

# AFRICAN MPs, RESEARCHERS CALL FOR ENHANCED EVIDENCE-USE IN PARLIAMENTS



REPRESENTATIVES FROM KENYA, RWANDA, TANZANIA, UGANDA, THE EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, SOUTH AFRICA, MALAWI, AND GHANA HAVE CALLED FOR IMPROVED RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE USE IN AFRICAN PARLIAMENTS.

**“If we’re going to make laws that will really touch the lives of people, they must be backed by evidence.”**

These were the words of Hon. Charles Sengabo, MP, Parliament of Rwanda, during the workshop, where the aim was to share experiences, to learn from one another and discuss good parliamentary practices that enhance the use of evidence in African parliaments.

MPs need to equip themselves with the right information to make the right decisions, said Hon. Olipa Myaba Chiluba, MP, Parliament of Malawi and APNODE member. “You need to have the evidence if you’re going to debate in parliament and if the best decisions are going to be made.” She said greater importance needed to be placed on evidence-based approaches in all African parliaments.

While the participants shared examples of evidence-based practices from their national parliaments, they also shared their challenges and barriers to improving evidence use and uptake.

**“From all the interactions we have had from different countries representing Africa, I’ve learnt that we are facing more-or-less the same situations.”**

- Hon. Dr Immaculate Sware Semesi, MP,  
Parliament of Tanzania

Hon. Semesi said the workshop had allowed for discussions on issues around how, when, and who collects evidence, how it should be synthesised and analysed. This workshop, she said, had provided new avenues for learning and given the participants the opportunity to “think outside the box on who you should involve in getting the right evidence and make decisions based on the evidence”.

The participants agreed that research-based evidence needed to be more common place in parliaments, but continued learning – including more regional peer learning – was necessary to ensure wide-reaching uptake of the practice.

**“It is clear that we cannot do our work effectively without evidence.”**

- Hon. Olipa Myaba Chiluba, MP, Parliament of Malawi  
and APNODE member

The participants agreed - unanimously - that workshops or platforms that bring regional parliaments and their staff and representatives together should be promoted so that local knowledge and best practices can be used across borders where the challenges or contexts may be similar.

## CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS



APNODE

Association of Parliamentarians of Northern and Southern Africa



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality  
and the Empowerment of Women



TWENDE MBELE

**AFIDEP**

African Institute for  
Development Policy  
Bridging Development Research,  
Policy and Practice

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AFRICAN PARLIAMENTS AND KEY FINDINGS ON EVIDENCE USE

## EVIDENCE IN PARLIAMENTS

- helps navigate the political context of decision-making
- should be informed by multiple perspectives eg. research studies, evaluation and departmental reports and what is seen on the ground can inform monitoring and oversight
- goes beyond information. It is tested and contested information
- is essential for parliaments to execute their mandate
- should come from evidence generators without barriers
- should apply a gender equality and equity lens that examines issues around social inclusion and power relations
- could be systematised by certificates of compliance
- should get the public to appreciate the role of parliaments
- should be freely available online to the public.

## PARLIAMENTS NEED

- sufficient time to engage on the evidence.
- to incorporate findings from external stakeholders; think tanks, CSOs, academia, business community, donors etc.
- to conduct primary investigations to help contribute to credible evidence
- information to be synthesised and packaged for use by MPs
- capacity for researchers to appropriately respond to MPs needs
- awareness by MPs to understand why evidence is important
- stronger systems with evidence generators and end users engaged in an increased flow of information
- more platforms for parliamentarians and staff to interact with each other.

## REGIONAL PEER LEARNING AMONG PARLIAMENTARIANS

- strengthens learning and sharing best practices.
- supports listening to different parts of society at national and regional levels, developing partnerships and networks for knowledge exchange that can contribute to improved evidence use among parliaments across the region.
- encourages more collaboration with civil society, regional associations, and networks to create a more enabling environment for mainstreaming equality issues.



**“Parliaments should strive to up our game in Africa in areas of oversight, legislation and representation. These kinds of platforms [workshops] provide the opportunity to learn and to share experiences. My hope – and also what I’ve seen – is that the participants will take these rich experiences and share them with their colleagues in the various parliaments.”**

*- Issifu Lampo, Senior Government Expert of the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs*

**“Attending this workshop, I’ve learnt from the Ugandan experience. They have a very good monitoring and evaluation system and they produce good reports which serve the house. That’s one of the things I am going to push for in my country.”**

*- Abraham Zackaria, Research Consultant, Parliament of Ghana*

**“There is never a time limit to studying or learning. As long as you are under the sun, every day is a new day and you have to learn things. As a parliamentarian you have a big role in making decisions, and in making those decisions you have to be well-informed; information comes from education. Our decisions impact our society; it’s my responsibility to ensure I am equipped with the best practices and the most critical information so that our impact is positive.”**

*- Hon. Dr Immaculate Sware Semesi, MP Parliament of Tanzania*

### VOICES REPRESENTED IN THIS COMMUNIQUE

Parliament of Tanzania | Parliament of Rwanda | Parliament of South Africa | Parliament of Kenya | Parliament of Malawi  
Parliament of Uganda | Parliament of Ghana | East African Legislative Assembly

African Centre For Parliamentary Affairs | African Institute For Development Policy | CLEAR-AA | Twende Mbele | UNWomen | APNODE

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