

# African Parliamentarians for Evaluation



Good programme evaluation is essential for progress in public health.

In support of the global Parliamentarians for Evaluation campaign, African Parliamentarians champion the critical role of evaluation in government initiatives.

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## ABOUT ASH

African Strategies for Health (ASH) is a five-year project, funded by the US Agency for International Development's (USAID) Bureau for Africa, and implemented by Management Sciences for Health (MSH).

ASH works to improve the health status of populations across Africa through identifying and advocating for best practices, enhancing technical capacity, and engaging African regional institutions to address health issues in a sustainable manner.

ASH provides information on trends and developments on the continent to USAID and other development partners to enhance decision-making regarding investments in health.

Learn more at [www.africanstrategies4health.org](http://www.africanstrategies4health.org)

# INTRODUCTION

To safeguard public health and improve lives, countries must be able to strengthen their capacity to generate and use high-quality health information to make evidence-based strategic decisions at local, sub-regional and national levels.

The Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation (GPFE) was launched in November 2015 when Parliamentarians from all over the world together with other international delegates gathered in Nepal to adopt EvalAgenda2020.

The GPFE then spearheaded a campaign to promote evaluation amongst parliamentarians.

In support of the GPFE Campaign, the African Strategies for Health (ASH) project partnered with the Pan African Parliament to promote the role of evaluation within national and regional health agendas.

Members of the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Affairs of the Pan African Parliament were interviewed during its fourth committee sitting and plenary held in March 2016 in South Africa.

Twelve Parliamentarians representing countries across all African regions joined the campaign.

Their views on the importance of evaluations were captured in a series of short advocacy videos which were publicly launched in May 2016.

A central theme arising from the interviews was Parliamentarians' recognition of the need for use of evidence for decision-making, as they championed the call for increased demand for, and use of evaluations across Africa.

The Parliamentarians emphasised the inclusion of diversity and gender equity principles in national policy, echoing principles enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) quest to leave no one behind.

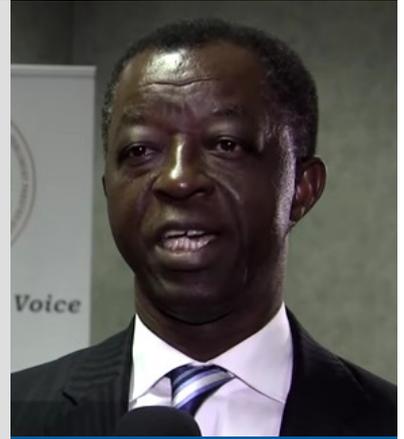
The Parliamentarians also elevated the value of cross-sectoral efforts in evaluation to create regional opportunities and integration of the African health agenda.

This publication highlights extracts of interviews with 12 parliamentarians. The videos are available online through the GPFE campaign channels and on the ASH website.





**“The objective of the government is to work together in the interest of the people. If you receive funding, you have to ensure that you use it in the interest of the population.”**



Hon. Roger Nkodo Dang  
MP, Cameroon and President of the  
Pan African Parliament

**Hon. Roger Nkodo Dang, a Member of Parliament in Cameroon and President of the Pan African Parliament, says evaluation is an important mechanism showing funders and partners that you acted in the interest of the people.**

“It is very important to evaluate government initiatives,” says President Nkodo Dang.

“The first objective of Government is to work together in the interest of the people. If you receive funding, you have to be sure that you use it in the interest of the population, he says.

“That is why I think evaluation is very important when you work with partners. And in your own countries, you have to monitor and evaluate how you use the funds that are allocated in national budgets”.

President Nkodo Dang emphasises that it is important for projects to be evaluated so that parliamentarians know the impact of the project on African populations, and are able to report back to donors.

He says the Pan African Parliament is an African people’s parliament.

It has a double role to play: firstly the supervision of political systems in member countries and, secondly, the control of States’ actions in light of good governance.

“The role of the Pan African Parliament is to promote good

governance in Africa, so I think that we need to monitor; and play a role of oversight in each country.

However, we need support from partners for good evaluations. Sound evaluations are important for our credibility”.

He says the Parliament has the capacity to fulfil its role, but that it relies on partners for good quality evaluations. He also insisted that evaluation is required in all fields and systems.

“I think the Pan African Parliament is one of the organs that can conduct good evaluations and use the evidence for new projects that we develop in Africa.

