



Standing Committee of IFLA Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments

Minutes of meeting of 18 August 2007, Durban, South Africa

ANNEX 1

APLESA ANNUAL REPORT 2006/07

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It is the mandate of the Chairperson of APLESA under article IX and XI to issue reports for and on behalf of the Association. I am under instruction to do this noble cause in the absence of Madam Chairperson of APLESA Ms Grace Mwakio, who has diligently delegated this task to me.

Background

Association of Parliamentary Libraries of Eastern and Southern Africa (APLESA) was established in Zimbabwe in a meeting that took place between 11th and 13th October, 1994. It was formed with the aim 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 would support the function of parliaments of the region, thereby facilitating in strengthening democracy and good governance.

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 also partly the reason for which APLESA was formed and to date APLESA membership has reached 14 countries including; Malawi, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya, Namibia, Swaziland, and Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia.

Vision and Mission

These are the APLESA vision and mission respectively;

- The vision of APLESA is *“to be an Association of excellence, advancing inter-parliamentary library co-operation within Eastern and Southern Africa.”*
- APLESA exists *“to enable Parliaments, through networking and information resource sharing, to make informed decisions.”*

APLESA Strategic areas of Vision and Action

It was planned that in the five- year period ending 2005/06, the following would have been the APLESA strategic areas of focus:

- (i) Promote cooperation and resource sharing among member countries (APLESA)
- (ii) Review the constitution, develop and implement other operational mechanisms to attain the highest level of service delivery focusing on clients.
- (iii) Promote communication and networking among APLESA members.
- (iv) Establish an effective and efficient information delivery service for APLESA stakeholders.

- (v) Obtain support for APLESA.

Hence, out of the five areas above, we reviewed the APLESA Constitution, promoted inter-library cooperation and resource sharing among APLESA members and discussed the issue of communication, networking and assistance for the Association. We also carried out some training workshops and held annual conferences among others.

APLESA Strategic Methodology

As a consortium of individual parliamentary libraries in the region, APLESA's intention was to endeavour to take advantage of existing membership. Hence, the functioning of the Association was intended to be run by the involvement of members at committee levels. This means engagement and commitment to the ideals and activities of the Association. The plan to re-enforce performance of APLESA adopted the following methodology;

- (i) Refine the constitution and the structure of APLESA.
- (ii) Organise conferences, workshops, seminars and attachments.
- (iii) Produce policy guidelines
- (iv) Market APLESA
- (v) Design and develop proposals for strengthening APLESA
- (vi) Conduct training needs analysis
- (vii) Develop database on website
- (viii) Improve communication

Committees for plan implementation

Four committees were formed to finalize the Strategic Implementation Plan and steer the implementation of the plan.

They are as follows:

| Committees and their mandates | Members |
|---|---|
| No.1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refining constitution • Producing policy guidelines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nelson Masawi (Zimbabwe) – Chairperson • Renata Shilubana (South Africa) • Innocent Rugambwa (Uganda) |
| No.2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Needs Analysis • Capacity Development • Organising workshops/ Attachments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Augustine Lubozhya (Zambia) – Chairperson • Grace Mwakio (Kenya) • Lucas Amanyisye (Tanzania) • Florence Butale (Botswana) |
| No.3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing and developing proposals • Marketing APLESA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duncan Mboma (Malawi)-Chairperson • Miguel Pedro (Angola) • T.D. Raliile (Lesotho) |
| No.4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Communication/ Information Sharing • Developing database/ Website | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gottfriedt Tsuseb (Namibia) – Chairperson • S.J. Engitu (Uganda) • Julio A.D. da Silva (Mozambique) • Esther Nxumalo (Swaziland) |

1. Review of the APLESA Performance

A number of activities were carried out to achieve the planned targets using the committees created. Here below are some of the activities carried out;

