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REPORT OF THE KENYAN DELEGATION
TO THE NINTH TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE
OF THE COMMONWEALTH HANSARD

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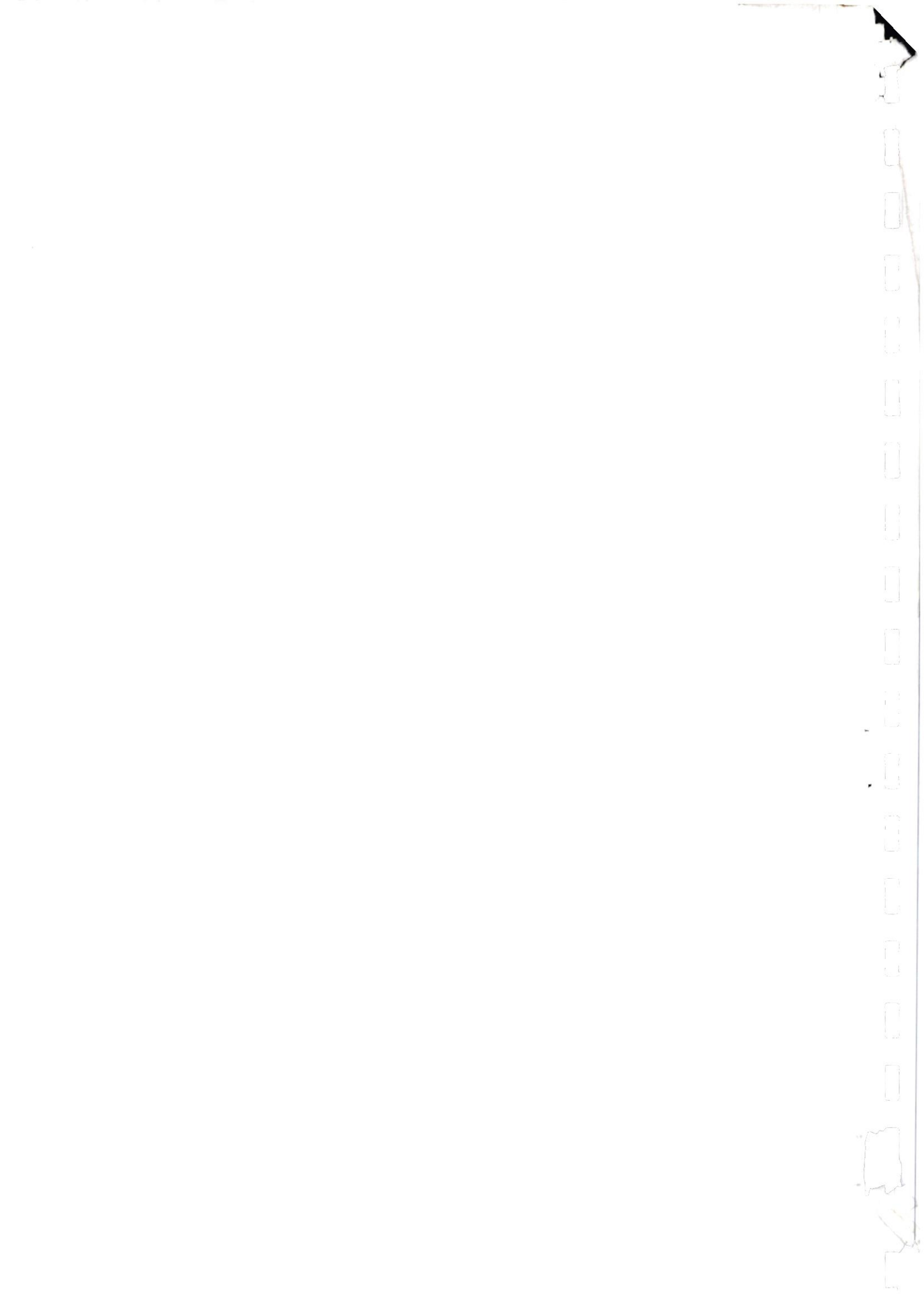
DATE: 27TH JULY TO 1ST AUGUST, 2008

PRESENTED TO:

THE CLERK OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
ON 17TH SEPTEMBER, 2008

BY:

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**REPORT OF THE KENYAN DELEGATION TO THE
NINTH TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF
COMMONWEALTH HANSARD EDITORS ASSOCIATION
HELD IN THE UNITED KINGDOM FROM 27TH JULY TO
1ST AUGUST 2008**

INTRODUCTION:

The Commonwealth Hansard Editors Association draws its members from around the Commonwealth, where the name HANSARD symbolizes accurate and impartial reporting of the proceedings of democratic Parliaments. Our association is committed, through a programme of advice and exchange of information, to ensuring that those parliaments receive reporting services of the highest possible standards. Membership to the Association is open to the Editor, or a senior staff member of each HANSARD in all Commonwealth parliaments, who must be a person involved in the actual reporting or editing of Parliamentary Debates.

A Deputy Editor or another staff person may substitute at a meeting of the Association, at the discretion of the Editor, and shall have full voting rights at any meeting where that person is a substitute.

