

**REPORT OF THE GPH AFRICA CHAPTER TO THE GPH MEETING IN WASHINGTON  
5<sup>TH</sup> -6<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2009 BY HON MARGARET ZZIWA; GPH VICEPRESIDENT:**

**INTRODUCTION:**

This report mainly covers the period April 2009 to date when the current executive was elected in Nairobi during the 22 UN GC summit.

The report mainly considers the activities of the board taking cognoscente of the strong recommendations made by the GPH to the 22<sup>nd</sup> UN GC.

Considering the time span covered there is one major activity of GPH Africa the GPH conference and board which was successfully held in Kampala –Uganda on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2009 at the Parliament Conference Hall.

At the time of election of the new executive, it was appreciated that governments in Africa have said much about their obligation towards the habitat agenda which includes the question of human settlement and provision of planned urbanized cities. It was however appreciated that these words have not been matched with policy or programmes to address the situations which in many African countries is appalling, in other words many governments have not walked the talk. It was also appreciated that since several governments took the stand on globalization and the adherent policies of the Brettonwoods institutions (IMF, World Bank, etc) which included liberalization and privatization of the economies, the housing sector has drawn very little budgets from governments yet also the planning function has not been enforced in many cities and urban centres leading to the problem of cities characterized by slums, congestion and un planned settlements.

Against this back drop, the GPH Africa realized that it has a crucial role to play towards campaigning for quick interventions in the situation and advocacy for governments to bring forth legislations to support descent housing as envisaged under the habitat agenda. These commitments were properly captured in the recommendations to the general council and that formed the basis for the first activities of GPH Africa.

## ACTIVITIES.

1. The first activity was to send forth the recommendations of GPH to the 22<sup>nd</sup> UN GC in form of a report the respective parliaments through with particular emphasis on the commitments to be undertaken by parliaments. This report were circulated though the normal addresses of parliaments and called on them to take up these recommendations particularly as they started the budgeting and appropriation process in the forth coming financial year.
2. The second activity was to plan for the GPH African chapter. With the acknowledgment that the Africa Chapter needed strengthening, and with the advice of the GPH coordinator at the UN habitat it was resolved that a GPH board meeting be held in Kampala to map out the plan of activities and to study the GPH constitution and the GPH Strategic plan. It was further agreed to hold a conference for Parliamentarians along with the GPH board to enable parliamentarians appreciate the importance of the Habitat agenda and their role in its implementation.

The GPH executive committee members approached the Speaker of parliament of Uganda who graciously agreed to host both events. With the help of parliamentary staff the Conference and GPH board meeting took place in Kampala –Uganda on the 20<sup>th</sup> August 2009. Under the chair ship of the GPH Africa President Hon Margaret Zziwa, the conference was officially opened by the Speaker of Parliament of Uganda Hon Sekandi, and was graced by the Hon Minister of State Lands, Housing in charge of Housing, Hon Werikhe.

The meeting was attended by over 68 participants who included parliamentarians, Local government officials, civil society and the media. Situational papers were presented on the status of Cities and urban areas in Africa and the challenges faced by governments on the rapid population growth and rapid urbanization. Also the theme for this years' World habitat day was discussed and the necessary steps required to be employed to address the challenges. Also the theme for the 22<sup>nd</sup> UN GC was addressed looking critically on the challenges of the financial global crisis and the challenges of climatic change on Africa situation. These were presented by

the commissioner of urban development in Uganda Mr.Mabala and the program director UNDP in Uganda Mr. Wegulo.

The role of Parliamentarians in promotion of the Habitat agenda particularly in support of better human settlement and better planning was presented Hon Tubwita. Participants included member of GPH from Uganda, Kenya, EALA, and DRC, and committee members of the committee of infrastructure concerned with Housing.

From the presentations and discussions, recommendations were made which were later adopted for parliaments to work on in their respective Parliaments. The full report and the recommendations are enclosed on this report.

The Conference was followed by the GPH board meeting to adopt the recommendations and to plan the next activities for the GPH Africa.

It was acknowledged that a plan of activities needs to be drawn and partners to support and fund these activities to be identified. However because several members of the board were not able to attend, it was resolved that we continue to contact each other through the normal channels to work out the future plans for GPH.

### **Challenges:**

Because GPH has not yet identified sources of funding for GPH activities, the identified activities faced a setback including affecting the participation in the GPH conference. Considering that some of the items require meetings but also required funding so items like Air tickets, accommodation, and conference venues are still a challenge to meet.

GPH Africa chapter needs to identify sources of funding for her programmes.

The linkages between UN habitat and parliaments is still not strong making it difficult to craft out effective checks on governments.

The UN programmes and activities are also not properly disseminated to Parliaments which make the partnership of their implementation very weak.

**Future prospects:**

GPH Africa chapter is in the process of working out its program of action which will include sensitization of parliamentarians on habitat agenda and the MDGs call on the housing sector.

An inventory on the parliaments which have the GPH Chapter will be launched and support process to those parliaments without the chapter to establish one will be embarked on in the later part of the year.

The process of identifying funders for the various activities will be embarked on starting with the organizations which work with Parliaments like AWEPA and Inter parliamentary Union (IPU). Already an effort was been made to AWEPA Secretary General who promised future corporation.

**Conclusion:**

GPH has a broad agenda to fulfil considering that the necessary legislations and policies are still scanty to support better human settlement. The effort towards sensitizing parliamentarians on the need by governments to provide good and orderly living to its citizens is still required. This was one of the objectives of the GPH Conference in Kampala.

Special thanks go Parliament of Uganda for the venue and facilitation of this Conference and to the resource people who presented papers at no pay. The GPH president and the coordinator are appreciated for the backup support. The GPH President and GPH Alternate president were instrumental in organizing this conference and Board. The GPH members especially from Kenya and EALA are appreciated for supporting themselves to the conference.