



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

## The 27<sup>th</sup> Conference

of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC)

03 to 06 January 2024

Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort, Kampala



*Welcome to the Pearl of Africa*



The Speaker of Parliament, Ms Anita Among poses for a photo with the Heads of Missions of Commonwealth member countries ahead of the forthcoming 27th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth. PHOTO| PARLIAMENT PRESS UNIT

# Uganda gears up for Commonwealth speakers' conference

1969  
CSPOC WAS  
STARTED

The conference aims to maintain, foster, and encourage impartiality and fairness of Speakers and Presiding Officers of Parliaments of the Commonwealth countries as well as to promote knowledge and understanding of Parliamentary democracy, **Monitor reporter** writes.

Uganda is fully prepared to host the 27th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC). This was revealed by the Speaker of Parliament Anita Annet Among on Friday, December 1, 2023.

Confirmed as the host at the previous CSPOC in Canberra, Australia, the conference will take place at the Speke Resort Munyonyo from January 3rd to 6th, 2024, and will be officially opened by President Yoweri Museveni.

Uganda will lead discussions on the topic, 'Diverse and Inclusive Parliament, Youth and Gender Sensitivity,' alongside the Parliament of Pakistan.

Other topics on the agenda include the environment, climate change, security measures for parliamentarians and parliaments, health and wellbeing support in parliaments, and the role of speakers and presiding officers.

The conference will be hosted by the leadership of the 11th Parliament led by the Speaker, Ms Among, Deputy Speaker Mr Thomas Tayebwa.

#### About CSPOC

Created in 1969, CSPOC was started as an initiative of the then Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada, Mr Lucien Lamoureux. The fraternity shoulders, among other mandates, the responsibility of bringing together speak-

ers and presiding officers of the national parliaments of sovereign states of nations of the Commonwealth.

The CSPOC has since its formation served as an independent group and has no formal affiliation with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Commonwealth Secretariat, or the Commonwealth Heads of Government.

The Chairperson, Coordination Committee, Mr Abdu Katuntu, said CSPOC consists of 22 bicameral Parliaments and 30 unicameral parliaments.

"CSPOC membership consists of 74 Speakers and Presiding Officers of National Parliaments from 52 Common-

wealth Countries up to 180 delegates attend a typical conference, including the Clerks and Secretaries-General as observers," he said.

Mr Katuntu added that the global fraternity "operates on a two-year cycle, holding a conference of the full membership every two years, usually early in January, and a meeting of the Standing Committee at the same time, the intervening year."

The CSPOC is steered by the Standing Committee for which the Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda serves as the current chairperson. This committee is composed of the chairperson, Vice Chairperson, immediate past Chairperson, and four other members, generally representatives of the four sub-regions of the Commonwealth.

These regions are Africa with a representation of three, Asia (one), Australia/New Zealand (One), British Isles and the Mediterranean (One), and Canada (one). Others are India (one), Southeast

#### CSPOC

#### Representations

The Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) is steered by the Standing Committee. It is composed of the chairperson, Vice Chairperson, immediate past Chairperson, and four other members, generally representatives of the four sub-regions of the Commonwealth. These regions are Africa with a representation of three, Asia (one), Australia/New Zealand (One), British Isles and the Mediterranean (One), and Canada (one). Others are India (one), Southeast Asia (one), the Caribbean, the Atlantic and the Americas (two), and the Pacific (two).

Asia (one), the Caribbean, the Atlantic and the Americas (two), and the Pacific (two).

The standing committee is mandated to, among other functions, propose dates, venue, and procedures of the next Conference propose subjects for discussion at the next Conference, and prepare a draft agenda.

The said committee is also meant to propose subjects for discussion at the next conference and to prepare a draft agenda.

It also reviews the standing rules and proposes draft amendments to the standing rules for the consideration of the conference as the occasion may arise; and considers all matters concerning the organisation and conduct of the conference, including financial arrangements.

The Chairperson of the standing committee, by being the Speaker of the Parliament of the host nation, this case Uganda, Ms Among will be expected to preside at each session of the Conference. Ms Among will open, suspend, and close the sitting; and Propose the date, time, and items for discussion at the next sitting.

