REPORT OF THE MEETING OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

14TH SEPTEMBER 2012

Venue: BMICH

Prepared by
HANSARD DEPARTMENT
Parliament of Sri Lanka
MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

President : Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa
Vice-President : Hon. Mninwa Johannes Mahlangu
Secretary-General of the CPA : Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija
Chairperson : Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst
Vice-Chairperson : Hon. (Dr.) Nafisa Shah
Treasurer : Hon. Marwick T. Khumalo

The President convening the General Assembly of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association warmly welcomed all Delegates, Secretaries, Observers and other Guests. He informed that there had been deaths of members in the CPA Branches, loss of lives and damages to property caused by natural and other disasters across the Commonwealth since the last meeting in London and messages of condolences were sent to the respective Parliaments on behalf of the Executive Committee. The President requested the members of the General Assembly to stand up and observe a minute’s silence in memory of the deceased.

Under item GA2 of the Agenda, the President informed the General Assembly that apologies for absence were received from the delegates of respective branches of the CPA. Under item GA3 of the agenda, the President informed that copies of the Minutes of the previous Meeting held in London have been circulated among the members. Thereafter, the minutes of the previous meeting were adopted.

Under item GA4 of the agenda - "Matters Arising" - it was noted that all matters arising have been included in the agenda.

Under item GA5(i) of the agenda - Annual Report for 2011 (as printed) - the President invited the Chairperson of the Executive Committee to present the Annual Report for 2011 to the General Assembly.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst presented the printed version of the Annual Report for 2011 to the General Assembly after approving it at the Executive Committee Meeting held in Tonga in April 2012. Under item GA5(ii) of the agenda, the Interim Report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012 which contained the activities of the CPA for the first half of 2012 was also presented. He stated that the edited version of the contents of this report would be merged with the interim reports on the CPA activities from July to the end of this year to become the Annual Report for 2012 which would be presented first to the ExCo and the General Assembly in 2013.

The Chairperson of the ExCo invited the General Assembly to receive and note the printed version of the Interim Report which was approved by the Executive Committee at its Meeting.
held on 9th and 10th September 2012 in Colombo. The Interim Report was approved by the General Assembly.

Under item GA5(iii) of the agenda the Chairperson presented the Chairperson’s Annual Statement and Update. Presenting the Annual Statement, the Rt. Hon. Sir. Alan Haselhurst appreciated the mandate given to by electing him as the Chairperson of the ExCo. He was concerned about the political profile of the CPA and stated that the CPA should be recognized more widely as a pre-eminent body of Parliamentarians and he looked for various ways they could be more important players in the Commonwealth family.

He requested the parliamentarians to pay more attention within their own Parliaments and Assemblies for the existence of the Commonwealth by having a Debate on a Commonwealth Day each year in order to build up much legacy. He also suggested that there should be a way of distributing the messages which come out of a Conference like this. He wanted their voices to be heard worldwide. He also put forward ideas as to how to better project CPA activities in printed material and also through speeches and to improve social media as the choice of communication among young people, especially the younger generation below the age of 25, which make a huge proportion of the total citizenry of the Commonwealth.

Referring to the status of the Commonwealth, he stated that he undertook to tackle the matter of status of the CPA and it consumed much of his time last year. He also stated that the Chairperson of the Working Party would present the working party report with the recommendation of the Working Party and with the approval of the Executive Committee.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst suggested that the status of the Commonwealth Organization should be changed from being a charity organization. He was of the view that the formula produced at the Working Party paves the way for them to achieve the desired status, which is extremely important to a large number of people. In anticipating the approval of the General Assembly on the Working Party Report, he stated that there is a specific decision to be taken at the next ExCo in 2013 which would be presented to the General Assembly next year.

He also stressed the importance of increasing female representation throughout the Commonwealth as the profile of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians is not high. He stated some regions are very much more organized than some of the other regions in terms of female representation. The Chairperson of the ExCo put forward some suggestions in boosting the CWP across the nine Commonwealth regions anticipating much progress in the next 12 months.

He was delighted by the approval given by the Executive Committee to convene the Commonwealth Youth Parliament as an annual event. He stated that the youth should be convinced that they have a line of communication towards the CPA.
He further said that he had paid a number of visits to other Branches with the finances allocated by the CPA and promised to fulfil the outstanding invitations according to the financial availability and commitment to his own constituent Parliament. He appreciated the kind reception he was given at both regional and branch meetings.

He mentioned that the real leadership should not be a matter of dictating terms but the leader should be accountable to all the Members of the Executive Committee and the General Assembly.

