



**PARLIAMENT
OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF
GUYANA**

**Closing Remarks by the Hon. Dr. Barton Scotland, M.P., C.C.H., Speaker of the
National Assembly of the Co-operative Republic of the Parliament of Guyana**

Post-Election Seminar

1st April, 2016, Marriot Hotel, Georgetown, Guyana

Honourable Ministers of the Government, Honourable Members of the National Assembly of the Parliament of Guyana, Honourable Member of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, Honourable Members of the Parliament of Canada, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Clerk of the National Assembly of the Parliament of Guyana, Clerk of the Parliament of Canada, Clerk of the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, staff of the Parliament Office of the Parliament of Guyana, good afternoon.

Our plenary has concluded and I am sure all of us will leave here more enlightened than we were two days ago.

The reflective session this morning provided some room for introspection and it was particularly interesting. Honourable Members from both sides arrived at a consensus on the challenges they face in conducting their work. Among those challenges are:

- Part-time Members: infrequent meetings (unavailability due to other occupation)
- The need to improve the relationship between the Ministers and Shadow Ministers
- The need for a strategic plan for the Parliament
- Inadequate space to provide Offices for Members
- Inadequate resources (both physical and human) for geographical Members of Parliament
- The need for more dialogue between the Members on both sides
- The need for a more structured approach in conducting the work of Parliamentary Committees.

I was pleased to learn that Members were in agreement that there is need for a greater degree of civility in debates and stronger collaboration between both sides.

Members were also able to identify those achievements worth celebrating:

- The recognition that the Parliament has developed/ matured
- Attainment of 1/3 elected female Members of Parliament and the participation of indigenous peoples in the National Assembly
- The commitment to serve the citizens of Guyana
- The efficiency of the Public Accounts Committee
- The camaraderie between the Opposition and the Government
- Enhanced mechanisms to inform the public of the work of the National Assembly: user-friendly website which allows for feedback from members of the public, live streaming of Sittings of the National Assembly, the creation of a Facebook Page for the Parliament, and a Schools' Outreach Programme.

Learning is a continuous process and this Seminar has not only provided an opportunity for knowledge to be imparted, it has also awakened in us an increased desire to learn more about our own parliamentary system as well as the parliamentary systems of other CPA Branches.

I extend sincere gratitude to our very knowledgeable resource team: Hon. David Lammy, MP, United Kingdom, Hon. Chandra Arya, M.P., Canada, Hon. Senator David Smith, Canada, Hon. Rodger Cuzner, M.P., Canada, Mr. Jose Cadorette, Deputy Principal Clerk of the Committees and Legislative Services Directorate, Parliament of Canada, Mrs. Jacqui Sampson Meiguel, Clerk of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and Mr. Akbar Khan, Secretary General of the CPA. I take a moment to recognise the pivotal role of Senator Smith in this Seminar and to acknowledge his many years of commitment and dedication and sterling contributions to the CPA. Though you will be retiring soon we will always consider you a member of the CPA family.

I also wish to recognise the efforts of Ms. Lucy Pickles, Assistant Director of Programmes of the CPA whose tireless efforts contributed in no small measure to the success of this Seminar.

This Seminar has reemphasised the urgency for the establishment of the CPA, Guyana Branch, for the Eleventh Parliament of Guyana.

I am deeply appreciative of the efforts of the Secretary General of the CPA who has taken time to be with us and for opening the door for further collaboration and capacity building.

I also offer my thanks to all Honourable Members for participating in this Seminar.

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