In her statement about the finer details and plans geared towards the successful conference, Speaker Among disclosed that the CSPOC largely aims at "maintaining, fostering and encouraging impartiality and fairness on the part of the speakers and presiding officers of Parliament.

She also added that the high-level conference will "promote knowledge and understanding of parliamentary democracy in its various forms" and "develop Parliamentary institutions."



# Why it benefits Uganda to host

With up to 74 Speakers and Presiding Officers of National Parliaments expected from 52 Commonwealth countries, the organisers are eager to reap hugely from the conference as the year opens. **Monitor reporter** writes.

**F**rom January 3rd to 6th, 2024, Uganda will be hosting top ranks in the legislation space during the 27th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC), an event that will be steered by the 11th Parliament.

The conference will usher in a string of opportunities and dividends for Uganda as the host both directly and indirectly.

The Chairperson Coordination Committee, Mr Abdu Katuntu, said all measures have been put in place to enable Ugandans to reap hugely from the conference.

The organisers through the various sub-committees conducted thorough onsite visits and spot checks on destinations where high-profile delegates will visit while in Uganda.

These sub-committees have deployed their best effort to ensure that every major sector gains from the conference.

“Every sector has a committee of professionals and experienced persons. Good enough, we have organised similar conferences before such as CHOGM,” Mr Katuntu said.

#### Strengthening diplomatic ties

The conference hosts Speaker Anita Among and her Deputy Mr Thomas Tayebwa are confident that the four-day event will not only strengthen Uganda's international ties with various global powers but also open newer gates for the country to tap into.

Ms Among is confident that the government will together with other Members of Parliament exploit the chances cased in the conference.

“This conference is especially important in deepening the Parliamentary diplomacy and augmenting Uganda's role in the Commonwealth Parliamentary collaboration,” Ms Among said.

The conveners also hope to learn and replicate practices expected to be pivotal in the administration and smooth running of the legislative assembly as it dispenses its roles chiefly aimed at developing the country.

The Parliament of Uganda will foster cooperation with other parliaments which will create alliances and, in the end, strengthen diplomatic ties with other countries.

#### Business opportunities

With up to 74 Speakers and Presiding Officers of National Parliaments expected from 52 Commonwealth countries, the organisers are eager to reap hugely from the conference as the year opens.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### Business opportunities

Several money-making opportunities are present. Ugandans in the lodging industry will heavily reap as the delegates will cater for their accommodation expenses, with the majority of the payments in major facilities already made through online bookings. Uganda will reap from the long-awaited meeting, hotel proprietors, tour operators plus persons in related sectors are lined up to gain dividends from the incoming delegates from across the globe. To fully exploit the opportunities within the tourism sector, the government through the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities has throughout the preparations process set up a direct working team to avail instant and spot details about tourism and all related aspects to incoming delegates.



Ms Among meets with High Commissioners ahead of the COSPC that will be held in January 2024. PHOTOS| PARLIAMENT PRESS UNIT



“There was a special committee on tourism and trade, we are fully represented by the Uganda Tourism Board, so we will be able to avail whatever is necessary that this country has to offer as a good tourism destination. So, we have all this prepared for the visitors,”

#### Mr Martin Mugarra, Minister of State for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities.

Ms Among is hopeful that the incoming delegates will be accompanied by influential persons who will in the end have a trickle-down effect on Uganda as a whole.

“You will find that the accompanying persons are the business communities that are coming to get business opportunities in the country. So, they are bringing money into the country,” Ms Among added.

Ugandans in the lodging industry will heavily reap as the delegates will cater for their accommodation expenses, with the majority of the payments in major facilities already made through online bookings.

“This is not a conference where Parliament is going to be paying for accommodation for



#### Bugabula South Member of Parliament, Mr Maurice Kibalya

delegates,” Mr Katuntu stated adding “What we did was to provide them with the Hotels, and they have booked themselves.”

A large section of those lined up and already booked for space in Kampala are business gurus from Malaysia who are keen to tap into Uganda's wealth.

“We will be liaising with the Uganda Tourism Board and other agencies of government to see whether they can have bilateral meetings.”