The institution can play an oversight role in ensuring that evaluation is done for the interest of African populations.”



**“Evaluation is key to everything that you do, if you really want to achieve the expected results.”**



Hon. Muntaka Mubarak  
MP Ghana and  
Member of the Pan African Parliament

**Hon. Muntaka Mubarak, a Member of Parliament in Ghana, emphasises that evaluation is critical in the promotion of evidence-based policymaking and that diverse values need to be incorporated into national strategies.**

Having had the privilege to chair Ghana’s Health Committee, Hon. Mubarak says the members have realised the significance of regular reporting to Parliament.

This has been the case in the development of national legislation such as the country’s public health law and the national health insurance.

Parliamentarians need to take decisions based on evidence, facts and accurate information, says Hon. Mubarak. If they don’t put in place mechanisms to monitor and evaluate, they’d be lost. “Evaluation is key to everything that you do, if you really want to achieve the expected results”.

Without comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) strategies, Parliamentarians would be unable to track their progress: “You don’t know whether you are moving towards your target; you don’t know whether you are almost getting there or whether there is a need to change strategy”.

Hon. Mubarak further reiterates that Parliamentarians need to be cognisant of different value systems in their national strategies because the evaluators, or evaluation experts, are influenced by these values.

“I am yet to be told of one country that has the same values”. Value systems affect how sensitive Parliamentarians are to gender issues and how they approach vulnerable stakeholders,

such as people living with disabilities, persons living with HIV/AIDS, children and the ageing, he says.

“At a national level we must encourage this diversity, especially if we are talking about the Sustainable Development Goals. To ensure that no one is left behind, we need to understand the diversity in evaluation”.

Evaluation has to bring these diversities to the fore, “Most of the time policymakers do not have time to look at the details.

They look at the evaluation report and act upon the report, so in the design of the evaluation, we need to ensure that all these key issues are factored in.”

Through this, Hon. Mubarak argues, Parliamentarians can act on “holistic dimensions” within their country.

Reflecting on the future of evaluation, he predicts it to become more frequent: “The future of evaluation would no longer be annual, it may be closer to monthly or quarterly, because of technological advancements, because of the diversity we have, and because of the fast nature of changes that is happening in the world”.



**“If you are working without research and evaluation it means you are not getting the priorities right.”**



Hon. Rachel Shebesh  
MP, Kenya and  
Member of Pan African Parliament

**Hon. Rachel Shebesh, a Member of Parliament in Kenya, reiterates that Parliaments cannot work without research and evaluation. Social programmes that deal with the life of the ordinary citizen need to receive the key focus in evaluations.**

“If you as a Parliamentarian are working without research and evaluation it means you are not getting the priorities right. Also, you are not able to assess yourself to see whether your policies are working and whether that is the development record you want to leave,” says Hon. Shebesh.

Unfortunately, she says, Africa has a shortage of researchers and evaluators which places a burden on the use of evaluations in planning and policymaking. It is therefore important for governments to allocate money to Parliamentarians to appoint evaluation specialists during budget-making processes.

According to Hon. Shebesh, Parliamentarians can evaluate policies with a gender equity lens by devolving processes to not only be handled at a national level, but to let it filter down to village level.

She uses the example of the construction of a dam. “As a Parliamentarian, you want to know whether the dam has

made an impact. You have to go to the area where the dam has been built, and you will have to ask the people directly how their lives have been changed. Those are the people that should not be left behind. They are the ones, at the ground level, who should be able to tell you that this particular dam is working well, or is not working well, or that they need more pipelines to go to the homes. That is how you engage. And if you engage that way, then at a national level, you are relevant to what the people want.”

In the future, Hon. Shebesh believes, social programmes should receive attention during evaluations. “Programmes that deal with the day-to-day living of the ordinary citizen. We should put more emphasis on health, on education, and security.

These issues affect the citizens, and that’s where we should put our focus, especially during budget allocation. We need to put more money in health, more money in education, and more money in the security sector.”



**“Parliamentarians  
need to be scientific,  
collect data,  
and analyse the data.”**



Hon. Awad Hag ali Ahmed  
MP, Sudan and  
Member of Pan African Parliament

**Hon. Awad Hag ali Ahmed, a Member of Parliament in Sudan, says social constructs such as gender equity are quantifiable and parliamentarians need to appoint the right evaluation resources to improve development outcomes.**

According to Hon. al i Ahmed, Sudan has established sound relationships with academic institutions in a bid to improve national evaluation.

