

**45<sup>th</sup> BRITISH ISLES & MEDITERRANEAN (BIMR) CONFERENCE**  
**Limassol – Cyprus, 24 – 27th May 2015**

I attended the above conference which was officially opened by H.E. the President of the Cyprus House of Representatives, Mr Yiannakis L. Omirou who welcomed everyone for attending. This was followed by the Family Photo.

**DAY ONE:**

The First Plenary Session: **Parliaments and Unemployment:** Chaired by Dr Pambos Papageorgiou, MP, Cyprus, with Expert Speaker Mrs Fiona Mullen, Director of Sapienta Economics & Mr Alexandros Alexandrou, Director, Department of Labour, Ministry of Labour, Cyprus.

It was high-lighted that un-employment in the EU was higher than in the USA, i.e. – 10% in Europe, 6% in USA and 18% in Cyprus.

It was recognised that Parliaments cannot change Globalization, but what Parliaments have control of is Taxes, Tax incentives such as for Training & Interest write off for debt and help with Child Care before going to work & after school care. Have an active labour market policy. Protect employability and NOT specific jobs.

It was recognised worldwide the hardest jobs to fill were Technical, Sales Representatives and Skilled Trade Workers, and that Parliaments/Governments need to encourage Schools & Universities to encourage students to train for these jobs, and Companies can help by training employees.

Governments should focus on the next generation, and train workers for what jobs are needed & **NOT** what individuals want nor job creation.

I took part in **Workshop B: Parliamentary Scrutiny of Government Employee Policies:** Coordinator: Mrs SKevi Koukouma, MP, Cyprus.

There was a lengthy discussion and the following transpired:

- Adopting Employment Legislation
- Promote Employment Opportunities
- Promote Transparency
- Protection against Fraud
- Identify best practises
- Health & Safety at work
- Hold Governments to account (one way in doing this is through Public Accounts Committee)
- Set up Independent Committee to scrutinise Government Polices & to select their targets
- Scrutinise whether Government have achieved what they set out to do

The BIMR AGM took place, and I was privileged to represent St Helena on the Committee as the Hon Derek Thomas was unable to attend.

## **DAY TWO**

**Second Plenary Session: Parliaments & Accountability**, Chaired by Mr Prodromos Prodromou, MP, Cyprus.

MP's accountable to the Electorate  
MP's responsible for their actions  
If NO Party structure, then MP's must be independent  
Must declare Interests where necessary to avoid conflict of interests

I took part in **Workshop D: What responsibilities for MPs regarding professional ethics?** - Chaired by Dr Christos Clerides, Advocate, Cyprus.

There was a lengthy discussion and the following transpired:

Cannot legislate for individual responsibility  
Professional ethics different from Political ethics  
Disclosure of interests to be regularly updated (something we already do)  
MP's should be allowed to continue their chosen profession on a part time basis in order to attract younger candidates  
If MP's were banned from continuing their chosen profession on a part time basis, they would resign & NOT stand again, which would mean that MP's would only be the rich or the retired  
**Remuneration** is a factor to attract younger candidates who wish to make politics a career  
MP's shouldn't bully to get the right decision  
Must be transparent

There were two other Workshops, namely Parliaments & Youth Unemployment and Broadcasting the parliament – pros & cons, but I were unable able to take part as they coincided with the workshops I took part in.

**Closing Session:** It was felt that Governments should do more to help Youth un-employment such as apprenticeships & work experience, and to support Youth in gaining employment, and unemployment in general.

The Conference closed with a farewell official dinner hosted by H.E. the President of the Cyprus House of Representatives, Mr Yiannakis I. Omirou, at the "Sailor's Rest" seaside restaurant, Limassol, Cyprus.

Wilson C. Duncan, MLC