#### Bolster tourism

Besides the aforementioned dividends that Uganda will reap from the long-awaited meeting, hotel proprietors, tour operators plus persons in related sectors are lined up to gain dividends from the incoming delegates from across the globe.

To fully exploit the opportunities within the tourism sector, the government through the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities has throughout the preparations process set up a direct working team to avail instant and spot details about tourism and all related aspects to incoming delegates.

The state minister for Tourism, Mr Martin

Mugarra confirmed the availability of this team which is expected to work directly with the excursions sub-committee chaired by the Bugabula South Member of Parliament (MP), Mr Maurice Kibalya.

“There was a special committee on tourism and trade, we are fully represented by the Uganda Tourism Board, so we will be able to avail whatever is necessary that this country has to offer as a good tourism destination. So, we have all this prepared for the visitors,” Mr Mugarra said.

Most of the itineraries of the incoming delegates and information from the various destinations to be visited show that the incoming delegates will visit various sites in the country.

The Parliament is confident that these will have both direct and indirect financial benefits to Ugandans employed in the tourism sectors.

There will be private visits to different attractions around Uganda and this will enhance the tourism potential and subsequently, increase income.

Organisers have also purposed to use the conference to expose, grow and market Ugandan



# conference



da's various cultural performing groups drawn from all regions of the country.

Unlike in the past when major performers of traditional dances were mostly booked from within the central region, a deliberate decision was taken to ensure that traditional performers were drawn from their respective cultural institutions in all regions of the country.

The Parliament will get ting dancing groups from all the regions of Uganda to help expose these upcountry groups to international meetings but also earn a little bit of income.

### Emblem of democracy, security

With the coming and successful hosting of the conference, Uganda is portrayed as a democratic state with accommodation to diverse and inclusive communities. This opens up the country to the world and attracts other players from the world's major decision-makers to entrust Uganda with hosting rights of pivotal and highly influential summits.

"I know there are many countries that would wish to handle this conference. But I think it is because of the lobbying capacity that for the first time we are hosting it in the country," the State Minister for Defense in charge of Veteran Affairs, Ms Huda Oleru said.

She added: "The members of Parliament are proud that they have managed to pull this conference. It shall be a historical event that CSPOC was hosted in Uganda."

Ms Oleru said that such top echelons meeting in Uganda signifies that Uganda is a key player in the space of democracy.

"This confirms the maturity of the democracy of this country. I don't think such a conference would be hosted in an undemocratic country," she said.

### CSPOC 2024

#### SUB-COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

- Mr Martin Ojara Mapenduzi/ Ms Prossy Akampurira - Accommodation
- Ms Esther Afoyochan/ Mr Felix Okot Ogong - Conference Management/ Conference Secretariat/ Documentation
- Mr Maurice Kibalya/ Ms Esther Afoyochan - Entertainment, Excursion and Tourism
- Ms Cecilia Ogwal/ Ms Lucy Akello - Gifts, Souvenirs, Spouses and Accompanying Persons
- Mr Moses Magogo/ Mr Andrew Ojok - ICT Support
- Mr Eric Musana/ Mr Dan Atwijukire - Media and Publicity
- Mr Charles Ayume - Medical and First Aid
- Mr Dicksons Kateshumbwa/ Ms Juliet Achayo - Protocol
- Ms Charity Bainababo/ Mr Tonny Awany - Security and Accreditation
- Mr Solomon Silwany - Transport
- Mr Henry Yoweri Waiswa - Deputy Clerk/ Head of Uganda CSPOC Secretariat

### NATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE



Ms Anita Among, Chairperson



Mr Thomas Tayebwa, Deputy Chairperson

### COORDINATION COMMITTEE



Mr Abdu Katuntu - Chairperson



Mr James Kaberuka, - Coordinator



Mr Mwine Mpaka - Coordinator



Mr Dicksons Kateshumbwa



Ms Esther Afoyochan



Mr Felix Okot Ogong



Mr Maurice Kibalya



Ms Cecilia Ogwal



Mr Dan Atwijukire



Mr Moses Magogo



Mr Andrew Ojok



Ms Prossy Akampurira



Mr Martin Ojara Mapenduzi



Mr Eric Musana



Ms Juliet Achayo





Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Mr Thomas Tayebwa (2nd left) attends the 26th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers (CSPOC) of the Commonwealth in Canberra, Australia in July 2023. PHOTOS| PARLIAMENT PRESS UNIT

# What will be discussed at CSPOC

52 COUNTRIES IN CSPOC

The standing committee approved the topics for discussion and they will include environment, climate change, and the role of parliament, security measures for parliamentarians and parliaments, **Monitor reporter** writes.

