

MID-YEAR MEETING OF THE CPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2016

I attended the mid-year review of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association held in the House of Parliament in London from 28th to 29th April 2016.

I departed St Helena on 20th April 2016 on the Comair Flights 737 for Johannesburg. The duration of the flight was 4hrs 10 mins and was a very pleasant and comfortable flight. I arrived at Tambo Airport at 11.30pm where I was met by a taxi driver and taken to the Peermont Metcourt Hotel which was about 2 mins drive from the airport. Peermont Hotels are a series of 4 hotels in secured grounds with full time security. The complex is a leisure facility with casinos, shops and other associated leisure facilities. A regular scheduled bus service services the hotels from the airport on the hour; a really safe environment. Reservation details are held with our CPA Secretary for future information if considered necessary.

The official meeting of the CPA was chaired by the Chairperson, Hon Dr Shiran Chaudhury MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Bangladesh and was the first meeting of the Executive Committee for our newly appointed Secretary General Mr Akbar Khan.

The meeting consisted of the adoption of the agenda and the acceptance of the minutes of the previous Executive Committee meeting held in London in October 2015 and the matters arising. Details of these minutes can be made available to members if required. We broke into sub-committees and Members will be aware that I formed part of the British Islands and Mediterranean Group, which consists of the Hon Carmelo Abela MP from Malta, and the Right Honourable Sir Alan Haselhurst MP, UK, who has replaced Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods MP. On this occasion I formed part of the planning and review sub-committee and under the business for discussion under the heading 'Branch Development Assistance Fund' the Committee approved an increase to the budget allocated to our Branch, as requested, by £3,890.89 - bringing the overall total of the budget to £26,999.89. I was grateful to the Committee for their support and approval.

It was noted that the CPA continued its collaborative work with the World Bank to develop and support regional public accounts networks and for this year a number of conferences have been planned for the Asia Region, Pacific and Caribbean. This is an area where our PAC could benefit from future conferences.

The Secretary General produced a paper entitled "A New Vision for the 21st Century – Addressing the Challenges Ahead". The Secretary General reported that the CPA is now in its 105th year, however it was fully accepted that if the CPA is to survive in coming decades, which is clearly the common goal, it must now adopt a new revised programme strategy and undertake an urgent structural reorganisation to give greater priority to programme delivery. A new revised programme strategy for 2016/17 was endorsed and accepted by the Executive Committee.

Statement of Purpose

The CPA connects, develops, promotes and supports Parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and the implementation of the enduring values of the Commonwealth.

Strand 1 Flagship Programme (Two training courses for Parliamentarians)

A CPA '**flagship course**' titled '**Parliamentary Fundamentals**' focusing on Parliamentary procedures and processes for newly elected Parliamentarians and returning Parliamentarians. The course will last one week (5 days) and will rotate on a regional basis or alternatively be hosted in London every other year to lighten the burden of finding a regional host each year. It seeks to provide a basic level orientation for all Parliamentarians from which to upskill. From existing CPA courses, relevant content will be culled and migrated to this new flagship course while new content will be created to fill the gaps to ensure a holistic training experience. When being delivered in a region, one day of the course will be dedicated to a regional focus to reflect the diversity of Parliamentary models within the Commonwealth.

Although the Westminster and Canadian Parliamentary Seminars have similar elements, the CPA flagship offering will be distinguished by its accreditation and its specific annual regional focus. It has been said that some Parliamentarians do not attend training and development either because they are 'too busy' or believe 'they already know it all'. Accreditation will help to make attendance more attractive and provide an attractive post-course qualification of value in other walks of life especially for those Parliamentarians from Legislatures where there is a commonly high turnover at general elections. Accreditation from a reputable Commonwealth university will also ensure a mark of quality, consistency and reputation of the training. Development of this flagship course will not preclude the CPA from collaborating with other branches who provide courses in this area.

A **flagship course** for the **small branches** will also be developed reflecting the particular constitutional peculiarities and challenges facing Parliamentarians in small branches.