In concluding his remarks, he stated that the suggestions and contents of the Annual Report would be useful for the progress of the CPA in the following year.

Under item GA6 of the Agenda - "Membership Report" - the President then invited the Chairperson to present the Membership Report.

**The Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst** in submitting the Membership Report elaborated that Annex A of the Membership Report lists the number of delegates and secretaries that each branch is entitled to send, geographical regions into which branches are grouped and the number of regional representatives permitted.

He stated that Fiji Islands, and Turks and Caicos Islands, remain in abeyance and said that there had been no new applications from branches which were in abeyance since their last meeting. He further stated that since the paper was drafted in relation to branches in suspension, only one State had paid its membership fee reducing the outstanding amount to Sterling Pounds 29,587, hence leaving four branches on suspension in the African region and one branch in the Pacific region. Thereafter, the Membership Report was noted and approved by the General Assembly.

Under item GA7 of the Agenda - "Audited Accounts and Balance Sheet for the year ended 31\textsuperscript{st} December 2011" - the President invited the Treasurer of the General Assembly, the Hon. Marwick T. Khumalo to present the report.

**The Hon. Marwick T. Khumalo**, Treasurer, in presenting the financial position of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for the financial year ended 31\textsuperscript{st} December, 2011, stated that he had worked very closely with the Executive Committee, the Secretary-General, his staff and the Secretariat to ensure that effective monitoring and management is done in terms of the finances. He said that he has requested the responsible officials under his constitutional capacity to continue to do proper management of finance in the Association.

He ensured that efficient savings are done with continuous reviews and specific programmes and services. At the same time, he ensured that the CPA would continue to maintain the minimum reserves policy of the CPA in order to avoid deficit budgetary situations and stressed that they
did not make any financial commitments or spend the Association’s funds without following the established process of approvals. The report was noted and approved by the General Assembly.

Under item GA8(i) to (vii) of the Agenda - "Draft Budgets and Financial Management Reports: Headquarters Secretariat Budget 2012" - the President invited the Treasurer of the General Assembly, the Hon. Marwick T. Khumalo to present the reports. Thereafter, the reports presented were approved and noted by the General Assembly.

Then moved on to item No. GA9 - "Appointment of External Auditors" - of the agenda.

The Hon. Marwick T. Khumalo, mentioned that the current External Auditors wished to continue in office for the financial year 2012 and the ExCo would recommend that the External Auditors be reappointed. He sought the approval of the General Assembly for that. It was approved by the General Assembly.

The Hon. Senator Stephen Parry (Australia) seconding the Motion raised a question on the amendment circulated in the Plenary Session and requested the Executive Committee to consider the wordings of the aforesaid amendments.

The Hon. Marwick T. Khumalo, confirmed that the matter raised by the Hon. Member of Parliament from Australia would indeed be considered at the next Executive Committee and ensured that the matter would be resolved.


The Hon. (Ms.) Moana Mackey (New Zealand), Regional Representative of the Pacific Region and the Chairperson of the Working Party, presenting the Working Party Report acknowledged the efforts made by all the Members of the Working Party.

She reminded the fact that the Working Party was first convened in Kenya to consider a range of issues relating to CPA’s celebration of 100 years of history. She said that the Working Party wanted to give due consideration in finding a compromise on the issue of status that all branches would find acceptable. She stated that the Working Party recommends a new kind of organization which is non-charitable and non-diplomatic. She said that there were many legal implications and more work had to be done in a way that does not expose the organization to any legal action under Charity’s Law. She stated that the Working Party's recommendations would be important in solving the issue of status which is decisive.

The Working Party was of the view that the issue of status be solved in a united way since it is difficult to review things individually and have a common point of view as an organization.
The Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst extended the Assembly’s gratitude to the Hon. (Ms.) Moana Mackey for presiding over the Working Party and for all the Members of the Working Party for their support in tabling the Working Party Report. The Working Party Report was seconded and agreed by the General Assembly.

Under item GA11 of the Agenda - "Strategic Plan": (i) Review of Strategic Plan 2008-2012, (ii) Draft Strategic Plan 2013-2017 - the President called upon the Secretary-General to present the Strategic Plans.

The Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija stated that the Strategic Plans have been adopted by the Executive Committee and the General Assembly. The Draft Strategic Plan 2013-2017 provided a guideline to the CPA Secretariat in delivering its programmes and services that build the capacity of Parliaments, Members and the staff to provide effective governance in political policies within their jurisdictions and in a wider Commonwealth. He stated that the areas covered under the Strategic Plan are categorized under the headings of Commonwealth, Parliamentary and Professional Development, Human Rights, Global, National and Personal Security, Sustainable development, Good Governance, Practices and the Rule of Law.