Ties between parliaments in the Commonwealth will be strengthened when speakers and presiding officers hold bilateral and multilateral meetings during the upcoming Speaker's and Presiding Officers Conference (CSPOC).

The Parliament of Uganda will foster cooperation with other parliaments which will create alliances and in the end strengthen diplomatic ties with those countries.

This high-level event comes with increased tourism hits, and its attendant dividends for the small, medium, and large-scale investors across the tourism value chain.

"With the delegates, accompanying persons, and other officials expected to grace the conference,

presents opportunities to create business and entrepreneurial linkages to cement trade relations with the visiting delegations," he said.

#### What will be discussed?

The issues to be discussed are those that are pertinent to the members of the CSPOC fraternity.

He said all cross-cutting issues will be divided into various sessions in major conference halls and in break-away rooms throughout the four days.

All the major topics to be delved into have been put into five major cluster topics as agreed upon and approved in the lead-up meeting held by members of the standing committee. Currently, the standing committee is chaired by the Speaker of Parliament Ms Anita Annet Among.

#### Topics of discussion

The conference will focus on topics such as:

- Environment, climate change and the role of Parliament;
- Diverse and inclusive parliaments (youth and gender sensitivity);
- Security measures for parliamentarians and Parliaments;
- Health and wellbeing support in Parliaments and the role of Speakers and Presiding Officers; and
- Building consensus

Speaker Among hopes lawmakers from the member states will dive deeply into ways of how Members of Parliament can harness the power within their reach to avert the persistently growing challenges of climate change.

"We have been discussing issues of the environment in the House and one of the topics that we want to discuss in the conference is environment, climate change, and the role of Parliament in the preservation and conservation of the environ-

ment," Ms Among said.

Top on the agenda also will be discussions on the diverse and Inclusive Parliaments with part of the focus placed on youth and gender sensitivity.

Mr Katuntu disclosed that this is an area where Uganda will be expected to take the lead.

Since the statement about the 27th CSPOC was tabled, several suggestions have been made regarding what to include in the discussions, especially around the idea of having inclusive and diverse Parliaments.

The State Minister for Gender in Charge of Disabilities Ms Hellen Asamo wants other Parliaments to borrow the example of Uganda's Parliament which has several categories of persons represented. These include Persons With Disabilities (PWDs), Youth MPs among others.

"This Parliament is doing very well on the issues of gender and youth as well as for People With Disabilities. How I wish we would bring that topic [during the CSPOC meeting] so that other Parliaments can take advantage of that and in the future, we might have a Parliament of disabled people to discuss other issues," Ms Asamo said.

Similar sentiments are carried by the Dokolo District Woman Member of Parliament Ms Cecilia Ogwal said "I would like that the management of the elderly should also be included."

Other topics to be discussed include health and well-being support in Parliaments and the role of speakers and presiding Officers; and a special session on *Building consensus for Parliamentary Business: The Role of Speakers and Presiding Officers*.



This Parliament is doing very well on the issues of gender and youth as well as for People With Disabilities. How I wish we would bring that topic [during the CSPOC meeting] so that other Parliaments can take advantage of that and in the future, we might have a Parliament of disabled people to discuss other issues,"

**Ms Hellen Asamo, State Minister for Gender in Charge of Disabilities.**

## SUB-COMMITTEE LEADERS



Ms Lucy Akello



Mr Charles Ayume



Ms Charity Bainababo



Mr Tonny Awany



Mr Solomon Silwany



Mr Henry Yoweri Waiswa

## MEMBERS OF CSPOC

### Countries

Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Botswana, Cameroon, Canada, Cyprus, Dominica, Fiji Islands, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kingdom of Eswatini, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, United Kingdom, Vanuatu, Zambia.