

PARLIAMENT
OF KENYA
LIBRARY

**REPORT ON THE EIGHTH CONFERENCE FOR THE ASSOCIATION OF
PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIES OF EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA
(APLESA)
MAY 13 – 17, 2002**

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KENYA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Eighth Conference of the Association of Parliamentary Libraries of Eastern and Southern Africa (APLESA) took place on May 13 – 17, 2002 at the Hotel Africana, Kampala, Uganda.

The purpose of the conference was to finalize the APLESA Strategic Plan that is expected to guide the Association as it attempts to achieve its objectives.

During the conference, three of the four committees that had been set up to work on the finalization of the Strategic Implementation Plan presented their reports. The reports were discussed and at the end of the conference, participants came up with the APLESA Strategic Implementation plan, also known as the Kampala Plan.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Association of Parliamentary Libraries of Eastern and Southern Africa (APLESA) was established in Zimbabwe to serve as a forum for professional networking and resource sharing amongst parliamentary libraries in the sub-region hence creating a means for information exchange that will support the function of parliaments in the region, thereby facilitating in strengthening parliamentary democracy.

This is because Libraries serving parliaments do not have all the resources they need in order to deliver efficient and effective information services to their Members of

Parliament (MPs). It was in light of this that the Association (APLESA) was formed and to date APLESA membership has reached 13 including; Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Ethiopia is contemplating joining it. Efforts are under way to contact the following eligible members to join the association namely; Mauritius, Comoros, Seychelles, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi.

3.0 PARTICIPANTS

A total of 12 librarians from 9 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa attended the conference. The APLESA member countries which were represented in the conference included; Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia. Ghana and The East African Community (EAC) attended as observers.

4.0 OPENING REMARKS

The official opening of the eighth APLESA conference took place on Monday May 13, 2002 and was done by the Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, Hon. Edward Ssekandi. In his speech, he told the delegates that Parliaments all over the world were under pressure from the people to ensure good governance.

In addition, there was need to provide an environment where Parliamentarians are able to make laws that were people sensitive.

He noted that emerging technology such as the Internet provides a vast amount of information, which could be used to build capacity and help deliver services bearing in mind that it also provides timely information that reduces the cost of obtaining the information through other means. The Speaker wished the delegates a fruitful deliberation.

5.0 PROCEEDINGS OF THE EIGHTH APLESA CONFERENCE

5.1 Plenary Session Day One, May 13, 2002

5.1.1 Chair's report

The purpose of the conference was to finalise the APLESA Strategic Plan. During the Strategic meeting which was held in Kampala, tasks were assigned to various committees that were set up to ensure that the plan could be worked on prior to the current conference. The committees were expected to present their reports in the Conference. The committees that were set up were:

- APLESA Committee on Constitution/Policy Guidelines
- APLESA Committee on Training and Needs Analysis/Capacity Development/Workshops/Attachments

- APLESA Committee on Proposals and marketing
- APLESA committee on Communication/Information Sharing and database

It was noted that three of the four committees had prepared reports. The APLESA Committee on the Constitution/Policy Guidelines did not have a report.

The chair presented this report in accordance with Article IX, section 1 of the APLESA Constitution, which was read for him by the secretary. It was noted that the focus of the next five years would be:

- Promotion of cooperation and resource sharing
- Improvement of the constitution
- Promotion of Networking among members
- Information delivery Services
- Obtaining support for the association

Certain issues, which needed attention, included, amendment of the Constitution to include membership fees and research officers. It was observed that the Association had missed several funding opportunities because of failure to present reports to donors. The Parliamentary Centre, Canada had previously been hosting the Associations website. It ceased to do so in march 2002. The South Africa Parliament had agreed to take over the responsibility however owing to some administrative hitches in the Parliament, it is was not yet feasible.

However, if the Association was able to raise US\$ 300 the website would be hosted by the South Africa parliament while the other administrative hitches are solved.

The Chair also gave a financial report on some of the activities, which had taken place in the last year.

- Cost of hosting the Website was Canadian dollars 4,877.50
- Design of Association Logo US\$550
- Strategic Planning Workshop US\$20,756.50

An issue regarding the establishment of a headquarters for the Association came up. It was noted that the country which hosts the secretariat would also host the website. There was concern about the financial implications of such a venture. However after a lengthy debate the delegates resolved that they should come up with a membership fee, which would be used to off set urgent financial obligations. This would have to be included in the Constitution.

