CPA COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

Update

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(1) Committee meets in Bermuda

The Executive Committee of the CPA met in Hamilton, Bermuda, from 13 to 18 April to determine the organization's programme of services and events to deepen democratic governance throughout the Commonwealth. The meeting was chaired by Hon. Dato' Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal, MP, a Malaysian Parliamentarian and Minister for Rural and Regional Development who is the Chairperson of the Committee. The meeting was also attended by senior Parliamentarians representing all regions of the Commonwealth.



Members of the CPA Executive Committee at the meeting in Hamilton, Bermuda.

Among other business, the committee accepted a motion from the newly elected Parliament of Bangladesh to resume active membership in the CPA. The Parliament of Bangladesh was placed in abeyance after the 2007 suspension of parliamentary government.

The committee set the agenda of political issues to be discussed at the Commonwealth's biggest annual political gathering this year, the 55th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference to be held in late September and early October in Arusha, Tanzania. It also set the agenda for the 29th Small Branches Conference, a meeting of Parliamentarians from more than 30 Commonwealth nations, states, provinces and territories with populations of up to 500,000 people.

(2) CPA to support developing Parliaments

A new support programme to assist developing Parliaments was established by the CPA Executive Committee at its meeting in Hamilton, Bermuda. The programme will provide more than £100,000 in seed funding to assist developing Parliaments to improve services and train Parliamentarians and staff to strengthen democracy. The Association will actively encourage major international businesses to provide funds for parliamentary development projects to augment CPA support.

The committee launched the new programme to offer direct support to parliamentary development projects such as: providing technical assistance to the Bougainville House of Representatives, financing a staff organizational review for the Parliament of Namibia and supporting the Parliaments of Saint Lucia, Zanzibar and Nigeria's Kwara state in making improvements to their research services.

Support will also go to: a Parliament and the Media Workshop for Seychelles, an Asia/India Financial Scrutiny Workshop, a workshop for women Parliamentarians on HIV/AIDS and a programme to develop Pacific Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures.

In announcing the programme, the Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee said the CPA is helping Parliaments, especially those in developing countries, to continue strengthening their democracies in the face of the economic stresses and uncertainties of today's global financial crisis. "The CPA will support projects to bring tangible benefits on the ground to emerging Parliaments," said Dato' Shafie.

The committee added this new initiative to an extensive programme of CPA events and services for the Commonwealth's 17,000 Members of national, state, provincial and territorial Parliaments and Legislatures.

(3) Post-Election Seminar for Swaziland

A Post-Election Seminar (PES) for Swaziland took place from 30 March to 1 April. The Seminar for Members was hosted by the Parliament at the Piggs Peak Hotel in the north of the country.

The three-day programme consisted of sessions on:

- Parliament, democracy and civil society;
- The role of Members of Parliament including the role of the Backbencher;
- Ethics and accountability of Members of Parliament;
- The relationship between the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary [Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles];
- Practice and procedure in the House including standing orders;
- Women in Parliament;
- Parliamentary committees;
- Parliament and the media, and
- Conclusions and way forward.

The CPA resource team comprised: Mr Francis Ole Kaparo, the former Speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya; Uganda's Minister of Information and National Guidance, Hon. Princess Kabakumbe L. Masiko, MP; Mr Felix Owusu-Adjapong, the former Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Majority Leader in the Parliament of Ghana, and Mr Robert Wilson, the Principal Clerk of Select Committees, House of Commons, Parliament of the United Kingdom.

ENDS



Above left: The Secretary-General presenting gifts to two of the deans of the London diplomatic corps, H.E. Mr Laleshwar K.N. Singh, the High Commissioner for Guyana (middle), and H.E. Mr Michael Eng Cheng Teo, the High Commissioner for Singapore (right); Top right: The Secretary-General talking to Mr Forhadul, the Political Councillor from the Bangladesh High Commission; Below right: The Chairperson of the CPA, Hon. Dato' Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal, MP, (left) seated next to Vice-Chairperson Hon. Keith Flax, MHA, at the Executive Committee meeting in Hamilton, Bermuda, in April 2009.

Calender of CPA Events 2009

MAY

24-30 Sydney, New South Wales, Australia: Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar

JUNE

15-19 Guernsey: 40th Conference of the British Islands and Mediterannean Region

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER

28 Septemeber to 6 October
Arusha, Tanzania: 55th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference

NOVEMBER

27-29 Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago: Commonwealth Heads Of Government Meeting

EVENTS TO BE ANNOUNCED/ TO BE CONFIRMED

TBC CPA/UNDP Asia, India, SE Asia Regional Benchmarks Workshop
TBC CPA/WBI Asia/India Financial Scrutiny Workshop
TBC British Columbia, Victoria, Canada: CPA/WBI Conflict Seminar at Royal Roads
TBC CPA/UNDP Pacific Regional Benchmarks Workshop