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MALAWI NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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**REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE 11TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIES IN
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (APLESA).**

APRIL 12th - 16th, 2010

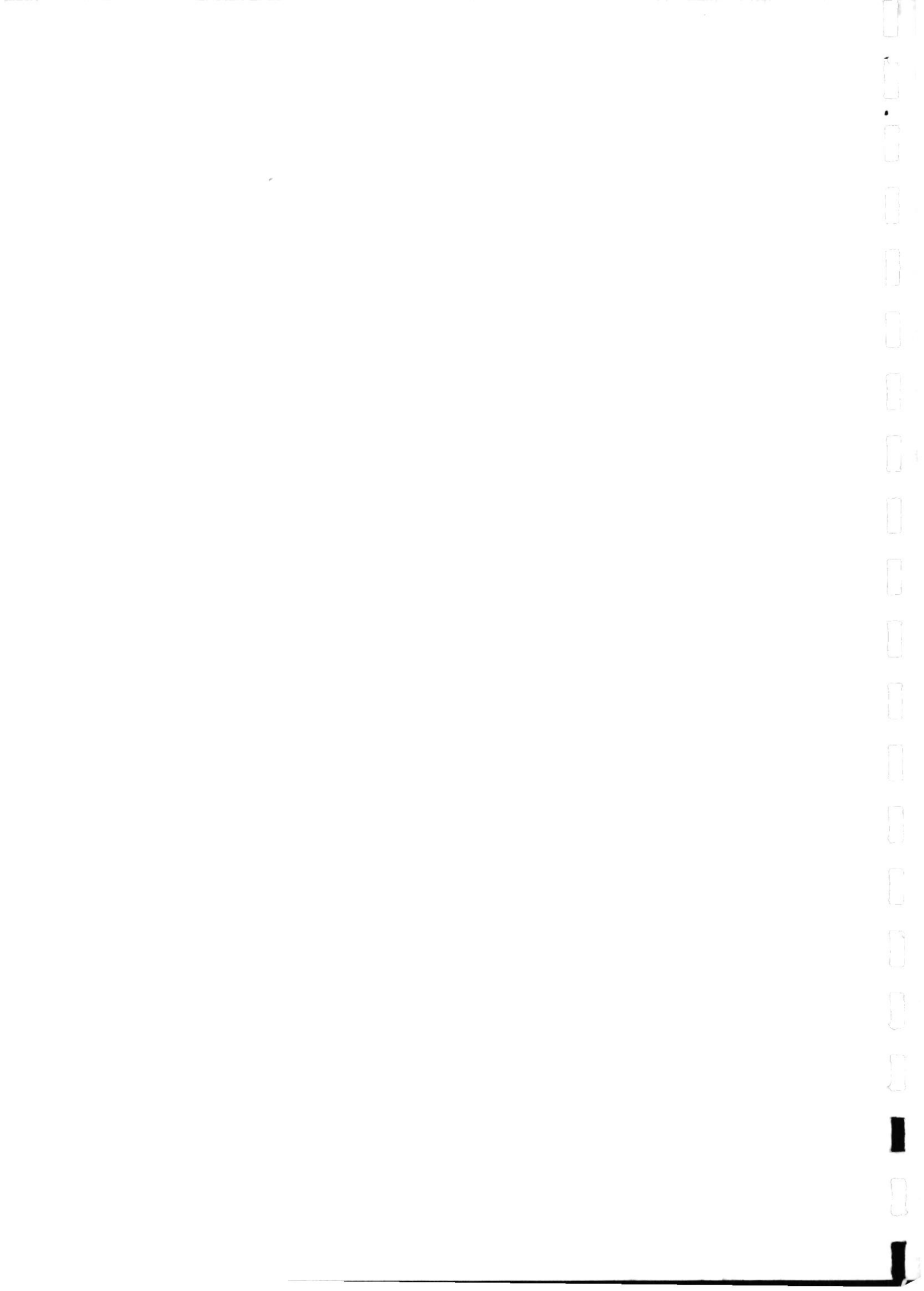
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MALAWI NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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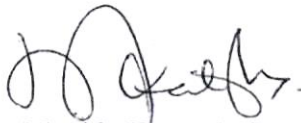
PREFACE

Information plays a crucial role in the development of any nation. Parliamentarians today are confronted with the responsibility of informing themselves quickly and effectively concerning a wide range of highly complex and technical issues in order to make informed decisions that are a lifeline of a nation.