5.1.2 Presentation of Report from Committee on the Constitution

As noted earlier the Committee was unable to make a report primarily as a result of failed communication among members. The only member present requested the members to permit him to go through the Constitution Article by Article so that the Plenary could help suggest possible amendments.

The members agreed to help out. All comments were to be noted and they would be voted upon on Wednesday. Several members made useful contributions. At the end of the day the following amendments were suggested: -

Article I

Name

Despite the fact that there were other groups that showed interest in joining the Association, the name would not be changed.

Proposed amendment

The acronym APLESA was said to be lacking in the name clause so it should be included.

Article II

Purpose and objectives of the Association

The current structure in the Constitution was not appropriate. During the Strategic Planning Workshop members had come up with new objectives. The delegates adopted some of them with amendments.

Proposed amendments

- *To promote co-operation and resource sharing among members of Parliaments (APLESA).*
- *To promote communication and networking among APLESA.*

- *To promote capacity building among members.*
- *To promote best services in service delivery.*

Article III

Membership

Section 1

Proposed amendment

The membership of the Association shall comprise of national and regional Parliaments of Eastern and southern African Region.

Section 2

Observer status may be accorded to the libraries of legislatures in the African region on the vote of current members of the Association at an annual conference.

Section 3

Proposed new section

Associate membership shall be open to provincial legislatures

Article IV

Meetings

Section 1

Proposed amendment

Meetings shall be attended by professional librarians and research staff working in Parliament.

Sections 2 and 3 were left intact.

Article V

Funding

The statement in the constitution was not appropriate. It was agreed that the article be amended as follows:

Proposed amendment

- *There shall be a membership fee of US\$50 and an annual subscription of US\$100.*
- *There shall be a registration fee of US\$100 or (any such amount) as may be determined by the Executive from time to time*
- *The Executive shall solicit more funding from member Parliaments e.g.*

Article VI

Voting

Current provisions left intact

Article VII

Officers

Section 1

Left intact

Section 2

Proposed amendment

Election of office bearers shall be for two years and each officer shall be eligible for re-election for one successive term.

Article VIII

Powers

Left intact

Article IX

Annual Reports

Left intact

Article

Casual vacancies

Left intact

Article

Affiliation

Left intact

Article

Amendments

Left intact

Article

Winding-up

Left intact

New sections

Preamble

Mission and vision

5.2 Plenary Session Day Two, May 14, 2002

5.2.1 Report from Committee on Training Needs/Capacity Development/Workshops/Attachments

The presentation was made by the Chair of the Committee, from Zambia Parliament. Assignment was given to members from Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania and Botswana. However the Tanzania parliament did not make any contribution.

Proposed training courses

- **Managing Libraries and Document Centres**

Purpose: to Enable APLESA members to manage information more efficiently

Duration: 3 weeks

- **Managing Electronic Records**

Purpose: To train APLESA in electronic records management system.

Duration: 4 weeks

- **Archives and Records Management**

Purpose: To train APLESA Librarians in Archives and Records Management.

Duration: 3 weeks

- **Internet and Electronic Communications**

Purpose: Understand the concepts of Internet and E-mail.

Duration: 4 weeks

- **Database System Design and Management**

Purpose: develop corporate computer based databases

Duration: 4 weeks

- **Senior Management Development Programme**

Purpose: To enable senior librarians to learn management skills

Duration: 2 weeks

- **Attachment Programmes**

Purpose: to visit various Parliaments

Duration: 3 weeks

- **Participation in IFLA and other Professional Association Meetings**

Purpose: attendance and presentation of papers

Duration: Two weeks

The members raised several queries in respect of the proposed courses.

Facilitation and funding

Facilitation and funding of courses was a major bottleneck in the whole effort. Members noted that some of the courses might not be appropriate for all of them. So it was agreed that a questionnaire be sent out to solicit ideas from members in regard to areas which they felt they needed training in. In house-training as well as regional training institutes such as ESAMI were considered as ways in which the courses could be delivered to members.

