

CPA Press Release

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CPA launches new Regional 'Hot Topics' Forums with first event for CPA Asia Region in Pakistan

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) launches its CPA Regional Hot Topics Forums to provide an opportunity for the CPA Membership and the wider community to engage with experts on a particular topic which is of specific regional relevance.

The **Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Mr Akbar Khan** said: *"As a key strand of CPA's work, the CPA Regional Hot Topic Forum focuses on pressing democracy and good governance issues relevant to Parliaments and Legislatures in the*

Region. Here in Islamabad, the CPA Regional Hot Topics Forum brings together not only Parliamentarians, but also the Commonwealth family, as well as academics and civil society leaders. The CPA Asia Regional Hot Topics Forum will provide an opportunity to discuss 'Democracies in Transition and the Challenges they face'; a very pertinent topic in this region and indeed across the entire Commonwealth as we seek to strengthen our democratic institutions and respect the importance of the separation of powers. I am delighted to launch the CPA Regional Hot Topics Forum here in the Asia Region of the CPA, hosted by the CPA Pakistan Branch and the Senate of Pakistan."

The first CPA Regional Hot Topics Forum was held in the CPA Asia Region on the subject of **'Democracies in Transition and the challenges they face.'**

At the opening of the CPA Asia Regional Hot Topic Forum held from 24 to 25 November 2016 hosted by the Senate of the Parliament of Pakistan and the CPA Pakistan Branch, **Hon. Mian Raza Rabbani, Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan** expressed the hope that with regular interactions like these and by playing an even more constructive part in the Association, Pakistan can benefit more to address the problems of freedom, national integration, implementation of policies, federation and power of the central government in its democracy and to establish itself firmly as a true democracy in the community of the parliamentary democracies of the CPA and around the globe.

Hon. Mian Raza Rabbani, Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan said: *"Learning from the experiences of the other democracies and parliaments is important for Pakistan as we are a democracy in transition and also because we started our journey of transition from dictatorship to democracy. It is also important to tell the people that parliament is no longer a debating club and a resting place for politicians. Rather that the initiatives being undertaken and the efforts of the Senate of Pakistan to legislate on the rights of the federating units and marginalised segments speak volumes of the changes*



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that have taken place.” He said that the executive have the tendency to override the Parliament and the time has come that Parliament should stand out to protect its powers. He also thanked the CPA for creating the CPA Regional Hot Topic Forums and for choosing to launch them in Pakistan.

The opening ceremony also heard opening addressees from: **Mr Akbar Khan, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)** - please [click here](#) to read the **CPA Secretary-General’s opening address; Senator Raja Zafar-ul-Haq, Leader of the House in the Senate of Pakistan; Senator Aitzaz Ahsan, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate of Pakistan.**

The two day CPA Asia Regional Hot Topic Forum heard from a wide range of experts and commentators in the Region on the subject of *‘Democracies in Transition and the Challenges they face.’* Participants were drawn from within the local CPA Pakistan Membership and across the CPA Asia Region as well as students from local universities, High Commissioners and civil society groups.

Participants heard from a wide range of guest speakers and panellists at the CPA Asia Regional Hot Topic Forum including:

- Mr I.A. Rehman, Secretary General, Human Rights, Commission of Pakistan, Lahore
- Professor Dr. Muhammad Waseem, Professor of Political Science at Department of Social Sciences, Lahore
- Professor Dr Syed Jafar Ahmed Director, Pakistan Study Centre, University of Karachi
- Dr Rasul Bakhsh Rais, Professor Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, LUMS University, Lahore
- Senator Sherry Rehman, Member of Senate of Pakistan
- Dr Anis Haroon, Former Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women
- Mr Babar Sattar, Columnist, Dawn Newspaper
- Mr Shahid Fayyaz, Chief Executive Officer, Free & Fair Election Network (FAFEN), Islamabad
- Senator Farhatullah Babar, Member of Senate of Pakistan

The CPA Secretariat in partnership with the CPA Regions and Branches will be holding CPA Regional Hot Topic Forums across the nine CPA Regions with the next forum, the CPA Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Regional Hot Topic Forum, due to be held on Thursday 15 December 2016 in the margins of the 62nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in London, United Kingdom.

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Notes to Editors: The **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)**, now in its 105th year with HM The Queen, Head of the Commonwealth as its Patron, exists to develop, promote and support Parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and to implement the enduring values of the Commonwealth. The CPA is an international community of over 180 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures working together to deepen the Commonwealth’s commitment to the highest standards of democratic governance. Parliaments, their Members and officials learn from each other through CPA activities: Annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conferences, Regional Conferences and other symposiums; Interparliamentary visits; Parliamentary Seminars and Workshops; Publications including *The Parliamentarian*, the Journal of Commonwealth Parliaments; and the Parliamentary Information and Reference Centre.

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