The Association of Parliamentary Libraries of Eastern and Southern Africa (APLESA) plays an indispensable role in promoting good practices of parliamentary information and resource management through networking to share ideas and experiences.

It is from this background that the Malawi Parliament felt obliged that despite having hosted APLESA in June, 1997, it is also proud to have hosted the 11th APLESA Annual Conference from 12th to 16th April, 2010 at Protea Ryalls Hotel in Blantyre, Malawi. This report is a reflection of the proceedings and resolutions of that meeting.

I wish to thank the APLESA member parliaments for placing their trust and confidence in the Malawi Parliament to host this important Conference and for the overwhelming participation. May I also encourage Parliaments in the region to continue strengthening APLESA by supporting their library staff to attend APLESA Conferences consistently.



Matilda Katopola (Mrs.)

CLERK OF PARLIAMENT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The 11th Annual Conference of the Association of Parliamentary Libraries in Eastern and Southern Africa (APLESA) was hosted by the Malawi National Assembly from the 12th to 16th of April 2010. The conference was held at Ryalls Hotel and drew participants from Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, Mozambique, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe and the host, Malawi.

The Department is very grateful to the Management of the Malawi National Assembly for affording the Department an opportunity to host such an important conference under the theme "Innovative Initiatives in Library and Research Services for Parliaments in the 21st Century." This report provides a summary of the proceedings and resolutions during the 11th APLESA Annual Conference.

1.1 About APLESA

APLESA is a grouping of Parliamentary Libraries in the sub-region that aims to promote professional networking and resource sharing among member parliaments.

The conference offered participants an opportunity to exchange ideas and share experiences in parliamentary information management and offer a way forward for APLESA members. Activities carried out during the annual conference included paper presentations; training on Koha, Bungeni, Proactive Librarianship, Africa Parliamentary knowledge Network (APKN); Resolutions; Meeting of the APLESA Executive, and Excursions.

2.0 OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 11TH ANNUAL APLESA CONFERENCE

2.1 Overview of APLESA by the APLESA Chairperson, Mr. Simon Engitu

The Chairperson of APLESA said he felt honoured by the presence of the Speaker and the Clerk of Parliament of the Malawi National Assembly for presiding over the official opening of the 11th Annual Conference of APLESA. The Chairperson thanked the organizers for making the conference a reality.

Mr. Engitu gave a brief overview of APLESA from 1986 to date. The Chairperson emphasized that APLESA was formulated to act as a forum for professional networking and resource sharing amongst parliamentary libraries in Eastern and Southern Africa. He addressed challenges that APLESA faces and recommendations that have been made so far. In his speech, he commended Malawi and Uganda for managing to hold the APLESA conferences twice, saying this is an indication that these two countries regard information as a resource for development.

In his conclusion, the Chairperson stated that parliaments need to move towards good practices of information management as well as market library services to the Speaker and other important stakeholders. He finally introduced the Executive members to the participants.

2.2. Welcoming Remarks by the Clerk of Parliament of the Malawi National Assembly;

The Clerk of Parliament thanked the Speaker for graciously coming to the official opening of the 11th Annual Conference of APLESA amid his tight schedules. The Clerk gave a word of welcome to the foreign delegates by making reference to the *"Warm Heart of Africa"*. The Clerk of Parliament also recognised the presence of the members of Public Appointments Committee who are mandated under Standing Order 162: Sub Section (e) to oversee the activities of the Library.

2.3. Official Opening of the Annual Conference by the Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Henry Chimunthu Banda, MP.

The 11th Annual Conference of the Association of Parliamentary Libraries in Eastern and Southern Africa (APLESA) was hosted by the Malawi National Assembly, in Blantyre, at Protea Ryalls Hotel from 12th to 16th April, 2010 and was officially opened by the Speaker of the Malawi National Assembly, Rt. Hon. Henry Chimunthu Banda, MP.

