



# IFLA Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments



## Co-operation and Networking for parliament Libraries and Research services: The case of APLESA

Presented by Esther Kamau

President of APLESA /Chief librarian / Deputy  
Director , Parliament of Kenya

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# THE ASSOCIATION OF PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIES OF EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (APLESA)

Who or what is APLESA?

A regional professional association of parliamentary Librarians.

## BACK GROUND

The idea for establishment of APLESA was hatched in 1986 and was informed by the dialogue among parliamentary libraries in Africa on the need for effective information exchange programmes and cooperation among them in the region.

In 1990, the then Chief Librarian of the Parliament of Zimbabwe, Mr. Gurure, shared the idea with his colleagues in Africa asking for their opinion about a regional association.

Aplesa was founded in Harare, Zimbabwe, in October 1994 when participants of 11 countries of the region met.

## Member Countries-

The countries were Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

- They were later on joined by Parliaments of Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, Seychelles and Rwanda.
- The Regional parliaments of East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) and most recently the Pan African Parliament(PAP) are also members
- The first APLESA Conference was held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania in July 1995
- Subsequently annual conferences were held every year until 2003 till 2009 from when we have consistently held our annual conferences

# Membership

Membership is opened to Parliaments within

- i. the Southern Africa Development Cooperation (SADC) region,
- ii. the East African Community (EAC) including those in the Horn of Africa i.e Djibouti, and Eritrea, among others.
- iii. The islands of Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Reunion are also eligible for membership to APLESA.
- iv. Regional parliaments such as East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) and the Pa African Parliament (PAP)

# Vision and Mission of APLESA

The strategic vision of the APLESA is guided by its Vision and Mission.

## Vision

‘to be an Association of excellence, advancing inter-parliamentary library co-operation within Eastern and Southern Africa region’

## Mission

‘to enable Parliaments, through networking and information resource sharing, to make informed decisions.’

# Aplesa objectives to:-

- (i) Promote co-operation and resource sharing among member Parliaments.
- (ii) Promote communication and networking among APLESA members.
- (iii) Promote capacity building among members.
- (iv) Promote best practices in service delivery.

Apart from the APLESA own conferences held in member countries, the association also hold its meetings at the sidelines of the annual meetings of IFLA and leading international global body representing the interests of library and information services and their users.



# Activities / achievements of the APLESA

Since its inception, APLESA has been engaged in a number of activities which include:-

- i. Information sharing through APLESA website and APLESA Newsletter.
- ii. Organizing of APLESA Conferences and Meetings.
- iii. Participation in IFLA Conferences.
- iv. Training of Library and Research staff on Access to Information, e.g., work undertaken with assistance by the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) in Uganda and Kenya.
- v. We look forward to development and adoption of a federated library management system which can enable creation of a union catalogue for APLESA region among others.



# The hosting of the APLESA conferences

- The APLESA conferences are series of annual conferences held to provide a dialogue and exchange of ideas and share experiences in good practices in parliamentary information management and way forward for APLESA members.
- The week-long gatherings are usually marked by presentations (papers and country reports), interactive sessions and discussions aimed at addressing issues and challenges related to provision of legislative information, library and research services.
- So far the association has held 16 successful annual conferences hosted by the following countries, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Kenya, Malawi among others.

# Benefits of networking

- Promotes establishment of strong parliamentary libraries and research services by getting assistance and support from those that are at higher levels of development.
- Increases the effectiveness of legislatures through adequate information support (timely, accurate, reliable, non-partisan)
- Provides an opportunity for learning and adapting the new information technologies used by other parliamentary libraries.
- Promotes the values of openness, transparency and democratic participation by encouraging institutions to ensure open access to parliamentary information to its citizens.

# Benefits of networking

- It is an opportunity to share knowledge and experiences, as well as promote standards and best practices to develop professional competencies.
  - Providing enlarged capacities and expanded knowledge and skills
- Provides a forum for identifying and discussing emerging issues, common challenges and concerns.
- Each partner brings in a new perspective which help to clarify and expand services to the various user-categories of the parliamentary community.

## Benefits....

- Gives the library greater publicity and appreciation of the role, mandate and contribution of parliamentary libraries.
- Networking places the parliamentary libraries at the centre of the legislative process and deepens its contribution to democracy
- Though networking, members get energized through new challenges, new ideas and new opportunities through participation with others.
- Parliamentary librarians may not single handedly deal with all the emerging issues . They need to engage in collaborative efforts with other librarians..

## Benefits continued

- Through collaboration and networking librarians can create new knowledge and skills,
  - come up with new information products and services and achieve a transformation
- When Libraries cooperate and network, they not only share information and make adjustments in their services - they share resources to help each other do a better job.

# Challenges

- Lack of funding for Association activities
- Lack of commitment from some member parliaments towards APLESA programmes.
- Poor communication among members of the association.

## Looking into the Future

- Develop a strategic plan for APLESA 2016-2020
- Attracting support from development partners such as UNDESA and others for funding of APLESA projects.



# Current Aplesa Executive

The new **APLESA Executive Committee** elected is as follows;

- Esther Kamau President Kenya
- Gerald Cambiete Vice President Angola
- Peter Moatswi Sec. General Botswana
- Innocent Rugambwa Treasurer Uganda
- Chama Mfula Member Zambia
- Juanita Vul Member South Africa
- Isaiah Munyoro Member Zimbabwe
- Simon Engitu Immediate former President (Ex official) Uganda

# Aplesa Namibia 2013



# Aplesa 2015 official opening by the Speaker N/A





# APLESA KENYA 2015 Group photo



# Delegates follow proceedings in Apleso Kenya 2015





# Delegates follow proceedings in Aplesa Kenya 2015





Thank You!