For **Parliamentary Staff**, the CPA proposes to continue sponsoring staff to attend the Training Programmes for Parliamentary Staff (The World Bank Group and McGill University programme). This is an excellent course and the CPA will increase the number of places it currently funds as it has no intention of duplicating what is currently available and of high quality. The CPA will continue to deliver its own Parliamentary Staff Development Seminars on a Regional basis.

Strand 2 Masterclasses

The **Flagship Programme** will be reinforced and augmented by a series or cluster of **Masterclasses** in procedural, key policy and corporate areas. For example, if a Parliamentarian wanted to know how to Chair a select Committee or to read a budget, Masterclasses will be developed in these areas lasting from half a day to

three days. Certain Masterclasses will focus on being 'interactive' by projecting a 'How to approach' and will be led by experienced Parliamentarians. Likewise, if a Parliamentarian wanted to quickly get up to speed on key policy areas, for example the 'Middle East Peace Process' or 'climate change' because he or she has a Foreign Affairs Committee or development interest, there will be clusters of thematic Masterclasses developed by various external partners. Additionally, the CPA will develop a suite of corporate Masterclasses to include leadership and management of staff, budget fundamentals and so forth. To reach the greatest number of our membership in a timely and cost effective manner the CPA intends to develop a web based offering as the 'norm' with face to face Masterclasses being held at only certain times of the year in regions or in London. The preparation of these Masterclasses will rely on securing experts in their fields within and outside the CPA with a focus on leveraging strategic partnerships.

Strand 3 Young Parliamentarians Leadership Programme

The CPA should lead and support young Parliamentarians across the nine regions who will have different development needs from more experienced parliamentarians. For **young Parliamentarians** in our regions who have been in Parliament for two years or less and who are committed to promoting Commonwealth youth and Commonwealth political values the CPA will support their development through a **Bespoke Leadership Programme** developed in conjunction with a reputable business school for up to 6 months. The programme will comprise practical (mentoring, work shadowing, exchanges) and academic content (for example, modules on leadership, values in public life, transparency, anti-corruption, climate change, gender equality, youth empowerment etc). On an annual basis the CPA will invite applications from each region. One candidate from each region (9 per year) will be selected annually by the CPA Secretariat based on specific criteria. The objective of the programme is to build a cohort and network of up and coming young Commonwealth Parliamentarians who will be leaders in their region in the next generation and who will contribute and feed back into the CPA Youth Parliament programme as CPA Youth Ambassadors.

Strand 4 Commonwealth Parliamentary Lecture Series

Establishment of a **Commonwealth Parliamentary Lecture Series** on Commonwealth Political Values based on inviting 6-9 distinguished speakers annually who are current or former Parliamentarians or international figures of repute (e.g. Kofi Annan) commencing with a theme around 'Commonwealth political values'. This high level lecture series will be delivered from London and podcast to the rest of the regions. Alternatively, if there is appetite we will rotate between London and any willing regions who are prepared to host. The format will be the lecture with a drinks reception for all guests with the Speaker, held before or after the lecture. We will look to secure appropriate **commercial sponsorship** for the lecture series to fund the hospitality and other costs associated with running it. Invitees will include Parliamentarians, Commonwealth High Commissioners, youth, media, civil society,

Commonwealth family, corporate donors and other relevant bodies and individuals thus helping the CPA to stay connected with key stakeholders and to be seen and recognized globally as a significant **convener** on key policy discussions impacting Commonwealth political values. Key deliverables from the lecture series will also include a CPA compiled collection of speeches and the identification of further areas for CPA programmatic work.