The Speaker, in his speech, stipulated that National Assemblies need to come up with innovative initiatives in order to meet the global technology changes in the delivery of information. The Rt. Honourable Speaker further disclosed that the Malawi National Assembly is undergoing a process of institutional restructuring and capacity building and that the new Parliament will have a modern library. He also made particular focus on taking the parliament to the people through outreach services, information dissemination and through the easy flow of information from parliament to people and vice versa.

2.4. Vote of Thanks by the APLESA Vice Chairperson

On behalf of the Executive members and APLESA member countries, the Vice Chairperson thanked the Speaker, the Clerk of Parliament and the organisers for making the conference a success. She further gave thanks to development partners such as APKN and INASP for their support in improving information services in Parliaments of Eastern and Southern Africa.

3.0. PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

3.1 Innovative Initiatives in Library and Research Services for Parliaments in the 21st Century, a Presentation by Prof. J. Utah.

Prof. J. Utah presented a paper entitled, "Innovative Initiatives in Library and Research Services for Parliaments in the 21st Century." He pointed out some of the principles of parliamentary libraries including power sharing between parliament, the judiciary and the executive. He pointed out the need for MPs to have easy access to information if they are to avoid making wrong, costly and sometimes dangerous decisions for a whole nation if not provided with adequate, reliable and timely information. He emphasized that with correct and timely information MPs make correct analysis of issues and therefore make useful and fruitful contributions to debates.

The Professor insisted on the need to build local collections, establish networks, set up standards and be able to undertake research which can contribute to literature and knowledge.

3.1.1. Discussions

- i. Parliaments need to develop innovative ideas based on information needs of Parliamentarians;
- ii. Need to collect and localize library services;
- iii. Need to link up with different organisations such as the National Statistical Offices;
- iv. Need for more advocacy to get more funding from management;
- v. Establish links with partners;
- vi. Need for proactive librarianship in order to meet the information needs of the clients;
- vii. Though libraries can develop innovative initiatives, there is low usage of services by Members of Parliament and therefore there is a need to conduct research in order to know why parliamentarians do not use library services;
- viii. Participants realised the need to communicate with MPs through committees because of their smaller groupings;
- ix. Make Parliamentary libraries more attractive;
- x. Undertake marketing strategies that will ensure that parliamentary libraries are maximally utilised;
- xi. Delegates noted that there is a need to provide information to Members of Parliaments; however, he noted that there is need to undertake a research on the reading culture of Members of Parliament;

3.2. Presentation of Country Reports

Participants from countries in attendance (Botswana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Uganda, Zambia, Seychelles, Swaziland, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Malawi) presented their country reports. The reports included historical and the host background information of parliament libraries, services offered, challenges being faced, cooperation with other institutions, staffing levels at parliamentary libraries, number of computers available in the library, on-going projects, level of digitization, software in use, library budget and library usage by Members of Parliaments.

3.2.1. Discussions

Based on the presentations made by country representatives, it was noted that though some member parliaments are facing challenges, other members are developing innovative approaches to delivery of information services. The Malawi Parliament was singled out to be undertaking good initiatives in developing library and information services using ICT. Delegates were impressed with the Malawi Digital Database as well as their plan in implementing the Malawi Parliament Portal. The following were challenges that were noted:

- i. Inadequate budget allocations;
- ii. Insufficient space;
- iii. Lack of adequate ICT skills for Librarians and Information managers;
- iv. Limited training opportunities for Librarians;
- v. Libraries not computerised;
- vi. Lack of reading culture/Low library usage by MPs;
- vii. Theft and vandalism of books;
- viii. Poor marketing strategies;

3.2.2 Suggested Solutions for APLESA Members

Participants provided various solutions on the challenges member parliaments were meeting. The following were suggested solutions based on the country reports;

- i. APLESA must come up with tangible decisions and a plan of action;
- ii. Parliament libraries must be carrying out research activities locally and corroboratively with APLESA