He says good evaluation relies on effective resources and that demand for evaluation can be strengthened if Parliamentarians realise this, and deploy professional evaluators.

“Parliamentarians should be humble and accept consultation of NGOs, of intellectual constituencies and of academia.

And not to think if they have been elected they can use common sense. Common sense does not work. They need to be scientific, collect data, and analyse the data. And not by themselves. It needs to be done by experts.”

According to Hon. al i Ahmed, the evaluation of policies with a gender and equity lens can and has to be measured scientifically if the development community wishes to give effect to the Sustainable Development Goals and EvalAgenda2020.

“I think these two issues are very computable. Tell me about the share of power in the different regions, the share of development of services, the share and representation of women. All of this can easily be counted, so that we have a regional body in Africa that can go deep in collecting data about these important issues.”

He reiterates that African regional participation and cooperation strategies are critical in promoting a stronger evaluation community.

“We need more regional workshops, and in these workshops we can bring academics, and NGOs who are qualified in evaluation to come together and then we could distribute the roles and be clear.

Then we reflect the outputs of these different organisations during another workshop, for evaluation and comparison between neighbouring countries and that would encourage others to do better evaluations, make more use of evaluations and improve their outputs.”



**“If we deal with matters regarding equity in terms of gender then we open up and expand social equality.”**



Hon. Santosh Vinita Kalyan  
MP, South African and  
Member of Pan African Parliament

**Hon. Santosh Vinita Kalyan, a Member of Parliament in South Africa, says the use of evidence-based research is critical for policy development, and that people need to be involved in decision-making processes.**

According to Hon. Kalyan, evaluation has been very valuable for a young democracy such as South Africa.

In the health sector, she cites the example of the anti-tobacco bill which caused a huge uproar initially.

“Evidence-base showed that it was going to be to the benefit of South Africans and of course there was resistance about it, but eventually when the legislation came to pass, it was different to what the experience was during the hearings for the bill.

We are now at a point in our country where we are considering the national health system. The private sector is feeling threatened about it, but the evidence has shown that it is a model that can work, provided that there is proper funding for it and I think it will be helpful going forward.”

She says it is important for Parliamentarians to include people in policymaking, if they wish to adhere to the concept of not leaving anyone behind.

“I think given that the rate of illiteracy is quite high and we talk in South Africa of what is called a people's parliament, that we

need the people to be involved in the decision-making because it affects them directly.

We say we are a people's parliament and we conduct public hearings all over the country, but at the same time we need to take the voices of the people into consideration in all the sectors, whether from the disabled side of the community, or in agriculture, whether a woman or a man. Every single role player has to be involved if we want to give effect to the concept”.

“The fact that the President has situated gender issues in the Presidency, and that we have a Chapter 9 Institution dealing with gender equality, shows that we are serious about gender issues in South Africa.

Unfortunately, when we talk about gender issues we tend to only focus on women, but men have an equal role to play. If we deal with matters regarding equity in terms of gender then we open up and expand social equality. The one follows the other”.



**“The core question should always be: is this development benefiting all of society?”**



Hon. Shitaye Minale  
MP, Ethiopia and  
Member of Pan African Parliament

**Hon. Shitaye Minale, a Member of Parliament in Ethiopia, says evaluations need to filter down to grassroots level. She further emphasises that evaluation needs to reflect the reality of the country for it to be balanced and inclusive.**

“I think evaluation is very important. In my country, Ethiopia, we do a mid-term evaluation in each five-year strategic plan. This is very important to see what is going on, on the ground. You can get real information at the ground level.”

She says there is often a discrepancy between what is written on paper, and what is going on in the communities.

“It is very important to go to the people at grassroots level. In Ethiopia, we are highly concerned to evaluate the benefit to the population especially at the grassroots level.”

Hon. Minale says samples need to be representative of the entire population and geographic area, and evaluators need to use rigorous scientific methods if the evaluation is likely to lead to societal change.

“This helps for the formulation and improvement to change the policy by itself. Evaluation is the key for change in the world.

Professionals must have enough time and resources and make sure that the information that is gathered is real. Through this scientific process, you can see how the policies are proper for the people, and what adjustments is needed, and then you can bring a different policy or strategy, if the current one is not working.”