The Association meets every three years at a place and time to be agreed upon at the Association's previous meeting.

The Chief Officer of the Association is referred to as the "President" and is usually assisted by a Chairperson, Secretary and other officers as required.

The Chairperson is usually the Editor in whose jurisdiction the current meeting of the Association is being held, while the "President" shall be that Editor in whose jurisdiction the immediately preceding meeting was held.

CHEA – THE ORIGIN:

In the year 1984, Westminster became the birthplace of the Commonwealth Hansard Editors Association – a small grouping of representatives from Parliamentary Hansards. Since that time, the Association has spread its wings with membership swelling to more than 50 HANSARDS, with

representatives and observers from across the entire Commonwealth and beyond.

The Association constitutes the greatest single body of expertise in parliamentary reporting in the world, and its aims and objectives remain as relevant today as they were in 1984 – to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information to enable the Hansard Department of each Commonwealth Parliament to serve its legislators as effectively and efficiently as possible.

As far as back as the early 1970s, the Editors of the Canadian Provincial and Ottawa Parliaments formed the Canadian Hansard Association. At about the same time, their Australian counterparts formed a similar organization. Both organizations proved to be immensely beneficial in raising standards of reporting and providing a forum for the exchange of the increasingly technical information that forms an essential part of an Editor's knowledge.

In 1981, several senior Editors began discussing, informally, the advantages that might flow from a wider grouping. In the autumn of 1983, the then Westminster Commons Editor, Ken Morgan, suggested the formation of an association of Commonwealth Hansard Editors. The Association was to provide the means of exchanging information and pooling experience about the rapidly-developing technological changes in reporting techniques. As all Editors operate training schemes of one sort or another, it was thought mutually beneficial to compare and co-ordinate thinking.

Each Association member is in a business beset by change-changing technology, changing methods and changing demands. In the space of just a few years, Editors in various parliaments have had to embrace multi-media, digital audio, voice recognition, internet and intranet publishing, and a variety of other technologies that were virtually unthought-of ten years ago, but which today are the tools that are used to service parliaments.

Above all, Hansard is the chronicle of history, and as Speaker Boothroyd said when opening our 1996 Westminster CHEA Conference:

“Behind change lies an unchangeable requirement on you all: the challenge and responsibility to maintain your traditional standards of accuracy and impartiality. This is crucial because accuracy and impartiality are the hallmarks of Hansard. Whatever changes come along, parliamentarians, all of us, look to you to hold fast to those guiding principles.”

THE 2008 WESTMINSTER CHEA CONFERENCE:

The Ninth Triennial Conference of the Commonwealth Hansard Editors Association was jointly hosted by the UK House of Lords and the House of Commons and the Scottish Parliament, in the beautiful cities of London and Edinburgh, from 27th July, to 1st August, 2008.

The theme of the Conference was ***“Hansard: Linking Parliament with the people”***. The participants had the opportunity to share information and views on the latest developments in making the verbatim reports of Commonwealth parliaments across the world available to the public in ever-more accessible ways.

In taking the words “Hansard” and “People” from the main theme, the participants discussed the ways in which they can develop themselves and their staff to provide their respective legislatures with the best possible service.

The Conference was officially opened by Sir Alan Haselhurst, the Chairman of Ways and Means and Senior Deputy Speaker in the House of Commons.

A presentation on the main theme of the Conference, ***“Hansard: Linking Parliament with the people”***, was made by Elizabeth Hallam-Smith, Director of Information Services, and Librarian of the House of Lords. Another presentation on ***“Hansard Centenary Volumes”*** was made by Ian Church, former Editor of House of Commons Hansard. The speech centered on the forthcoming Centenary celebrations of Hansard, 100 years of Hansard, which will be held in 2009. He talked about the history of the Hansard since 1909.

“The search for Hansard” was also a presentation made by Robert Brook, systems architect of the work that is being carried out to make the historical data from the Hansard more easily available to the public.

Fiona Booth, Chief Executive of the Hansard Society, made a presentation on the training programmes offered by the Hansard Society. These include research, political education and training, promotion of reforms, undergraduate and postgraduate studies, citizenship education, professional education, promotion of democracy and strengthening of parliament.

The Hansard Society was established in 1944 with support from Winston Churchill and Clement Attlee, who wanted to ensure that democracy would be safeguarded by being understood, debated and improved by parliamentarians and the public.

The Hansard Society is universally recognized as the independent and non-partisan authority on parliament and democracy. It has built an unparalleled reputation for producing innovative and influential research that seeks to make parliaments more transparent and accessible.

The Hansard Society is an independent, non-partisan education and research charity which, for over 60 years, has worked with decision-makers, opinion-formers, academics, policy experts and the media to encourage more effective parliamentary democracy and greater public involvement in politics.

The Society of Hansard undertakes research on a range of parliamentary and political issues. Their research is often accompanied by recommendations – many of which have resulted in change.

The Society's projects fall into four broad research categories:

- **Public Engagement:**

This centres on the public's political awareness and participation and monitoring the public's attitude to politics.