- member countries in order to contribute to their information resources;
- iii. There must be application of Information and Communication Technology in order to make sure that libraries are responsive to the information needs of parliamentarians;
 - iv. Member countries must assess their information services objectively and honestly develop effective strategies relevant to Parliament libraries in providing high quality information services;
 - v. There must be provision of information services tailored specifically to local information users;
 - vi. There must be a need to enforce the establishment of networks locally, regionally and internationally;
 - vii. There must be a need to instil a reading culture in our children;
 - viii. Libraries must make use of general information available around and then doing in-depth research based on their local users;
 - ix. Libraries must be reaching out to institutions that can provide relevant information to parliament libraries;
 - x. Libraries must be subscribing to online information resources;
 - xi. Librarians must find out ways to attract MPs so that they can make use of parliamentary libraries. However, Esther Kamau carried out an investigation on why MPs do not make use of information sources and found out that they do not have time and that the environment is not conducive enough;
 - xii. Use of research assistants who can coordinate with the library on the information needs of parliamentarians

3.3. Library Systems in Malawi with Focus on Library Networking, Resource Sharing and Co-Operation: A Presentation by Mr. G. Nyali, the National Librarian

The National Librarian began his presentation with an overview of Library systems in Malawi. He gave a brief history of libraries in Malawi. The presentation provided definitions of library networking, resource sharing and cooperation. He further gave an overview of previous attempts of networking and resource sharing in Malawi and later on explored the reasons for their failure. The presentation continued by stating the set conditions needed for the library to share resources. He stated that institutional libraries need to show commitment to the cause of such networks. The Librarian highlighted current successful networks such as

MALICO, Eldis, Malawi Fisheries Information Network and Inter-library Loan system. Finally, he provided the different challenges that such networks and sharing facilities meet. He concluded his presentation by stating that networking and resource sharing among libraries is important and therefore a need to benefit from them.

3.3.1. Discussions

- i. Participants emphasized the need to work together to achieve networking, resource sharing and cooperation. Participants further highlighted that such network are a good strategy for communicating information. However, such networks fail due to lack of information;
- ii. It is vital to make long term plans in which parliamentary libraries should change from providing country reports to providing progress reports and the participants emphasized the need to have bench marks to measure their progress based on resolutions made. There is need to set tasks that ought to be completed by member parliaments as they prepare for upcoming meetings;
- iii. APLESA members noted that there is lack of commitment towards networking. The delegates observed that there is a need to set resolutions and standards so that member parliaments ought to compare;
- iv. Standard systems should be used to promote union catalogues;
- v. APLESA members need to make bold decisions to ensure that there is a need to undertake pilot trials in order to check if member parliaments can work together using an integrated system;

3.4. Proactive Librarianship by Emma Farrow and Kristi Newman, INASP Representatives

The paper highlighted the importance of understanding user needs, keeping records of usage, statistics, website hints, statistical analysis, user surveys, interviews and focus groups. The presenter pointed out the importance of feedback which gives guidance to Librarians on potential new products, promoting existing ones and also cancelling existing ones. She made emphasis that users should understand the products that the library offers to ensure maximum utilisation of the resources. However, 'this can only be made a reality through good marketing strategies', she noted.

The paper suggested a shift from reactive to proactive Librarianship, provision of information at low cost with the use of the Internet and intranet, access to training, marketing of information services and reaching out to non-users.

The presenter also highlighted the importance of information literacy skills which involve sourcing, evaluating and applying information to specific situations. Through research and analysis, Librarians are able to gain value added skills.

3.4.1. Group Exercise

The presenter divided the participants into groups. The groups were expected to develop a strategy on how to reach out to users and non-users of Parliamentary Libraries. The following groups developed the following approaches to the exercise;

Uganda

- i. Target Audience: MPs, Committees, members of staff, academia, APLESA, APKN;
- ii. Benefits: Real time service;
- iii. Channels used: websites, e-mails, social networking services, displays, e-banks and regional networks.

Mozambique

- i. Target Audience: MPs, staff members and the public;
- ii. New Service: Introduction of a virtual library, e-books;
- iii. Benefits: Time saving, convenient services from your desktop.

Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland

- i. Target audience: MPs;
- ii. Benefits: Information alert to aid MPs in contributing to debates in order to make fruitful decisions;
- iii. Channels: E-mail, Pigeon holes, text messages, personal contact.

Zimbabwe, Zambia and Seychelles

- i. New service: Bibliographic service;
- ii. Target audience: MPs, Committees, researchers, staff members;
- iii. Benefits: Awareness of available resources;
- iv. New service: To title all materials, to have abstracts, URLs, Blogs;
- v. Channels: E-mails, website, notice boards and newsletters;

After the group presentations, Professor J. Utah implored the participants to use the proposed channels in a multi-faceted way in communicating to their clients in order to effectively deliver their information services.

