

**COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION**

**22<sup>ND</sup> COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY SEMINAR  
NEW DELHI, INDIA**

**24-29 NOVEMBER, 2011**

**AGENDA:            PARLIAMENT, THE EXECUTIVE AND THE  
                          PUBLIC SERVICE**

**(SESSION NO. 9)**

**SATURDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2011 14:50 Hrs.**

**CHAIR                -            Michael Mischin, MLC (Western Australia)**

**PRESENTER        -            Shri P.D. Rai, MP India**

**PARLIAMENT OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI**

In the first instance, the Chair welcomed Sh. P.D.Rai, MP and introduced him to the distinguished guests. Thereafter, the Presenter, Sh.P.D. Rai, (MP), informed the delegates that like other countries of the world India is also facing various challenges though it is the largest and highly successful democracy in the world. The Indian Parliament is properly responding to the wishes of the people. The Executive or the Government is responding through the Right To Information (RTI), Right to Education (RTE) and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) legislations. Recently, there is an idea to bring about a legislation which will make food security in our country a right as well. So far as the citizens rights are concerned, they are satisfied when the economy is doing well, but the public demands increase whenever there is a slow down and when the buoyancy in tax collection is weak. Right now India is going through the same phase. He further elaborated that oversight of the executive is weak. The world is heading towards globalization and, therefore, many of our global treaties need not be ratified by the Parliament. He was of the opinion that this issue needed to be looked into in a more globalised world.

About the induction of experts into Civil Service and the challenge before an MP, the Presenter stated that the Executive which works through a bureaucracy was an army of civil servants which used to be the main source of the 'expertise'. As we move into an era of global information and scientific discoveries which increasingly are impinging on us, the civil servants cannot cope. So, the executive has to rethink in terms of how to increase the induction of experts into public service. This is a debate which has been doing the rounds, but has not seen any major movement. This is clearly a leadership challenge for our executive as also for our Parliament. Increasingly we are facing questions and the role of the MPs in the oversight function. The big challenge before the MPs is how to live up to the expectations of the voters and communicate to them that what we do in the national arena can help them and the country and

hence they need to vote if we do a good job. In India, the National Advisory Council (NAC) is playing a very important role. Many important Bills have been introduced in Parliament after coming into power of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) – II in Parliament. Our country is facing a lot of problems and certain hurdles are not allowing us to march ahead as fast as we want to.

Mr. Lucas KipKosgei Chepkitony (Kenya) joined on the issue of frequent adjournments of both the Houses recently. He stated that they have also seen the recent adjournments of the two Houses. Since the House is the depository of varied functions as enshrined in the Constitution such adjournments should be minimized by use of standing orders by Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha and Hon'ble Chairman, Rajya Sabha. In this context, the Presenter from India clarified that presently India do not have such a system. The problem is that since so many MPs and so many political parties raise certain issues in their respective Houses and therefore, Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha and Hon'ble Chairman, Rajya Sabha are unable to take a stringent action. However, these adjournments are an indication towards the big issues like creation of Telegana State, wherein a large number of MPs and people of the country as well are concerned. He added that

like other developing countries India has inherited a low paid bureaucracy. Sometimes, the schemes like MGNREGA are not being implemented properly by the State Governments, whereas the funds are provided by the Center as it is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. The MPs need to devote more time for such issues whereas sometimes we are unable to do that.

About the functions of the three organs of government Sh. P.D. Rai, MP, the presenter from India stated that the Legislative work is done by the Parliament, Executive runs the Government and the Judiciary interprets the law and resolves the issues on impact on our people. Since the majority party forms the Government, so they are at liberty to derive Ministers even from the Upper House. The best example is that of our Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh who is a MP from Upper House. One of the delegates from Zambia desired to share the real problems being faced by India on domestic fronts whereas it is the highly successful democracy in the world and also a fast developing nation. The Presenter opined that it was because of oversight function sometimes that the equitable distribution of resources is not possible and also because of oversight as we have a different socio-economic society.

In our country corruption is a big challenge. He, therefore, stated that in spite of being a huge successful democracy we have yet to find answers to many problems.

The Chair wished to know as to why the Ministers do not appear before the Parliamentary Committees, whereas only the civil servants explain the policies and programmes of the Government in India. In this regard, the Presenter informed the distinguished delegates that it is true that in India Ministers do not come and appear before the Parliamentary Committees, except in rarest of the rare case when the Minister had appeared before the Joint Parliamentary Committee on 'Bofors Gun Inquiry'. It is so because our Ministers fully rely on their civil servants. However, in case of Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs), the Minister gives a statement on the Floor of the House about the action taken on the recommendations contained in the reports within a period of 6 months from the date of presentation of the Report to the House. Almost 50% of the recommendations are accepted and if the Government differ with the recommendations of the Committee on major issues they are taken up by MPs in Parliament.

Shri Sipho Caiphas NKOSI, MPL, KZN LEG from Kwazulu Natal from South Africa stated that the presentation by Sh. P.D. Rai is highly informative. In my country the society is very strong. No country can afford to neglect the impact of globalization which was originally socialistic. Sometimes, the Government of India tends to defend on few international issues. To this, the presenter from India clarified again that we are a set of nations. In India the issues are totally different from the rest of the world. However, our civil society is vocal on all fronts whether Law, Human Rights, etc. We have very innovative group of people in the field of genetically modified seeds. Many of the MPs attend Talks conducted by civil societies. Our society is a well engineered. We have a concept of mixed economy wherein both the public and private sectors participate. That is why India had a huge growth of 8%. We have a coalition Government and India is a stable democracy. However, the main problem is that a few people have made huge amount of money. So, this is also a big issue before the Government. Another problem which the Government had faced was the confrontation over the issue of Nuclear Deal.