

## **Speech delivered by Hon. Ambassador Liberata Mulamula at the meeting of the Parliamentarians under ICGLR at Speke Resort Munyonyo. Kampala 12th Dec 2011**

I feel greatly honoured and privileged to get this opportunity to address the 2nd Plenary Session of the ICGLR Forum of Parliaments. I wish to thank the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda for hosting and supporting the organization of this 2nd Plenary Session. Our sincere appreciation is extended to our true friend and Partner, AWEPA for its continued invaluable support to the ICGLR Mechanism and to the Great lakes Region as a whole.

I wish to thank most sincerely, His Excellency Luc Dhhoore for his commitment and dedication to supporting this important Forum in the implementation of the ICGLR Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region. Indeed, the establishment of the Regional Forum of Parliaments is one of the greater achievements of the ICGLR in fostering dialogue and enhancing co-operation among member states and its Parliaments.

It is also important to recall that the establishment of Regional Forum of Parliaments is in line with the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region which expresses the commitment of the countries of the Great Lakes Region” to build together a space of lasting peace and security for States and Peoples based on dialogue, respect for the values, principles and standards of democracy and good governance and rule of law, the strengthening of leadership capacities, the transparency of electoral processes, equitable participation widened to all citizens, the strengthening of representative institutions and Civil Society.

To concretize this commitment, the ICGLR Member States through their Leaders resolved to promote the participation of all the social components of the population in all the decision-making processes. It therefore envisaged the creation of a number of Regional fora, namely the Forum of Parliaments, the Forum of Women, the Forum of Civil Society, the Multifunctional Forum of Youth and the Forum against corruption. With the support and cooperation by the Member States and partners, the Secretariat has been able to put in place the Regional Women Forum, the Youth Forum, the Forum of Parliaments and recently the Civil Society Forum.

We are convinced that in the implementation of its mandate, the Forum of Parliaments will strengthen the regional parliamentary framework of dialogue, exchange of experience and improve the parliamentary capacities to legislate and ensure the respect of the rule of law. The Forum will also promote a dynamic framework for consultation between governments and the governed and so encourage political participation of all representatives of the society.

I would like therefore to congratulate the Forum of Parliaments for the progress that it has so far made. We were quite gratified by the fact that immediately after the signing of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region on 15th December 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya, the Parliaments of the ICGLR Member States were the first Institutions to meet in order to support the ratification and implementation of the Pact.

I wish to recall here with appreciation and without going into details that with the support of the AWEPA and the Member States, the Parliaments of the ICGLR Member States met in 2007 in Kinshasa, DRC (the meeting I addressed soon after I was appointed to Office). This was followed by meeting held in 2008 in Bujumbura, Burundi in which among others, the Members of Parliaments discussed their role in implementation of the Pact and contributing to the peace process in Burundi as they set a foundation for the establishment of the Regional Forum of Parliaments.

Subsequently, and again with the support of AWEPA and Member States, the first Plenary Session of the ICGLR Parliaments was held in December 2008 in Kigali, Rwanda. The session signed the Accord setting up the Regional Forum of Parliaments. The accord was signed by the Speakers of Parliaments from ICGLR Member States in a spirit of cooperation which was an important milestone towards strengthening the role of Parliamentary Institutions in the Region. In Kigali, it was unanimously decided that the Headquarters of the Forum of Parliaments should be located in Kinshasa DRC and that the first Secretary General of the Forum should come from Rwanda. The Kigali Session also set up different Commissions, as provided in the Accord, and chosen Member States to chair them.

Having accomplished all these achievements, I am confident that this Second Plenary Session of the Forum is to emerge with positive outcome, as is a continuation of the work previously well done. Looking at the Programme of the Session, I am encouraged by the fact that you have taken a particular interest by looking at important Regional initiatives which are now being implemented in the framework of ICGLR including the fight against illegal exploitation of natural resources and Sexual Gender Based Violence. I am therefore convinced that the outcome of your deliberations would help the Secretariat to effectively facilitate the implementation of these initiatives as well as its mandate for peace, stability and development in the Great Lakes Region.

Honourable Speakers; Invited Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am further pleased to inform you that the organ of the Secretariat mandated to work with the Forum and other Forums such as Women Forum, Youth Forum and Civil Society Forum is now operational. This is the Levy Mwanawasa Regional Centre for the promotion of Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights and Civic Education based in Lusaka, Zambia. The Lusaka Centre, which has just developed its strategic plan, is poised to become our **“Think Tank”** in the Region, undertaking applied and policy oriented research and facilitating capacity building of social and political institutions in the Member States. I urge the Parliament Forum to take advantage of this Centre of innovation to facilitate the promotion of the Forum’s agenda for the Region. The Executive Director of the Centre and his Staff Team are at this Summit meeting and I hope your Officials will touch base with them to discuss the way forward.

Lastly but no least, I would like to take this opportunity to inform Honourable Members that we are in the preparations of the forthcoming ICGLR Ordinary Summit to be held on 15th -16th December 2011 here in Kampala, at Munyonyo Resort Hotel. The Summit is preceded by the meetings of the National Coordinators and Ministers of foreign Affairs on 11th – 12th and 13th -14th December 2011 respectively.

During the forthcoming Summit, there will be a Special on Sexual and Gender Based Violence in which the Heads of State and Government will endorse and support the Regional Initiative on the fight against SGBV. We shall be briefing you more in details on this initiative in the course of your meeting. I therefore hope that the recommendations emanating from this Session would be valuable contribution to the 4th ICGLR Summit now underway here in Kampala at Munyonyo Resort.

On behalf of the Conference Secretariat I wish to extend our invitation to the Honourable Members to attend the opening session of this important Summit and deliver your statement/declaration of support at the Special Session of the Summit on SGBV with focus on “Prevention, End of Impunity and Protection of Victims of SGBV.”

With this few remarks, let me wish you Honourable Members fruitful deliberations and thanking you for your kind attention.