Inclusion of a course for researchers

It was suggested that since researchers were to be co-opted as members of APLESA there should be a course tailored specifically for them. However the exact content would be left to them to decide.

Duration of Courses

The durations suggestion were said to be too long. The conventional time frame for such course would be between one to two weeks.

Structure of Course

Amendments were suggested in respect of the structure of the courses. The course on records management and communication should only cover records management since communication related issues were covered under other suggested courses.

The content of the course entitled Internet and Electronic Communication should include e-governance.

5.2.2 Report from the Committee on Communication/Information Sharing and Database

Presentation was made by Simon Engitu. The members of the Committee did not discuss the assignment so the contribution was made by one member, Uganda. Aspects that needed to be addressed:

Computer Literacy

This arose as a result of the fact that there was a communication problem, which was most probably, arose as a result of inadequate IT skills. He suggested that there was need for the members to obtain training in that field.

Website

The website needs to be constantly updated. Members were urged to give/provide information about their parliaments.

Database

He suggested that a database be set up. Various fields were suggested.

Comments from other members

The fields should include:

- Other special interest groups

5.2.3 Report from Committee on Proposals and Marketing

The Secretary read the presentation, which was sent via e-mail, on behalf of the chairperson who was unable to attend the Conference. The Committee members were unable to meet/discuss the assignment. Thus the report reflected the views of only one person. The committee could not come up with any concrete document because it required getting information from the other Committees. Proposals could not be drawn up without knowledge about what was required. The relevant Committees were also drawing up their reports and until they are ready the Committee could not start its work.

5.2.4 Library, Research and Information Services Department (LRIS)

Organization of the Library, Research and Information Services Department (LRIS) in Parliament of Uganda *by* Aloysius Makata, Director LRIS.

The Members of Parliament in Uganda are elected on the basis of individual merit. The parliament therefore does not consist of MPs elected on party basis. Originally the Parliament was based on the Westminster structure that pertains in the House of Commons. Currently however the structure is a mix of the House of Commons and the American Congress. The Parliament comprises of six other departments including:

- Budget Office
- Legislative Counsel
- Office of the Clerk

The idea to have a Budget office was adopted from the American congress. Through this office Parliament is able to obtain independent budget enquires. Legislative Counsel provides legislative drafting services to MPs who wish to table a Private Members Bill as well as effecting amendments made by the house to Bills that were tabled by the Executive.

The LRIS Department, which is headed by a Director, is divided into three sections viz:

- Library section
- Research Section
- Information Technology Section

Structure

It was borrowed from House of Commons. It differs slightly in that while each section has directors in the House of Commons, in Uganda each section is headed by a Head and then at the top is a Director.

Research Section

Carrying out independent research for use by Parliament. It is made up of an interdisciplinary group of 12 professionals who give analysis in their own specialty. The section is further divided into four subsections namely:

- Science and Environment
- Social Services
- Legal and Political
- Financial and Economic

Bills first go to the Committee Research Offices, which, may be requested to assist in getting information from ministries. Analysis is made as it is and the researcher tries to avoid any bias in their work. Individual members can also use the research section.

Library Section

It collects and keeps information. There is a digital cataloguing system in place. Research reports are available in paper form and shall soon be available on an intranet. The service does not only act as a depository it also offers proactive services. It announces conferences, programs and also works with the researchers.

Information Technology Section

Currently has 4 members of staff. There are about 150 computers on the network. The staff is responsible for handling technical issues as well as maintenance of the machines.

The Director has to be knowledgeable in the three areas but not necessarily skilled since each section is headed by persons who are specialists in the area.

5.3 Plenary Session Day Three, May 15, 2002

On Monday there had been a general discussion on the constitution. Several amendments were suggested.

Preamble

It requires an element of legislative drafting. Need to look at Constitutions of similar associations.

Name

Section 1

The name of the Organization shall be the Association of Parliamentary Libraries of Eastern and Southern Africa (APLESA) (hereinafter referred to as the Association)

Mission and Vision

Based on other Constitutions of similar associations, it is not in order to include a mission and vision in the Constitution.

Article II

Objectives

Section 1

To promote co-operation and resource sharing among members of Parliaments (APLESA)

Section 2

To promote communication and networking among APLESA.