In terms of gender equality, Hon. Minale says development or growth can come from different avenues, but the core question should always be: is this development benefiting all of society?

As far as gender equality goes, the level of development is not the same, she says. “You have to give attention to the people that are behind. My Constitution gives huge rights to women. So women are benefiting from the rule, but the practice is still a problem, which comes down to implementation.”

She says gender equity requires people to change attitudes and beliefs and to collectively strive towards the improvement of all people’s lives.

In terms of the future of evaluation, Hon. Minale says it is critical that evaluations reflect the realities of the country, and that evaluators do not act in their own interest when conducting evaluations.

“The aim should be clearly stated. We shouldn’t evaluate things for the purpose of evaluation. We have to evaluate things to find solutions, to develop future strategies or policies. We have to be clear about our needs,” she concludes.



**“If we want to truly evolve and move forward in our projects, it is imperative that each activity we conduct includes an evaluation stage.”**



Hon. Prof Dr Bakary Quattara  
MP, Cote d'Ivoire and  
Member of Pan African Parliament

**Hon. Bakary Quattara, a Member of Parliament in Cote d'Ivoire, reiterates that evaluation needs to be compulsory. He further emphasises that the development of public health model laws in the Pan African Parliament could address many health projects in Africa.**

Hon. Bakary says evaluation is very important in Cote d'Ivoire because it allows parliamentarians to see whether they have achieved the goals they have assigned to their activities. "It is important to take stock, assess and see if we are heading in the right direction with our projects or if there is a need to give new directions."

He says if countries want to move forward and be effective, evaluation should be compulsory. "We must seek it and do it, it is an obligation. If you have a goal and establish a strategy to reach the goal, at some point you need to stop and evaluate if your strategy is good enough to help you achieve it. If your strategy is not leading you to the right direction, you need to adjust it or find a new strategy or see if the activities you identified were good. The evaluation is imperative, it must be done absolutely."

"If we want to truly evolve and move forward in our projects, it is imperative that each activity we conduct includes an evaluation stage. This is the only way we would be able to see our effectiveness."

According to Hon. Bakary the Pan African Parliament's role as a continental organisation implies that its members, the Parliamentarians, represent the nations of the continent. "Each of us have an important role to play. To be able to speak

about or to meet continental challenges, it is important for us to identify the referents, by referents I mean countries that have already established good policies and practices that work in specific areas such as health, and use their expertise as reference to establish our policies and approaches."

He says the Pan African Parliament provides a platform that allows Parliamentarians to develop common strategies that will be disseminated to member countries. "This will allow us to speak the same language as a continent in all matters related to health. It will help to boost a common health policy within our continent.

"These model laws, or strategies, can be disseminated throughout our States by our national Parliaments who will adopt them. The laws can address many health problems, including laws on infectious diseases and drug registration. This is one example of how the Health, Labour and Social Affairs Committee can reshape the regional and national health agenda."



**“One of our main purposes now is to develop model laws which take into account the true population’s health problems in Africa.”**



Hon. Dr Zalikatou Diallo  
MP, Guinea-Conakry and  
Member of Pan African Parliament

**Hon. Zalikatou Diallo, a Member of Parliament in Guinea-Conakry, emphasises the need for evaluation advocacy and the availability of adequate data to ensure the effective adoption of evaluation by parliamentarians.**

“Evaluation has been of utmost importance as it helped provide insight into all health policy-related issues in our country. This helped in ensuring adequate budgetary allocations to respond to health challenges within the country,” says Hon. Diallo.

Hon. Diallo believes that there is a need for advocacy, raising awareness and lobbying to try to make decision-makers at all levels understand that evaluation is a valuable tool to determine countries’ policies in planning.

She insists that, most importantly, there is a need for reliable data which implies training of capable investigators able to run proper monitoring and evaluation processes, from data collection to reporting.

According to Hon. Diallo, this is critical in providing accurate information for the design, update and implementation of key policies and health programmes to support populations’ well-being at all levels, especially in rural areas where, in developing countries, health services are in deficit.

Responding to her view on the future of evaluation in Africa, Hon. Diallo says, “There is hope for the future of evaluation in Africa, because there is a better understanding of the need for accurate data to allow governments to provide sufficient and well-structured budget allocations that meet international partners’ commitments and populations’ needs”. She supported this by highlighting an example, “The

Declaration of Abuja recommends that African States’ budgets should allocate at least 15% of GDP for population health. Often most States do not respect this due to the lack of clear indicators. Through evaluation, countries have more accurate figures and are motivated to implement these recommendations”.

