



**CPA Parliamentary Staff  
Development Workshop for the Asia  
and South East Asia Regions**

**Islamabad, Pakistan**

**4-6 May, 2016**

**Welcome Speech**

**By**

**Amjed Pervez Malik,  
Secretary,  
Senate of Pakistan**

- **Mr. Peter McHugh**, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Western Australia.
- **Dr Godfrey Haantobolo**, Deputy Clerk, Zambia.
- **Mr. Simon Ross**, Senior Deputy Greffier, Guernsey.
- **Ms Meenakshi Dhar**, Director of Programmes, CPA Secretariat.
- **Resource Persons, and participants.**
- **Distinguished Guests.**
- **Ladies and Gentleman,**

**Greetings and a very Good morning!**

It is indeed a pleasure for me to welcome all participants, our distinguished guests and colleagues from Commonwealth parliamentary fraternity in our midst at this staff development workshop that marks yet another milestone of continuing collaborative synergy between Pakistan Senate, national and provincial assemblies CPA regional branches and the CPA secretariat.

On behalf of the Senate of Pakistan, I like to extend sentiments of goodwill to all of you.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Parliaments are pillars of democratic governance, and ipso facto, a deciding factor in a nations socio economic development, accountability and responsiveness.

Three major functions of parliaments, namely law-making, supervision and representation, effectively contribute to viable democracy and open society.

However, as the proverb goes that “**a chain is as strong as its weakest link**”, a parliament cannot function effectively in the absence of adequate, highly professional and need-specific staff support to the house, its committees and members.

Hence, quality staff and secretariat support – or for that matter the lack of it – can both be a force-multiplier or an Achilles’Heel of a legislature.

It is extremely important for present day parliamentarians as well as the support staff to equip themselves with the provisions of Rules, Conventions and Practices to contribute more effectively and efficiently to parliamentary proceedings and functions, from plenary debates to legislations, and from committees work and oversight to public outreach by engaging civil society, media and public at large.

That quality human resource and staff capacity building are integral to a legislature's viability can hardly be overemphasized.

However, in a parliamentary milieu, learning and improving is not a one-time thing, but a continuous process that takes in its stride both emerging needs and trends as well as the valuable lessons learnt from bitter and sweet experiences.

Although, developing skills and staff capacity building is a staple for any dynamic public or private sector organization, but for the parliamentary staff and administration, it is indispensable because they have to provide highly quality professional services for which formal education and training is not adequately available.

It is in this spirit that the Senate of Pakistan has joined hands with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) to bring on one platform resource persons and practitioners of parliamentary administration from the CPA and Senate Secretariat for an intensive training session covering various aspects.

Senate of Pakistan had been actively engaged with the CPA in a number of other initiatives in the past and hopes to build further on these.

Cast in this conceptual mould, Staff capacity building and training is also one of the high-priority strategic objectives of Pakistan Senate, as also enshrined in our administrative strategic plan.

As Pakistan Senate's secretary general / clerk, it is my firm belief that we not only have to raise the bar with respect to staff capacity and skills, but we also need to assist members in performing their representative function more effectively, by enhancing their public outreach and connectivity.

I am very pleased that the CPA shares and understands our enthusiasm and needs in this regard as a key partner and facilitator in our reformatory initiatives.

I also deem it pertinent to highlight that in tandem with this workshop, the road-show to be arranged by Pakistan Senate and the CPA at the National University of Modern Languages in Islamabad will be another joint venture towards increasing awareness among youth about parliament and democracy.

This training workshop is part of many ongoing programmes, all aimed at improving skills, capabilities and professional expertise and performance of our staff, and support branches of the Senate Secretariat.

The underlying objective and guiding principle behind all such initiatives is to optimize legislative performance and output in all core areas from legislation to House proceedings and to committees work, to name but a few, and in turn, strengthen parliamentary democracy.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Conceived in this vein, the thematic and practical sessions of this workshop attempt to enlighten the participants on some core issues relevant to the working of a modern day parliament.

Out of all themes, the ones very close to my heart include the secretary-general / clerk's impartiality, administration and funding of parliament, and most significantly parliament, media and civil society, based on personal experience as parliamentary professional and administrator. I personally feel that while the staff of parliamentary secretariat has very important role in procedural matters around legislation and committee work being the core function of parliament I personally feel that the elected members of major player and determining factor in these areas. The aforementioned three areas are be ones in which staff has to play crucially important role. In our region and a especially in my country we have to learn a lot and improve performance in big way in connecting parliament with the people through media and civil society.

These and other such themes have been chosen after much thought and deliberations for being crucial to parliamentary proceedings.

I am positive that the collective, yet diverse, professional insight and wisdom offered by our worthy resource persons, comprising clerks, deputy clerks and other senior staff officers, will expose participants to a rich learning curve.

I am confident that participants will make the most out of their interactions with senior administrators and staff members of esteemed parliaments.

I expect the participants to use the knowledge thus gained towards playing a more supportive and beneficial role in helping the Parliament plan, adapt and chart out the best possible policy and legal frameworks in face of often overlapping challenges and opportunities on various fronts.

I also hope that this workshop will inspire parliamentary professionals to push the doors of possibilities open, and find new solutions and ideas to reinvigorate our parliamentary and democratic systems.

With these words, I once again welcome all our distinguished guests and participants.

I wish you all a comfortable stay and a rewarding experience with assurances that the Senate Secretariat will be there for your kind assistance and convenience so as to enable you to make the most out of this endeavour.

**Thank You!**