected our continent on all fronts - economic, social, political and environmental.

In this regard, Parliaments and Parliamentarians are duty bound to ensure that concrete measures are taken by Governments and other stakeholders to address the climate crisis through implementation of robust mitigation and adaptation measures, including adoption of green technologies. Apart from allocating a commensurate share

of budgetary resources for national environmental protection programmes, Parliaments ought to hasten ratification and implementation of international agreements, notably Paris Agreement and the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol. Parliaments are also expected to oversee implementation of nationally determined contributions to reduce GHG emissions, as well as enhancing transparency and accountability of climate action and reporting. In addition, Parliaments ought to be at the forefront of raising the profile of the climate change agenda through quality debates, so as to promote a better understanding of the need to take prompt action to prevent an environment catastrophe at national and global level.

Like many other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Tanzania too, faces significant threats from climate change. In response, the Parliament of Tanzania enacted the Environmental Management Act, and Water Resources Management Act which include provisions for mitigating climate change impacts through reforestation programs, conservation of water resources, and promotion of renewable energy sources. The National Environment Management Council (NEMC) was also established through an Act of Parliament to undertake environmental enforcement, compliance, review and monitoring environmental impacts, research and raising awareness. The Parliament also has a Standing Committee on Water and Environment which provide oversight function on water resources management and environmental issues. In doing so, the Parliament collaborates with other stakeholders to shape people's perceptions on climate change and impart knowledge nationally, as well as at the constituent level. Furthermore, Parliament has been instrumental in advocating for interventions to minimize adverse impacts of climate change on food security, like pushing for smart agriculture and avoidance of conflict over land and water resources, carbon trade to incentivize protection of forests as well as championing the transition from the use of charcoal and firewood for cooking to clean energy, an agenda that is championed Africa-wide, by H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan. Similarly, Parliamentarians are at the forefront of tree planting campaigns, street cleaning in urban and beach areas, as well as distribution of gas cylinders to local communities in their constituencies.

### ***Distinguished Delegates;***

With regard to **youth employment**, it is well known that Africa is now the world's youngest continent with 70% of sub-Saharan Africa under the age of 70 and the Median age is 19. This youthful profile creates a potential for economic growth when the share of the working - age population exceeds the non working - age population (demographic dividend). However, it is estimated that 10 to 12 million young people enter the labor market each year, but only 3 million are absorbed, leaving the majority of the youth either unemployed or forced to settle for low-paid and low productive jobs to make ends meet. The prevailing underemployment and lack of employment prospects for the youth in African countries are driving the young people to migrate to urban centres or overseas, even in very dangerous circumstances. As a result of unemployment frustrations, the youth have become prone to extremism propaganda and joining political riots.

Under the above circumstances, Parliaments are duty bound to voice the plight of the youth, put forward practical interventions required, and advise the Executive to devise youth employment programs and see to it that they are reasonably funded, through the national budget and cooperation with other partners. As Parliaments exercise their legislative and oversight functions, they need to work with governments to promote pro-employment policies and programs, and innovative financing for youth entrepreneurial programs. Parliaments should also advocate for education and training reforms to facilitate school-to-work transition, prevent skills mismatches, side by side with special programs and dedicated funding for projects run by youth groups and those with disabilities but also ensure that young people receive equal treatment in the job market. For example, here in Tanzania, each LGA is required by law to set aside 10% of revenue from own sources, to fund projects run by youth groups as well as women and people with disabilities.

***Distinguished Delegates;***

Since agriculture is the main employer in Tanzania, absorbing about 75% of the population, we have deliberately tripled the agriculture budget over the past three years 2021/2022 – 2023/2024. The Government has also set up a start-up capital fund under the BBT program to facilitate access to land, acquisition of agro-inputs and modern technology. The program has also entailed establishment of a digital platform for registration of farmers and posting of inputs and market information. The Government has also leveraged on cooperation with multinational companies and partnerships with the private sector to attract FDIs in the agriculture sector. Some of the areas that are apparently attractive to our young people include horticulture, livestock fattening, fish farming, agritech, e-commerce, logistics and marketing of farm produce using ICT.

***Distinguished Delegates;***

In winding up, I would like to stress that addressing the global challenges of food insecurity, climate crisis, and youth unemployment requires collective action of all stakeholders. Importantly, it also requires sustained peace in Africa. In this regard, African parliaments are uniquely positioned to spearhead this drive through effective legislation and oversight. Let us seize the opportunity offered by this conference to exchange best practices and country experiences on tackling these global challenges more effectively, alongside greater resolve to end conflicts and silence the guns in Africa. Peace is imperative for tackling all burning global challenges. Together, we can overcome them and build a better Africa for future generations as envisioned in the 2063 Agenda: The Africa we Want.

With these remarks, it is now my singular honour and privilege to declare the 53<sup>rd</sup> CPA Africa Regional Conference, officially opened.

**God bless CPA Africa Region**

**I thank you**