Strand 5 Regional ‘Hot Topics’

Establishment of a **Regional ‘hot topics’ forum** on key policy issues to be run by each region where high level panels will discuss the hot topics of the day relevant to their region. The topics, panel and audience guests will be regionally chosen thus giving ownership to each region. This strand is about raising the profile of key policy issues identified by a region for discussion in the region with support from the CPA to highlight pressing democracy and good governance issues and to identify possible solutions. To be billed as a great networking event with media opportunities showcasing the convening and networking power of the CPA to promote, support and benchmark best practice in democratic governance. We will look to secure appropriate **commercial sponsorship from leading regional companies, universities and others.**

Strand 6 CPA Roadshow for Schools and Universities

Establishment of a **CPA Roadshow for Schools and Universities.**

This strand seeks to connect CPA Branch Parliamentarians (and CPA Secretariat staff when available in-country) with local schools and universities in a cost effective manner to promote democracy and Commonwealth values. The CPA Roadshow was launched in Dhaka on 2 March by the Honourable Chairperson with 150 school children amidst much excitement. Since that date, the CPA has received requests from Branches and organisations to assist them in delivering the CPA Roadshow. The CPA Communications team has developed a stand-alone CPA presentation pack to assist staff and Parliamentarians with this new activity.

This is a cost effective, innovative, informal and interactive way of connecting CPA Parliamentarians with young people in the communities they serve while promoting the CPA visibility and connection with youth outside of the formal CPA interventions like the Commonwealth Youth Parliament. Branches are encouraged to deliver the CPA Roadshow themselves in their locality with the assistance of a CPA speaking pack and advice from the CPA Secretariat.

The CPA Roadshow could serve as a potentially transformative experience in a young person’s life inspiring them to become more connected in shaping the society in which they live.

Strand 7 Technical Assistance Programme

Strengthening of the CPA Secretariat’s Technical Assistance Programme

The CPA already assists Parliaments to conduct self-assessments in accordance with the Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures programme. However, the CPA

stops short of further pro-active assistance after the self-assessment is completed. The proposal is to be more pro-active on the **self-assessment of Parliaments** under the Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures programme by helping Parliaments to identify what further technical assistance they require to meet all the benchmarks where they have fallen short after their self-assessment. I envisage the CPA working up in collaboration with the individual Parliaments that invite assistance an agreed list of Parliamentary strengthening interventions in accordance with a timeline to work towards fulfilling the spirit if not the letter of the benchmarks. The CPA will monitor and track progress to demonstrate impact and may even suggest peer reviews by other parliaments who are participating in the programme. A key deliverable is to bring about improved standards across those Commonwealth legislatures that participate in the technical assistance process within a specific timeline.

A further strand of strengthening the CPA's offering in the field of technical assistance is the establishment of a small but agile '**think tank research**' capability. Parliamentary research assistance is already provided by the CPA on request. However, current resources are too limited to have any meaningful impact. This proposal is to augment the resources available to provide a more bespoke timely and comprehensive research or policy development service to members seeking advice only within the CPA Statement of Purpose. The CPA will retain experts and provide oversight of research projects including conducting research itself for Branches on request. Projects undertaken will require the agreement of the Chairperson on behalf of the Executive Committee to ensure that the CPA is not breaching its non-political mandate by underrating any research.

Strand 8 Establishment of a Clearing House Platform

Currently many Commonwealth Parliaments have their own ad hoc Exchange programmes with other Parliaments. However, the CPA proposes a more comprehensive approach. This will involve the CPA hosting a clearing house platform to match requests received from members of one Branch who are seeking a visit or exchange with another Branch that is willing to offer such opportunities. This strand will help strengthen collaboration between branches and regions beyond the traditional ad hoc Parliamentary twinning arrangements that currently exist, thus opening up significant opportunities for cross branch and cross regional co-operation to help share best practice and break down regional silos that currently exists. The clearing house function will also bring to the CPA membership information from CPA partners about their events which may be of interest but which might not have been notified to members through other channels.

Strand 9 High Level Annual Event

Outside of the Annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC), the CPA hosts no other high level event that brings together its myriad stakeholders in the promotion and celebration of global democracy and good governance. The CPA proposes that 'International Day of Democracy' is used as a day of celebration to

host an annual high level event as a culmination of a previous week of activities hosted by CPA branches in the field of promoting democratic governance. This annual event which might comprise a high level panel discussion or lecture could rotate around the nine Commonwealth regions showcasing progress in democratic governance. Such an event will serve to strengthen CPA's global stature, to provide an opportunity to include stakeholders and commercial sponsors while celebrating democratic progress around the regions. It could also be developed as a fundraiser for a worthy cause through the sale of tickets for the event hosted by the CPA on International Day of Democracy. For the avoidance of doubt what is envisaged here is not a social event given the public sensitivity around the costs of hosting such events attended by Parliamentarians.