Hon. Diallo says the Health, Labour and Social Affairs Committee of the Pan African Parliament discusses highly relevant topics on the health agenda. “One of our main purposes is to develop model laws which take into account the true population’s health problems in Africa. To succeed in our mission, we must cooperate and have synergistic actions with sub-regional organisations so that these model laws can be disseminated at different levels to support national laws, in order for them to be as effective as possible”.

She insisted that as a Parliamentarian, it is necessary to interact with the people who elected you. The debate at population level is very important and synergy with civil society organisations will disseminate important messages related to health promotion. She also highlighted the importance of working with the media.

She believes that evaluation focus has to be on women, children, communicable and non-communicable diseases, which are significant public health problems today.



**“There is a need to disseminate information on the role of Parliamentarians of the Pan African Parliament among communities.”**



Hon. Francisca Domingos Tomas  
MP, Mozambique and  
Member of Pan African Parliament

**Hon. Francisca Domingos, a Member of Parliament in Mozambique, says women education is critical for women’s inclusion in the development agenda. She says the Pan African Parliament plays an important role in sharing bases for comparison for gender equity.**

Hon. Domingos says Mozambique has made major strides in the area of women’s participation in decision-making.

“We have demonstrated a real progress in the area of gender equality in Mozambique. Approximately 38% of the Parliamentarians who participate in decision-making are women. We are approaching 40%. The Sustainable Development Goals require 50%. This means that Mozambique is on the right track. Many women are governors, administrators and judges. The president of the National Assembly is a lady. There has been real progress.”

This representation ensures that policies that support women are gradually being implemented, says Hon. Domingos. She explains that this is a very important victory because women constitute the majority of the Mozambican population. “Unfortunately, however, many of them are being left out, due to lack of education”.

She believes that investing in women education could be a solution to increase women participation in decision-making, as so many women are still illiterate. Girls’ education is also neglected and many young girls hardly complete primary school, she says.

Hon. Domingos points out that early marriages and HIV/AIDS also impact women’s participation in decision-making, with increased HIV-infected women losing the chance to finish

school, preventing them to participate in the development of the country.

She says the development agenda therefore has many challenges.

“The Mozambican government aims to support women through economic empowerment to help achieve their dream of agriculture production. Most women are breadwinners and heads of households. If we fail to help them with sustained economic support, we may run the risk of failing to achieve the sustained development we expect.”

As far as regionalisation is concerned, Hon. Domingos says that there is progress in the area of international relations and the strategies to support the role of Members of the Pan African Parliament. However, she points out that some challenges remain, because several communities still ignore the existence of the Pan African Parliament.

She believes that there is a need to disseminate information on the role of Parliamentarians of the Pan African Parliament among communities, so that they know the Parliament’s mission.



**“Regional strategies are to be encouraged as they make the integration and expansion of national strategies easy.”**



Hon. Patrick Mayombe Mombioko  
MP, DRC and  
Member of Pan African Parliament

**Hon. Patrick Mayombe Mombioko, a Member of Parliament in the DRC, believes regional strategies are critical for the improvement of public health, and that the Pan African Parliament’s mandate to move towards legislation would be critical in achieving this.**

Hon. Mayombe insists that, every year, the Government must evaluate its projects to see which areas need improvement. “As Parliamentarians, we must push so that evaluations are done at all ministries. It is important to get the Government to agree to making evaluation compulsory at all levels. In my country, it is still an area where we are fighting for change”.

He reiterates that evaluation must be done in all areas without exception: scientific research, health, education, agriculture and infrastructure.

“Evaluation is the hub of development of a country. It compares what has been achieved with what was expected and helps in planning future strategies. The evaluation provides information on the evolution of the current situation, in order to inform future strategies.”

Hon. Mayombe points out that to win the fight against underdevelopment which hampers the continent, it is recommended that African nations initiate regional groupings.

“It is more effective when fighting strategically as a region than if we fight in isolation. If at country and regional level, we establish good evaluation systems, it will make the integration at international level easy, because the structures are already well established at national and regional levels. Regional strategies are to be encouraged as they make the integration

and expansion of national strategies easy,” he says.

