Hon Members
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning!

It gives me great pleasure to join you here today at this the third meeting of the Caribbean Network of Public Account Committees (CarNPAC). I am especially delighted to be here in Jamaica and to be part of the development of this network in my home region – the Caribbean.

I am also delighted to bring greetings from the 7th Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Mr Akbar Khan, who is also a son of these Caribbean shores and who holds dear the development of these 19 jurisdictions which span the Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic. The Secretary-General is unfortunately unable to be here with you today but sends his best wishes for a successful meeting.
On behalf of the Secretary-General, please allow me to express the Association’s gratitude to the Parliament of Jamaica for hosting this important meeting. May I extend my deepest thanks to the Hon. Presiding Officers and Clerk for their continued commitment and cooperation. It demonstrates the commitment of the Parliament of Jamaica to promote the parliamentary democratic values to which we all subscribe. Jamaica has always been a highly active member of the CPA, especially through the Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Regional Secretariat, which is based here. Under the stewardship of the Regional Secretary, Mrs Heather Cooke, the Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region has led the way on a number of programmes and initiatives. A fact that as someone from this region I have always felt a sense of pride.

Since joining the Association in January 2016, Mr Khan has brought with him a new vision for the CPA. A vision which seeks to reinvigorate and redefine the Association’s position as a leader in identifying and promoting benchmarks of good governance and the enduring values of the Commonwealth. Values to which we all adhere and which have been enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter:

- Democracy
- Human rights
- International peace and security
- Tolerance, respect and understanding
- Freedom of Expression
- Separation of Powers
- Rule of Law
- Good Governance
- Sustainable Development
- Protecting the Environment
- Access to Health, Education, Food and Shelter
- Gender Equality
- Importance of Young People in the Commonwealth
- Recognition of the Needs of Small States
- Recognition of the Needs of Vulnerable States
- The Role of Civil Society

These values are underpinned by the separation of powers between the three branches of government: the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. In their respective spheres, they are the guarantors of the rule of law, the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights and a determinant of a country’s adherence to good governance.

In this regard, the CPA has been working with you, our members and with our developmental partners such as the World Bank Group, to strengthen Parliament’s oversight functions over the executive.
This meeting builds on the outcomes of two earlier meetings of this network which took place in Trinidad & Tobago and Barbados and aims at further strengthening the cross-parliamentary cooperation between the PACs of the region.

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of Public Account Committees in ensuring proper Public Financial Management. The CPA’s involvement in this programme is part of its longstanding commitment to strengthening Parliaments, especially in developing parliamentary capacity for effective financial scrutiny.

The Association has carried out extensive work examining how Parliament manages its public funds – to this end, a number of Study Groups, Workshops and Seminars have been convened to investigate PACs and the role they play in parliamentary scrutiny and good governance.


It is hoped that by addressing the knowledge deficit around this issue, it will enable parliaments and development practitioners to make informed decisions as to how to improve parliaments’ audit performance.

The CPA firmly believes that the most effective way in which PACs performance in every jurisdiction can be improved is by developing ways to exchange information. Information is a key resource in building capacity for the PAC to function well. Even well-established PACs need to keep abreast of developments, identify trends and try to anticipate the varying range of audit issues which it will eventually have to deal with.

The CPA offers its members a very useful network to exchange such information. It is made up of around 180 Branches across 9 regions of the Commonwealth and therefore offers a vast opportunity for Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff to link on issues of mutual concern. It is hoped that, through its programmes, activities and publications, the CPA can contribute to the ongoing interchanges on PAC matters which can only strengthen and develop the capacity of each committee - and that’s why we feel that supporting the development of a network of PACs in the Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region has incredible scope.
Without doubt, this network has a lot of potential and will make a very significant contribution to the quest for value for money in public spending, effective scrutiny and oversight and enhancing the assertiveness and power of parliaments in holding government spending to account.

Hon. President, Hon. Speaker, Resource Persons and Participants, let me end by wishing everyone present a very successful meeting. I very much look forward to the outcomes that will be generated for the Caribbean Network of Public Account Committees.

Thank you!

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