The revised programme was accepted and endorsed by the Executive Committee.

Arrangements for the 62nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference and Associated Meetings

The CPA Bangladesh Branch is hosting the 62nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference and associated meetings in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 1 – 10 September 2016.

62ND COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

**DHAKA, BANGLADESH
1 – 10 SEPTEMBER 2016**

DRAFT PROGRAMME (as at 9 March 2016)

<p>(DAY 1) 1 September</p> <p>1500 – 1730</p>	<p>Arrival of the CWP Steering Committee and Co-ordinating Committee Members</p> <p>Coordinating Committee Meeting <i>followed by</i> Performance and Review Subcommittee Meeting <i>Venue: Business Class Lounge, Level 8, Radisson Blu</i></p>
<p>(DAY 2) 2 September</p> <p>0900 – 1730</p>	<p>Arrival of Executive Committee and Small Branches Delegates ALL DAY</p> <p>Meeting: CWP Steering Committee <i>Venue: Sundabarn, Level 14, Le Meridien Hotel</i></p>
<p>1030 – 1045</p>	<p>Morning Tea/Coffee break</p>

1300 – 1400	BUFFET LUNCH <i>Venue: Latest Recipe Restaurant, Le Meridien Hotel</i>
1530 – 1545	Afternoon Tea/Coffee break
1730	CLOSE
(DAY 3) 3 September	
0900 – 0945	Official Opening of the 35th Small Branches Conference: <i>Venue: Utshab Banquet Hall, Ground Level, Radisson Blu</i> Group Photographs: Utshab Banquet Hall, Radisson Blu
0945 – 1015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Committee (only) • Small Branches (only) • Executive Committee with Small Branches
1015 – 1030	Morning Tea/Coffee break <i>Venue: Pre-Function Area</i>
1030 – 1230	Meetings: Main Executive Committee Meeting <i>Venue: Mallika, Level 2, Radisson Blu</i> Small Branches Conference <i>Venue: Utshab Banquet Hall, Ground Level, Radisson Blu</i>
1230 – 1330	BUFFET LUNCH <i>Venue: Grand Ballroom</i>
1330 – 1730	Meetings: Finance Subcommittee <i>Venue: Mallika, Level 2, Radisson Blu</i> Planning & Review Subcommittee <i>Venue: Madhabi, Level 2, Radisson Blu</i> Small Branches Conference cont'd <i>Venue: Utshab Banquet Hall, Ground Level, Radisson Blu</i>
1530 – 1545	Afternoon Tea/Coffee break <i>Venue: Pre-Function Area (Small Branches)</i> <i>Venue: Mahua (Finance Subcommittee)</i>

	<i>Venue: Outside Madhabi (Planning & Review Subcommittee)</i>
17:30	CLOSE
1930	Dinner for Executive Committee Members, Small Branches Conference Delegates, CWP Steering Committee – hosted by Chairperson of the Executive Committee, Hon. Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Bangladesh. <i>Venue: Radisson Blu</i>
(DAY 4) 4 September	ALL DAY: ARRIVAL OF COMMONWEALTH WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS' (CWP) CONFERENCE DELEGATES
0900 - 1730	Meetings: Small Branches Conference cont'd <i>Venue: Utshab Banquet Hall, Ground Level, Radisson Blu</i> Main Executive Committee <i>Venue: Mallika, Level 2, Radisson Blu</i>
1300 - 1400	BUFFET LUNCH <i>Venue: Grand Ballroom, Lobby Level</i>
1030 - 1045	Morning Tea/Coffee <i>Venue: Pre-function Area, Ground Level (Small Branches)</i> <i>Venue: Mahua (Executive Committee)</i>
1530 - 1545	Afternoon Tea/Coffee <i>Venue: Pre-function Area, Ground Level (Small Branches)</i> <i>Venue: Mahua (Executive Committee)</i>
1730	CLOSE
	Dinner at respective hotels
(DAY 5) 5 September	ALL DAY: Arrival of all Delegates, Observers, Accompanying Persons and Society of Clerks-at-the-Table and other participants
0900 - 1730	CWP Conference <i>Venue: South Sky Ballroom, Level 16, Le Meridien Hotel</i>

