President Paul Kagame this Wednesday opened the 17th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) for the Africa Region calling for collaboration for the continent.

“I would like to encourage all of us to continue sharing knowledge, skills, and resources with one another. It is by collaborating that our individual efforts will be multiplied.” President Kagame told the conference.

Kagame said that the pandemic had exposed Africa’s vulnerabilities and reversed some of the gains made. “Africa is not alone in these setbacks, but we can afford it less than others can. So we have to work together to get back on track, with a sense of urgency.”

Hosted by the Rwandan Parliament from 24-28 November 2021, the Conference this year is held under the theme “African Parliaments in the 21st Century”, It brings together African members of the CSPOC for discussions that focus on digitizing the parliamentary system, assessing parliamentary immunities, powers, and privileges, and retooling parliaments for effective and efficient oversight.

CSPOC was created in 1969 as an initiative of the Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada, with membership of the conference open to Speakers and Presiding Officers of National Parliaments of the Commonwealth.

Countries represented at the 17th CSPOC are Botswana, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. In addition, some Nigeria State Assemblies and South Africa Provincial Legislatures are participating as observers.