Section 3

To promote capacity building among members.

Section 4

To promote best services in service delivery.

Secretariat

Section 1

There shall be a Secretariat for the Association located in a member country agreed upon by the members

Section 2

The secretariat shall be comprised of the Treasurer and the Office Administrator

Article III

Membership

Section 1

The membership of the Association shall comprise of APLESA member Parliaments.

Section 2

Associate membership shall be open to other Parliaments.

Section 3

Observer status may be accorded to libraries of Legislatures on the invitation of the APLESA Executive.

Article IV

Meetings

Section 1

Meetings shall be attended by professional librarians. Parliamentary researchers may attend.

Section 2

Such meetings shall be held annually

Section 3

A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of representation from at least, two-thirds of the Member Parliaments

Article V

Funding

Section 1

Members shall be a membership fee of US\$100 and annual subscription of US\$50.

Section 2

Associate Members shall pay a membership fee of US\$150.

Section 3

Participants shall pay a registration fee at annual meetings as may be determined by the Executive Committee.

Section 4

The Executive Committees shall solicit the required funding for APLESA activities from respective Parliaments, donor agencies, etc.

Article VI

Voting

Section 1

Voting at annual meetings shall be by member participants and each member Parliament in good standing shall be entitled to cast one vote on any procedural question or question

affecting the operation of the structure of the Association regardless of the number of delegates present from that Parliament.

Good standing requires to be defined

Article VII

Structure of Association

Section 1

There shall be an Executive Committee elected by the Members of the Association. It shall comprise of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and two other Members.

Section 2

The term of office for the Executive Committee shall be for two years. A member shall be eligible for re-election for only one successive term.

Successive term to be interpreted

Section 3

The Executive Committee may establish working committees as and when the need arises.

Section 4

In the circumstance where a position of an executive member falls vacant between Annual Conferences, it may be filled by a postal ballot of members to be conducted by the remaining members of the Executive Committee within 30 days.

Article VIII

Powers

Section 1

The Chair, on the authorization of the Executive, shall issue statements, enter into negotiations on behalf of the Association

Section 2

Article IX

Annual Reports

Section 1

The Chair shall present an annual report of the Association's activities at the annual General Meeting.

Section 2

In the event that the Executive Committee raises any funds from any source, the Chairperson shall give a financial report on how these funds have been used.

Article X

Affiliation

Section 1

The Association may co-operate with or establish relationships with such other groups, public or private as may seem most likely to advance the purpose of the Association.

Article XI

Amendments

Section 1

The association, at any meeting may amend its Constitution by two-thirds majority vote of all members present and voting provided that a notice of such amendments be filed with the Executive Committee, at least, seven days prior to the meetings.

Article XII

Winding up

Interpretation Section

In this Constitution, unless the context otherwise requires

“*Associate Member*” refers to librarians from other Parliaments

“*Association*” means APLESA

“*Executive Committee*” shall be the governing body of APLESA

“In Good Standing” means a Member Parliament that pays its dues in full

“Parliamentary Researcher” means a researcher fully employed by Parliament

“Successive term” means two consecutive terms of office in the same capacity

“Working Committee” means a committee appointed by the Executive Committee.

Secretariat shall be in Uganda

5.4 Plenary Session Day Four, May 17, 2002

5.4.1 Elections

The APLESA elections were held and the following were elected as the New APLESA Executive: -

1. Florence Butale - APLESA chairperson (Botswana)
2. Grace Mwakio - APLESA Vice Chairperson (Kenya)
3. Innocent Rugambwa – Treasurer (Uganda)
4. Simon J. Engitu - APLESA Secretary (Uganda)
5. T.C Mtine - Member (Zambia)

5.4.2 Next APLESA Conference venue

Kenya announced that they were ready to host the 9th APLESA Conference next year 2003. Members, however, put Swaziland on standby should there be any complications on the side of Kenya.

6.0 CLOSING CEREMONY

The Director of Library, Research and Information Services Department (LRIS) of Uganda, Mr. Aloysius Makata, officially closed the conference. He congratulated the new Executive Committee upon being elected and called upon all members of APLESA to work hard to make the Association a success.