	Group Photo: <i>Venue: TBA</i>
1030 – 1045	Morning Tea/Coffee <i>Venue: Pre-function Area, Level 16</i>
1300 - 1400	BUFFET LUNCH <i>Venue: Pre-function Area, Level 16</i>
1530 – 1545	Afternoon Tea/Coffee <i>Venue: Pre-function Area, Level 16</i>
DAY 6 6 September	
0830 - 1020	Breakfast Meeting of Regional Secretaries <i>Venue: Members' Cafeteria Parliament of Bangladesh</i>
1030 - 1200	Official Opening of the 62 nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference <i>Venue: South Plaza, Parliament of Bangladesh</i> <i>Followed by: Group Photograph</i>
1300 -1400	BUFFET LUNCH Venue: <i>Grand Ballroom, Lobby Level and Mallika + Mallika Terrace, Level 2</i>
1400 - 1530	1st Plenary: Addresses by the Secretaries-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Commonwealth <i>Venue: Utshab Banquet Hall, Ground Level, Radisson Blu</i> Briefing for spouses/partners and start of Programme <i>Venue : TBC</i>
1530 - 1600	Briefing for delegates, observers and secretaries followed by briefing for workshop moderators, discussion leaders, rapporteurs and sessions secretaries. <i>Venue: Utshab Banquet Hall, Ground Level, Radisson Blu</i>
1600 - 1620	Movement of Delegates from Radisson Blu to Le Meridien Hotel
1630 - 1730	Regional Group Meetings: Le Meridien Hotel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Africa: Sky Ballroom South, Level 16</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia: <i>Panowa, Level 14</i> • Australia: <i>Jaflong, Level</i> • British Islands and Mediterranean: <i>Rangamati, Level 14</i> • Canada: <i>Somapura, Level 14</i> • Caribbean, Americas & Atlantic: <i>Bhulua, Level 14</i> • India: <i>North Sky Ballroom, Level 16</i> • Pacific: <i>Sundarban, Level 14</i> • South East Asia: <i>Kuakata, Level 14 or PDR 3 Level 15</i>
1730	CLOSE
1930	<p>Dinner for All Participants hosted by the CPA President, Chairperson of the Executive Committee and Speaker of the Parliament of Bangladesh</p> <p><i>Venue: Banquet Hall, Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC), Dhaka.</i></p>
(DAY 7) 7 September	
0900 - 1100	<p>CWP Business Meeting and Election of CWP Chairperson</p> <p><i>Venue: South Sky Ballroom, Level 16, Le Meridien Hotel</i></p>
1100 - 1115	<p>Morning tea/Coffee</p> <p>Venue: TBA</p>
1115 - 1330	<p>Workshops: A – D</p> <p><i>Venue: Le Meridien Hotel</i></p> <p>Workshop A: <i>Venue: Panoaa & Jaflong & Rangamati, Level 14</i></p> <p>Workshop B: <i>Venue: Grand Ballroom Pre-function Area, Level 14</i></p> <p>Workshop C: <i>Venue: North Sky, Level 16</i></p> <p>Workshop D: <i>Venue: Pre-function Area, Sky Ballroom, Level 16</i></p>
1330 - 1430	BUFFET LUNCH