Participants were asked on how they can undertake user education. Participants felt that user education can be conducted through the following means:-

- Library Guide (print / online);
- Induction for new parliamentarians or piggyback on existing programme;
- Library tours;
- Presentations;
- Newsletters (print/online);
- Training materials, for example, CD ROMs or DVDs
- Drop-in workshops;
- Online guides (in-house/resource provider);
- Online tutorials (in-house/resource provider);
- E-learning.

3.4.2. INASP support to Parliamentary libraries

Ms. Newman continued on the presentation of Proactive Librarianship. In her presentation, she made much focus on how INASP funding can support parliamentary libraries in undertaking Proactive Librarianship. She said that APLESA members can benefit from INASP funding to support for:-

- i. Training;
- ii. Networking and;
- iii. Research and advocacy.

3.4.3 How Parliamentary libraries can get support from INASP

- i. Apply for INASP funding to carry out training, networking and research activities;
- ii. Application forms available at www.inasp.info/eipm;

- iii. INASP can link up parliamentary libraries to experts in different fields;
- iv. Grants up to \$10,000 with a financial report required to be presented to INASP;
- v. INASP partner countries from APLESA include Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Mozambique;
- vi. INASP funders include: the British, Swedish and Norwegians.

3.5. Strengthening the Role of African Parliaments in fostering Democracy and Good Governance, Presentation by APKN Chief Technical Advisor, Mr. Flavio Zeni.

Mr. F. Zeni gave an overview of APKN project goals which, among others, include the provision of efficient support structures and services for the administration of parliaments and strengthening regional networking among African Parliaments.

The presenter gave an overview of APKN main areas of intervention such as capacity building activities and assisting National Parliaments in adopting common standards and software applications. The presenter disclosed that Parliaments have common technological problems but likewise have common solutions.

He went on to state that information services and software applications are more cost effective and sustainable if they are delivered to a regional or continental audience. He continued to look at the strategic gaps in terms of needs and technology. The presenter noted that there were gaps between global or continental needs but what was important is to look for locally focussed solutions which parliamentary libraries can harness.

To fill the gap, Mr. Zeni showcased participants the application of AKOMA NTOSO, Bungeni and APKN which aim at promoting the quality of information services whilst at the same time bridging the digital divide. He concluded his presentation on the use of APKN portal which aims at 'exploiting the synergies and benefits of the region or continent' to deliver high quality and sustainable services.

3.6. Federated Parliamentary Library System, a Training Session by Joyce Burkiwa

Mrs. J. Burkiwa gave a presentation on the Federated Parliamentary Library which is also known as the Parliamentary Integrated Library System. The Federated Library System is designed to support different parliament libraries to provide their users with access to information from other libraries.

The presenter made presentations on the application of KOHA library system with an aim to equip participants with transferable knowledge and skills in the use of automated library management systems. She provided the participants with definitions of library automation, the need of such automation, the basic modules and the interaction with the KOHA Open Public Access Catalogue interface. She further looked at the Federated Library system which is available on <http://www.apkn.koha.org>. She made emphasis that APLESA members ought to contribute databanks of their collections because in that way, it will assist Parliamentary Libraries to share information and resources. She however stated that the success of the Federated Library largely depended on the APLESA member countries to take an active role in sustaining it.

3.7. **Use of Bungeni - Legislative Documentation System, a Training Session by Mr. F. Zeni**

Mr. Zeni made a presentation on the use of Bungeni. Before his actual content, he made reference to several applications that can be used by parliamentary libraries that include D-space, Koha, Content Management Systems and Cyn-In. In his presentation on Bungeni, he provided a practical example on how to use the application to manage the life cycle of legislative documentation.

The presenter educated participants that they should regard paper as history in parliamentary libraries and that it is high time they embraced ICT services in their information service provision. However, he urged participants to localise the information services in ensuring that the services are available 24/7. Unfortunately, it was noted that most African countries have not yet started using Bungeni but there was an overwhelming positive feedback of the system from South American countries.

Participants were encouraged to make use of open source software in providing information services to MPs. The Presenter disclosed to the participants that the best way to approach their management is to come up with innovative services and later on mention the kind of technologies that might be required in providing such a service.