- APLESA Constitution was re-defined in 2002. A section to provide for fund raising through payment of fees was introduced. It was also amended to include the Research staff of parliament as members of APLESA.
- A website (www.aplesa.org) for the Association was designed. The Communication, Information Sharing & Database Committee did a commendable job to collect information from various that formed the site and because of funding problems, it has gone offline due to funding problems when APLESA took over. Funding was initially obtained from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through the Parliamentary Centre, Canada which hosted it up to March 31, 2002.
- Training needs analyses were also done by some individual member parliaments in which skills on communication among members clearly became evident that were lacking among members. To address this, issues on lack of communication was always been discussed in APLESA Conferences. This later led to exchange of parliamentary documents, members exchanged documents between themselves as gesture towards information sharing.
- Within the period in which the current APLESA Executive has been in charge, membership registered two more Members; Ethiopia and Mozambique. More other members were intending to join had it not been for the problems in funding APLESA meetings that we currently face when we could not fellowship. It therefore increased its membership now 14 in all. Since its inception in 1994, APLESA has held its annual conferences as indicated below;

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Zimbabwe | 1994 (launching) |
| Tanzania | 1995 |
| South Africa | 1996 |
| Malawi | 1997 |
| Zambia | 1998 |
| Namibia | 1999 |
| Lesotho | 2000 |
| Botswana | 2001 |
| Uganda | 2002 |
| Kenya | 2003 |
| Angola or Swaziland?!! | 2004 (It has not happened since then) |

Within the same period, the following resolutions to guide in the achievement of the APLESA Objectives have been passed;

- a) To rigorously market APLESA by coming up with a directory of each member library which would be placed on the APLESA Web site before the year 2000 conference and to promote networking within APLESA member countries.
- b) To facilitate capacity building through attachments and study visits and to promote exchange arrangements between member countries.
- c) To ensure that all the knowledge produced in the country is made accessible to parliamentarians, *each Parliamentary Library should have a legal deposit status.*
- d) To follow- up all the strategies that had been set up to implement the resolutions of APLESA conference 2000, namely;
 - To organize the Strategic Planning Workshop
 - Organize attachments for members
 - To produce APLESA Newsletter

- To monitor and evaluate APLESA activities
 - To organize APLESA Executive Consultative meetings
 - e) To identify aspects of the constitution that require amendments together with members, for consideration in the APLESA Conference 2002
 - f) APLESA members to come up with the respective Collection Development Policies before the next APLESA conference
 - g) APLESA Conference proceedings to be made ready and distributed to members before next conference.
 - h) Setting-up of APLESA Secretariat in Kampala, Uganda
 - i) APLESA Executive members to be facilitated to meet at the Conference host country two days before the date of the Conference
- The association has also held two training workshops on Strategic Planning; one in Namibia in 1999 funded by the House of Commons, UK through the British Department for International Development (DfID) and the Finnish Parliament held in Windhoek, and the other in Uganda in July/ August 2001 in Kampala, Uganda funded by CIDA through Parliamentary Centre, Canada held in Kampala in July/ August 2001. However, individual parliaments have met the bigger part of the assistance to APLESA. They have been funding the APLESA Annual Conferences by hosting or facilitating members to attend them on a yearly basis for which we are very grateful to all.
 - From the Membership fees, the Association collected USD 1350 during the APLESA 2003 Conference in Mombasa, Kenya
 - The last time in 2003 when Elections for a new APLESA Executive after the resignation of Florence Butale of Botswana who was then Chairperson was held, the full list of the executive then came to be as follows;

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Ms. Grace Mwakio (Kenya): | Chairperson |
| Mr. Sebastiao Muzumbi (Angola): | Vice Chairperson |
| Mr. Simon J. Engitu (Uganda) | Secretary |
| Mr. Innocent Rugambwa (Uganda): | Treasurer |
| Ms. Tembi Mtine (Zambia) | Member |

The new entrant Mr. Sebastiao Muzumbi, Director of Documentation and Information Services of Angola National Assembly was elected vice chairman.

Despite a number of challenges it faces, it should be mentioned here that APLESA has tried to meet a few of its objectives.