- **Parliamentary and Constitutional Reform:**

This involves looking at parliamentary scrutiny, government accountability, law-making process and identification of cases for change.

- **The Nature of Representation:**

Since democratic structures are shaped by the individuals who operate within them, the Hansard Society has an ongoing interest in the role of Members of Parliament. The study looks into the experiences of newly elected Members and it provides an interesting insight into the background of members, including what they hope to achieve and their day-to-day operations.

The study also looks into the role of women in politics and assesses the impact that women have had to date in parliament and makes recommendations to support the election of larger numbers of women in future years.

- **Democratic Innovations:**

The Hansard Society observes that effective parliaments make the greatest contribution to vibrant representative democracies. Parliaments must evolve over time, as must public opportunities for engagement with them. The Society is renowned for its proven track record in navigating the difficult terrain of democratic innovations.

In 2003, it published the first evaluation of political blogs and, in 2006, it ran the first pilot to assess how mobile phones could be used to support parliamentary committee inquiries.

In 2007, the Hansard Society created "*Our parliament for the Future*" initiative. This initiative in turn created an exciting "Incubator Group" of private and public sector organizations to anticipate the forms of technology being used by the Westminster Parliament over the next ten years. This is another example of research designed to provoke debate and encourage practical development work.

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT – EDINBURGH

The second and final phase of the Conference was held at the Scottish Parliament from 31st July to 1st August 2008. The official opening was conducted by the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, Alex Fergusson. The Presiding Officer welcomed the delegates and explained how the Scottish Parliament carries out its work. He talked about the Committee System and the law-making process in the Scottish Parliament.

He also talked about the history and architecture of the Scottish Parliament Buildings.

A presentation on Public Petitions was made by Fergus Cochrane, Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee. He talked about the Scottish Parliament e-petitions programme. He explained that the Public Petitions Committee considers petitions that have been submitted to the Scottish Parliament and may decide to refer them to other committees for further consideration.

He went on to say that petitions are submitted by individuals and groups who want to raise an issue. The public petition system is a key part of the Scottish Parliament's commitment to openness and accessibility. All committees in the Scottish Parliament have a responsibility to consider and report on any petitions referred to them by the Public Petitions Committee.

Petitions can have positive outcomes that may lead to change or inform debate. For example they can:

- Lead to changes in law
- Be considered as part of a wider inquiry
- Initiate parliamentary debates
- Prompt action from the Scottish Government or another public body
- Inform the scrutiny of legislation
- Result in changes to regulations and guidance.

Since its establishment, the Scottish Parliament has received over 1,000 petitions.

In addition to presentations from various resource persons, the Conference participants also conducted formal CHEA business. The delegates held a Café-style debate on "***Hansard-linking Parliament with the People***". There were contributions by representatives from various CHEA Regions. These include, CHEA (Africa Region) CHEA (Asia Region), CHEA (Australian Region) CHEA (Canadian Region) and the newly created (Caribbean Region). The next CHEA Conference will be held in 2011 and will be jointly hosted by branches in the newly created CHEA (Caribbean Region). The next CHEA (Africa Region) Conference will be hosted by the Parliament of Uganda in 2009.

During the last day of the Conference, Regional meetings were held and after the meetings, delegates held a plenary session during which time they were able to share ideas and innovations.

The delegates held a session on "*Hansard and the future*" – which included a Scene-setting speech by Roy Cross, Director of British Council, Scotland.

At the end of the Session, it became clear that the official Report provides a record for posterity. It offers a day-to-day account of parliamentary proceedings, reflecting attitudes to the significant issues of the day and the changing values and views of society. In short, the Official Report will help future generations to paint a picture of how we live today.

CONCLUSION

Since the formation of the Commonwealth Hansard Editors Association, the Parliament of Kenya has never failed to send a representative/delegation to any of the CHEA Conferences that have been held in various Commonwealth Parliaments. These conferences have exposed editors in the Hansard Department to what happens in other parliaments; the problems faced by editors and reporters in other parliaments in producing the Official Report; what works well and why, modernization of Hansard production systems, facilitation in terms of better working conditions and team building.

Through these conferences, we have realized that we are producing the Official Report (HANSARD) for people who are democratically active; people with interest in politics and the political processes in our country.

We also realize that, through the Official Report, we are able to inform people about our own parliament and its work and that we are helping to enhance public understanding of the work of parliament.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We must record our deep appreciation and profound gratitude for the assistance given to the Hansard Department, over the years, by the Office of the Clerk of the National Assembly and, by extension, the Parliamentary Service Commission. The Office of the Clerk of National Assembly and Parliamentary Service Commission have facilitated attachments, to foreign parliaments, for individuals and teams from the Hansard Department. This has helped to equip officers with the necessary knowledge and skills to

enable them face the future, because the future belongs to those who prepare for it.

We strongly feel that we may never be able to do enough for our parliament to match what it has already given to us or what it may give to us in future.

Many thanks to the various Departments in the Kenya National Assembly for playing their crucial roles to facilitate our travel to the United Kingdom and back to Kenya.



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