4.0. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE APLESA CONFERENCE REPORT OF 2009**

Based on the conference report of 2009, participants made the following decisions and deliberations:

- i. To host APLESA conference 2011 in Mozambique in May or early June, 2011
- ii. Mozambique Parliament to keep in touch with APLESA Secretariat;
- iii. Mozambique parliament to come up with the theme of the conference with

the help of APLESA Secretariat;

- iv. Mozambique Parliament to come up with the conference program;
- v. Mozambique Parliament to book venues in advance

5.0. CONFERENCE BIDDING FOR 2012 - 2015

a. 2012

- i. To give Namibia two months so that they can make consultations with their superiors.
- ii. If Namibia fails to host the conference in 2012, Tanzania is ready to do so.

b. 2013

- i. Botswana
- ii. Swaziland
- iii. Kenya

c. 2014

- i. Zambia
- ii. Seychelles
- iii. Zimbabwe

d. 2015

- i. Kenya
- ii. Swaziland
- iii. Uganda

6.0. APLESA RESOLUTIONS FOR 2010

Following the conference proceedings and deliberations, APLESA participants came up with five resolutions. Participants agreed that from next year, APLESA members must provide progress reports instead of country reports. Resolutions made include:

6.1 Capacity Building

Realising the need to strengthen capacity building of Parliamentary libraries within APLESA region, member countries to the 11th APLESA conference resolve that parliaments should institute formal training programmes for library personnel and further recommends that training plans of each parliament should be channelled through the Chairperson of the APLESA capacity building committee.

6.2 Networking

Realising the information needs of parliaments in the 21st Century and the fact that parliaments do not have adequate resources, APLESA shall strengthen regional and continental networks.

6.3 Support

In order to provide effective and efficient research and information services, APLESA shall encourage Parliaments to provide increased and focused support to Parliament libraries.

6.4 Management of Parliament Websites

In line with the guidelines issued by the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Global Centre for ICT on the management of parliamentary websites, APLESA recommends that parliamentary libraries take a leading role in the Content Management of parliament websites.

6.5 Cooperation between Research, Libraries and ICT Departments.

Recognising issues of convergence in delivering information services in the 21st Century, APLESA recommends that individual Parliaments embark upon strategies to synergise research and library services with ICTs supporting information service delivery.

7.0. CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Geoffrey Mwenyeheli from Malawi National Assembly gave the closing remarks on behalf of the Clerk of Parliament, Mrs. M.M. Katopola. He urged

APLESA member countries to seriously put into practice whatever has transpired during the conference. Finally he wished all the foreign delegates a safe journey back home.

8.0. FAREWELL DINNER HELD AT MOUNT SOCHE HOTEL

A farewell dinner was hosted in honour of the visiting delegates at Mount Soche Hotel. In line with the agreement made in Uganda to support hosting Libraries, the APLESA President made a presentation of \$950 to the Principal Clerk Assistant, Mr. J. Mwenyeheli, on behalf of the Clerk of Parliament, to assist the Malawi Parliament Library to procure a computer.

9.0. RECOMMENDATIONS

The conference has provided an opportunity to the department to learn a number of lessons and approaches as to the way member libraries in the region are delivering their information services. Based on the proceedings, the Malawi National Assembly Library recommends the following to Management for approval:

- 9.1 Based on the resolution that parliament libraries should take an active role in managing parliamentary websites, the library recommends to management that the library department should take an active role in managing the technical and content system of the parliament website;
- 9.2 It is recommended that the library should establish partnerships with regional and continental institutions that support legislative libraries in order to benefit from their support;
- 9.3 It is further recommended that management should consider to provide and strengthen capacity building by providing continuous training to members of staff and more particularly training on the application of ICT services in the functions of parliament;
- 9.4 It is recommended that the Parliament library should join the Federated Library System to enable it network resources with fellow member parliaments;

9.5 Lastly it is recommended that the Library department be given more support in terms of ICT resources in order for it to support the undertaking of the Malawi Parliament in this 21st century;

10.0. VOTE OF THANKS

The department of Library and Research once again would like to thank the Rt. Hon. Speaker, Henry Chimunthu Banda, Clerk of Parliament, Mrs. M.M. Katopola and management of the National Assembly for allowing and supporting the Library to host the conference. We also wish to thank Mr. Jeffrey Mwenyeheli for chairing the local organising committee successfully. We are also indebted to all members of staff who contributed to the success of the conference in one way or another. It is our hope that we will have the same spirit as we conduct future events.