Challenges facing APLESA:

- a) The most serious challenge faced by APLESA currently is its inability to convene its annual conference where from many issues affecting the Association could be addressed. The history of this started in 1999/2000 when Kenya's bid to host the APLESA conference was discussed in the conference. Subsequently in Lesotho, Botswana and Kampala, Uganda it continued to be an issue. Lesotho had come in to host when Kenya failed to do so in 2000, then Uganda, having realized that Swaziland was unable to host came in to bail it out in 2002, then eventually Kenya confirmed that they would host in 2003. In the years that followed, the tendency had become infectious where those who had been scheduled to host have defaulted. For example,

at the same venue, Members had confirmed that Angola hosts the 10th APLESA Conference in 2004 through Mr. Sebastiao Muzumbi the Director, Documentation and Information Services of Angola National Assembly who had just been elected the Vice Chair of APLESA, Angola still failed to host the conference, expecting Swaziland which had been expected to host the conference earlier to do so. Swaziland was on standby should Angola fail. Each of them expected the other to host.

- b) There was also reluctance by the selected committees to do their work mandated to them. Whenever information is sought from the APLESA Secretariat, it was always a struggle to get reports from them. The Committees were there in name, but were not active.
- c) Another major challenge facing APLESA is the issue of the term of office for the current APLESA Executive that ended in 2004, the same year when either Angola or Swaziland was to host the activities of the Association according to the schedule. Follow-up communications were made and the subsequent e-mails exchanged between the APLESA Secretariat and the respective Librarians. Letters were then written to the Clerks of the Swaziland and Angola Parliaments to host the 10th APLESA meeting, but nothing substantial has been realised. Since members had been lined to host, nobody came up to volunteer to host APLESA meeting, thereby in a way causing constitutional crisis in the Association, and yet new office bearers must be elected before the end of the two- year term to ensure its continuity.
- d) Arising from the plenary discussions and resolutions during the course of the APLESA conference in Mombasa Kenya in 2003, some issues were agreed upon, but did not materialize- hence opportunity missed. For example; The training assistance that the Finnish parliament promised did not materialise due to the way we members have decided to handle the affairs of the Association as indicated by their own words as follows,

“Unfortunately, we in the Parliament Library in Finland are not able to work on with this project at this point. The best I can do for you is to point out an alternative solution. The following training opportunity may serve your needs related to information technology skills. Belgian Government is sponsoring a scientific and technological training programme for libraries in Brussels, October – December, 2001...”

The follow-ups were not made immediately the pledge was made in July 1999. It was until when a new APLESA Executive took office in 2000 when they enquired about it a year and half later in January 2001. We lost that opportunity.

In addition, funding was secured for APLESA from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through the Parliamentary Centre, Canada. Unfortunately, when a communication was sent to members through their e-mails and through the APLESA mailing list, members either took quite long to send nominations or did not send it. Later, Ted Dreger, who was coordinating assistance to APLESA gave regrets for the continuation of this project.

- e) Though a total collection from membership fees was US\$ 1350, currently in the custody of the Treasurer, APLESA account could not be opened because the amount was below the minimum requirement for the opening of a Foreign Bank Account.
- f) Due to the break down of communication as a major challenge affecting APLESA, many resolutions have not been implemented as scheduled. It is also as a result of members attitudes in the way we look at the cooperation within APLESA. Some

members do not take APLESA quite seriously hence a reason why there is reluctance to give feedback and responses to enquiries

- g) The other challenges like the rejuvenation of APLESA Committees are hoped to be tackled when APLESA meeting takes place.

Way Forward

I hereby urge members present here today to really assist in finding the solutions to the most pressing problems currently faced by APLESA. Top among them are the following;

1. Convening an annual meeting to consider election of the new APLESA Executive. This means that those who scheduled to host the annual meeting should reconsider their commitment and invite members so that this item is disposed off. Angola and Swaziland are particularly being urged to come up to re- commit themselves.
2. Committees should commence work on their mandates and advise the executive what to do. If information is being sought from you, please kindly send it rather than just keeping quiet. It would help improve communication.