	<i>Venue: Grand Ballroom Level 14 (TBC)</i>
1430 - 1700	<p>Workshops: E – H Venue: Le Meridien Hotel</p> <p>Workshop E: <i>Venue: Venue: Panoaa & Jaflong & Rangamati, Level 14</i></p> <p>Workshop F: <i>Venue: Grand Ballroom Pre-function Area, Level 14</i></p> <p>Workshop G: <i>Venue: North Sky, Level 16</i></p> <p>Workshop H: <i>Venue: Venue: Pre-function Area, Sky Ballroom, Level 16</i></p>
1530 -1545	Afternoon Tea/Coffee
0930 - 1300	<p>Meeting of Society of Clerks at-the-Table (SOCATT) <i>Venue: Grand Ballroom – Westin Hotel</i></p>
1030 - 1045	<p>Morning Tea/Coffee <i>Venue: Pre-function Area</i></p>
1300 - 1400	<p>BUFFET LUNCH <i>Venue: Taste Restaurant, Westin Hotel</i></p>
1430 -1730	<p>SOCATT Meeting cont'd (3- 4 Breakout Groups) <i>Venue: 1, 2, 3 Grand Ballroom, Level 1 & Silver room</i></p>
1530 -1545	<p>Afternoon Tea/Coffee <i>Venue: Pre-function Area</i></p>
1730	CLOSE
1900	<p>Dinner for all Participants – hosted by the Honourable President of the Peoples’ Republic of Bangladesh <i>Venue: Official Residence, Bangabhadan, Dhaka.</i></p>
(DAY 8) 8 September	
0900 – 1300	<p>General Assembly <i>Venue : Grand Ballroom, Lobby Level, Radisson Blu</i></p>

1030 - 1045	Morning Tea/Coffee
1300 - 1400	BUFFET LUNCH <i>Venue : Utshab Banquet Hall, Lobby Level and Mallika + Mallika Terrace, Level 2</i>
1400 - 1600	Final Plenary and Closing Ceremony including receiving of Plaques for retiring Officers and Executive Committee Members
1430 - 1700	Meeting of Society of Clerks at-the-Table <i>Venue: Grand Ballroom, Westin Hotel</i>
1530 - 1545	Afternoon Tea/Coffee <i>Venue: Westin</i>
1600 -1730	Meeting of the New Executive Committee <i>Venue: Mahua, Level 2</i>
1700	CLOSE
	CPA Secretary-General's Drinks reception for Clerks, Secretaries to Delegations and their spouses/partners <i>Venue: Prego + Prego Bar, Level 23, Westin Hotel</i>
	Dinner hosted by the Secretary, Parliament of Bangladesh for Clerks, Secretaries to Delegations and their spouses/partners <i>Venue: Prego + Prego Bar, Level 23, Westin Hotel</i>
(DAY 9) 9 September	ALL DAY – CONFERENCE TOUR(S) - OPTIONAL Venue(s): TBA
(DAY 10) 10 September	ALL DAY – DEPARTURE OF DELEGATES

Small Branches Conference

During the session it should be noted that St Helena will be expected to lead on the Third Session. Therefore we should be well prepared.

1st Session

The role of the Commonwealth in supporting the outcomes of the COP21 Paris Agreement on Climate Change (*Falkland Islands*)

2nd Session

The role of Parliament in the protection and safeguarding of children
(*Falkland Islands*)

3rd Session

Is unequal wealth distribution a threat to democracy in the Commonwealth?
(*Based on submission from St Helena*)

4th Session

Eliminating barriers to women's leadership in politics in Small Branches
(*Montserrat*)

During the 62nd Annual Conference an election will take place to nominate the Chairperson to represent the Small Branches. An election will also be held to nominate a CWP Chairperson. It was emphasised that as many delegates as possible from Regions should attend.

The Committee endorsed the Secretary General's recommendation in that 70% of funding should be spent on the development of Branches in terms of training and support and associated support funding. This will provide an excellent opportunity for the future development of CPA Branches.

Once again I found the Executive Committee meeting to be extremely useful. Good working relationships continue to be maintained throughout the Secretariat and with Executive Committee members.

Councillor Derek Thomas