Appendix I: Contact Details for Participants, Guest Speakers and Secretariat

11TH CONFERENCE: BLANTYRE, MALAWI 12TH - 16TH APRIL, 2010

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Appendix II: Conference Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

Participants were provided with a questionnaire to fill. 15 of the 17 participants filled the evaluation form and handed them over to the secretariat. The purpose of the data collection exercise was to provide the secretariat with a benchmark to measure the successes of the APLESA conference held from 12th to 16th April 2010.

2. Results Findings

The following results were obtained from delegates:

1. How was the reception at the Airport?

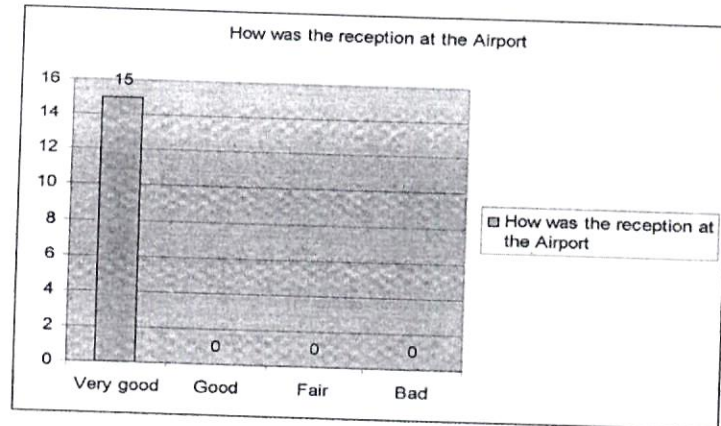


Figure 1: Level of satisfaction of the reception at the Airport

The above figure indicates that all delegates were satisfied with the reception at the Airport.

2. How would you rate the venue of the conference?

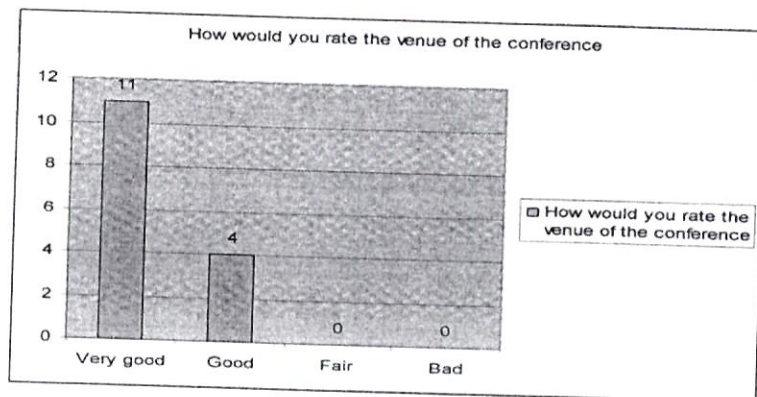


Figure 2: Satisfaction of the venue of the conference

Figure 2 shows that 11 delegates were very satisfied while only 4 were satisfied.

3. How would you rate the conference facilities?

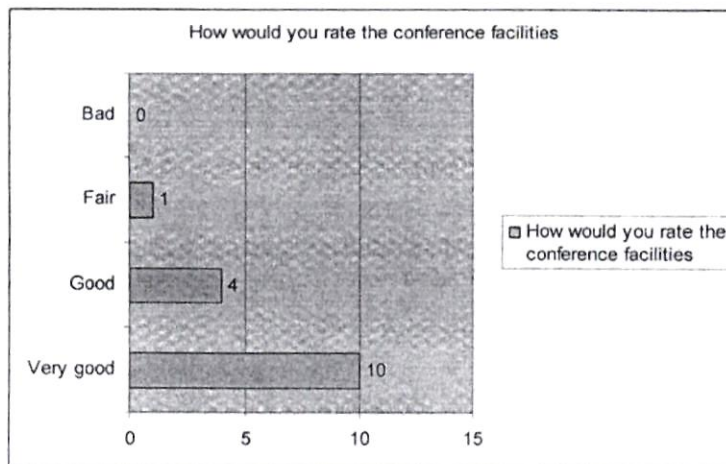


Figure 3: Rating of the conference facilities

The figure above shows that 10 delegates felt that the conference facilities were very good while 4 and 1 indicated that conference facilities were respectively good and fair.

