Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Small Branches Workshop, on Strong and Independent Parliaments in Small Jurisdictions',

The CPA Small Branches Workshop on '***Strong and Independent Parliaments in Small Jurisdictions'***, was hosted on the Isle of Man, jointly between the CPA and the Tynwald, the Parliament of the Isle of Man.

The Workshop commenced on the 01st April this year, but the previous evening, a Welcome Reception was hosted at Government House, by Lieutenant Governor and Lady Lorimer, providing an opportunity for the delegates to meet socially, prior to the Workshop.

There was a delegation of twenty parliamentarians, covering: Australian Capital Territory, Fiji, Guernsey, Jersey, the Maldives, Northwest Territories (Canada), Saint Lucia, Samoa, St Helena, St Kitts and Nevis, Tasmania and Tuvalu.

The first day started with a chance to sit in the public gallery of the Parliament and view a Sitting of the Tynwald. The Order Paper for the day contained fifteen questions and the second reading of a Bill.

The remainder of the day was divided into sections on '***Separation of Powers'***:
The Latimer House Principles – the principles were implemented by Commonwealth Heads of Government, in 2003, defining the professional relationship between the three branches of Government, who are the Executive, the Legislature, and the Judiciary, with the aim of strengthening democracy and good governance between the three branches. The session was led by Judge Mbogholi Msaga, a retired judge from the Court of Appeal in Kenya.
The Expectation of the Workshop – a breakout session that enabled participants to discuss their aspirations for the Workshop and to raise more awareness of their jurisdiction.

On the evening of the first day, members were invited to the Manx Museum. The Manx Museum showcases 10,000 years of history, from the Stone Age to the modern era and is home to some of the most memorable Viking treasures in the British Isles. A highlight for me, was that on display was a hand-written letter dated 26th March 1822, from a gentleman advising his brother that he had declined the Governorship of St Helena Island.

Day two was a continuation by Judge Mbogholi Msaga on '***Separation of Powers':***
Parliament and the Judiciary – a talk on how Parliament makes laws, and the Judiciary interprets and applies them; the importance of having a separation of powers to ensure there is no overlap between the two sectors and that there should be no political influence in judicial operations.
Mechanisms for Accountability, to include oversight of Government and Civil Society. These sessions covered the implementation of scrutiny committees, public question sessions, fair and independent processes and the production and publication of official reports.

On the afternoon of day two, we were taken on a visit to Tynwald Hill, one of the island's most distinctive landmarks. Tynwald Hill is a historic site on the Isle of Man, where annually the Parliament host a ceremony to mark their independence as a self-governing crown dependency.

The final day was split into five sessions on '***Financial Oversight',*** delivered by Isabella Watkinson, Master of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the Universality of Toronto; Juan Watterson, Speaker of the House of Keys and Chair of the Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees, and Geoff Dubrow, Public Finance Management Specialist from Canada.

Topics discussed and presentations made, centered largely on 'Budget Formulation', 'Strengthening Parliamentary Financial Oversight' and shared experiences of our different jurisdictions.

In discussions on Public Accounts Committees (PACs), I was given the opportunity as a member of our PAC, to speak on compilation of the committee and how we conduct business. Delegates were impressed on how disciplined St Helena's PAC is, the regularity of committee meetings and live hearings, especially as some jurisdictions does not have an operational PAC.

In addition to the above, we were given factual case studies, to be worked on as a team and then selected individually to present our findings. I was selected to speak on a case that occurred in Fiji, between a Human Rights Organisation and the Judiciary.

Although this was a formal Workshop, with extremely experienced presenters and many seasoned parliamentarians, it was delivered in such a friendly and informal way, that it encouraged and enabled constructive participation from the group.
Opportunities such as this, give the chance to network and build professional relationships and for me, enables further professional development which can only assist me with my work here on St Helena.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the CPA and Speaker Gunnell for enabling me to attend this Workshop.

Gilly
Councillor Gilly Brooks