He says good model laws in the health field can be very useful in the case of infectious diseases or epidemics. For example, it will help in establishing regional African health strategies and strengthen the regional response in case of a health crisis, like that of the Ebola virus that hit West Africa.

Hon. Mayombe also says the slowness with which the Pan African Parliament is adopting its mandate from oversight to legislative presents a challenge.

“The Pan African Parliament previously had very limited advisory powers in relation to the African Union. Only recently in 2014, in Malabo, did the Parliament receive the power to legislate.

This power is still in fact limited and subject to the will of the heads of States. As Pan African Parliamentarians, we cannot legislate independently, we can only do so by the authorisation of the heads of African States. If we could be independent and free to suggest and vote for model laws, we believe to be best for our people, we will be able to influence policies that consider regional approaches.”



**“Regional positioning of policies provides confidence in the continent's future.”**



Hon. Dr Amin Al-Biely  
MP Sudan and  
Member of Pan African Parliament

**Hon. Amin Al-Biely, a Member of Parliament in Sudan, says the Pan African Parliament acts as a mouthpiece for African Parliamentarians. He is confident that the debates and decisions will lead to the convergence of public policies between the member countries.**

Hon. Al-Biely says governments cannot or should not perform any actions through specific policies, without evaluation.

He says that policies and laws voted by parliaments summarise the diverse views that turn into an overall opinion which benefit populations.

He says in 80% of the cases, it's the majority's view that prevails. He therefore insists that evaluation is key in the provision of informed views to MPs so they can make an informed vote that talks to their population's reality.

When asked about social equality and gender; Hon. Al-Biely says, "Social justice and equality in Sudan are guaranteed by the Constitution and by our habits and customs. They are the keystone to the resolution of a good number of challenges that both genders face. We call for gender equality in compliance with the laws and the Constitution that runs the country."

He affirmed that in Sudan, there is not a big difference between the two genders. "Today, there are women doctors, engineers, police officers, women at universities and in many other trades and professions. In all aspects of life, Sudanese women contribute actively alongside men in national development," he says.

He believes that this balanced gender representation in a professional environment is an indicator of gender equality in Sudan.

When asked about regionalisation Hon. Al-Biely says, "The Pan African Parliament brings together all nationalities and races that make up Africa and provides a platform that allow for debate on key issues concerning all countries.

Through this countries can reach a minimum consensus that serves common interests, which will be transformed into regional policies."

He is confident that the decisions taken at the Pan African Parliament will lead to the convergence of public policies between the various countries in the continent, and that it will put Africa on the path of development.

He believes that the regional positioning of policies provides confidence in the continent's future.



**“We need to have a good relationship between Parliaments and those bodies responsible for doing evaluations.”**



Hon. Bongani Mdluli  
MP Kingdom of Swaziland and  
Member of Pan African Parliament

**Hon. Bongani Mdluli, a Member of Parliament in Swaziland, says evaluations are a way of determining the worth, merit and significance of policies. The new mandate given to the Pan African Parliament to craft model laws requires well researched evaluations.**

“In my country, evaluation is very important because we as Parliamentarians need to be informed on matters of health, and its different domains.

Information has to be two-way. If such information is provided through the Pan African Parliament, whose Members come from different National Parliaments, these issues can be taken back to Parliamentarians’ Member States and can even reach their communities,” says Hon. Mdluli.

“It’s all about making available well researched information as long as this information is shared,” he says.

Hon. Mdluli further emphasises the importance of feedback between the Parliament’s committees and its Members’ national parliaments.

“There is a loophole as far as that link is concerned because we usually take the information from the Parliament to our Member States and then get it implemented if possible, but feedback is quite rare. For

example, there is a caucus for East Africa, within that caucus you take information back to your National Parliament, this might not be possible in regions where caucuses do not exist. Since taking information to other Member States has implications, we are only permitted to take information back home unless one has been assigned the responsibility. Evaluations which are objective can change this status quo,” he says.

The new mandate given to the Pan African Parliament to craft model laws is very useful because it will create uniformity, says Hon. Mdluli.

“Uniformity leads to harmonisation of different legislation in our Member States. For health issues, if we use legal instruments that are almost the same, it will even help in the dispersing of standardised and proven medication to be administered to the people, resulting in healthier African communities,” he concludes.



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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