4. How would you rate the Dinners the Excursion?

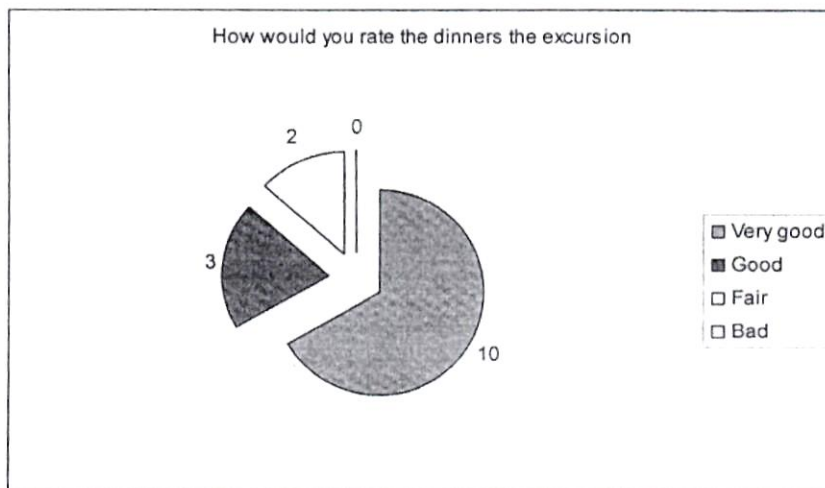


Figure 4: Rating of Dinner

The pie chart shows that 10 participants felt that the dinners were very good whilst 3 and 2 delegates rated them good and fair respectively.

5. Level of Satisfaction?

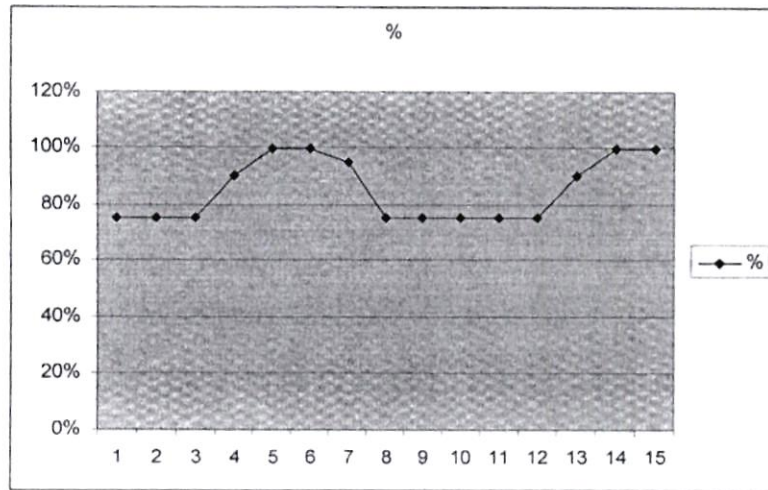


Figure 1: Level of Satisfaction

The line graph above shows that most participants were satisfied with the conference. The average satisfaction level stands at 85% of the responses.

6. What delegates liked and did not like of the host:

Table 1: Positive Factors

Points	Responses
Warm heart of Africa	3
Good Hospitality	3
Good public relations	2
Everything	1
Total	9

Table 2: Negative Factors

Points	Response
Lack of information	4
No list to choose hotel/motel/residence	2
Total	4

3. Discussion of findings

These results show that foreign delegates were mostly satisfied with the host's preparations. The results indicate that the organising committee, the Library and Research department and the secretariat had made adequate consultations on the annual conference. However, the delegates indicated that access to information was a challenge. Through observation, a number of participants queried of not being provided with a list of accommodations and other facilities. This information mainly might consist of information brochures that outline the different products and services that can be accessed in the host country. It is therefore important that information about various services and products such as Hotel accommodations be repackaged by the Library department to be provided to delegates in the subsequent conferences.