He stated that the Executive Committee monitored the progress in the achievement of those objectives and would provide a review with an analysis of progress to the General Assembly in 2017. The Draft Strategic Plan 2013-2017 would be supplemented by a detailed business plan with measurable objectives for every year so that the CPA could make a better evaluation at the end of the five-year period. He stated that a business plan will be prepared for each year to review the success and the failures or fulfilment of the objectives.

The Strategic Plans were seconded and approved by the General Assembly.

Under item GA12 of the agenda - "Recommendations from the Executive Committee to the General Assembly" - the President invited the Chairperson, Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst to present the recommendations. The recommendations were noted and approved by the General Assembly.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst stated that formal letters have been sent by the Hon. Speakers of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island seeking the CPA’s support for applying for the World Heritage Sites. He further stated it was discussed and considered at the Executive Committee and sought the approval of the General Assembly to endorse the applications of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island Legislatures for nominating their Parliamentary buildings as World Heritage Sites. The General Assembly approved it. He further stated that the General Assembly encourages all the CPA Branches to consider applying for the World Heritage Sites for their current or former Parliamentary complexes.
The Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija, moving on to item GA13 of the Agenda - "Matters Submitted by Branches" - requested the distinguished delegates to introduce themselves while seconding or agreeing a motion so that it would be clearly recorded.

He stated that the Gauteng Branch has submitted a proposal to be placed on the Agenda in accordance with the Article 13 (1) and the Article 37 (2) (b) of the CPA Constitution and the CPA Secretariat had the obligation of including this item - Matters Submitted by Branches - to the Agenda. And he requested the President to give the opportunity to Gauteng for her submissions.

The Hon. (Mrs) Lindiwe Maseko, the Speaker of the Gauteng State Legislature, the Chairperson of the CWP Steering Committee reported that they submitted a motion in amending the Article 2 (a) of the Constitution of the CPA. She agreed upon postponing the amendment in view of the recommendation of the Working Party without withdrawing it. She stated that it would remain in the Agenda until the next meeting in 2013. The General Assembly agreed to postpone that amendment.

Under item 14 of the Agenda - "Report of the 32nd Conference of Members from Small Branches" - the President called upon the Hon. (Mrs.) Ingrid Moses-Scatliffe, Speaker of the House of Assembly, British Virgin Islands and Representative of the Small Branches Conference to present the Report of the 32nd Conference of Members from Small Branches.

The Hon. (Mrs.) Ingrid Moses-Scatliffe, presenting the Report of the 32nd Conference of Members from Small Branches stated that the First Plenary Session titled “Ensuring Adequate Parliamentary Scrutiny of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs” headed by the Hon. (Mrs.) Jacqueline Petrusma of Tasmania with three Discussion Leaders, the Senator (Prof.) VelM.A. Newton from Barbados, the Hon. David Agius from Malta and Senator Ian Joseph Gorst from Jersey. The topic was proposed by the branch of Jersey and was selected as the Small Branch’s topic for the plenary conference workshop. Members agreed that improving Parliamentary role in Parliamentary scrutiny is necessary and make the existing Parliaments more confined in order to improve Parliamentary scrutiny. The main aim was to ensure the openness in the process. The challenges identified in ensuring Parliamentary scrutiny were the Parliament's limited influence on the Executive, international agencies such as the United Nations and Organization of Economic Corporation and Development - OECD. It was stated that some small States were dependent territories and Provincial Legislatures so that their relationship with the sovereign and national Governments remained a challenge. Scrutinizing of all international treaty was proposed for exhausted resources of the small States. She also stated that the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association could assist by facilitating the exchange of information.

The Second Plenary Session titled “Impact of Informal Economy on Economic Diversification in Small States” was chaired by the Hon. (Mrs.) Sharon Halford of the Falkland Islands. Two discussion leaders were the Hon. Marlon Penn of British Virgin Island and the Hon. Allister
Hurrell Langlois of Guernsey. She stated that the informal economy is not governed by the rule and it affects both underdeveloped and developed countries. It was noted that countries with a high rate of unemployment are more likely to have a larger informal economy. The informal economy encompasses gambling, prostitution, illicit drugs and unregulated trading. The Members agreed that there no single solution to the problem. The Session recognized the need for human compassion and an understanding the underlined needs of the informal economies. She stated that the Session was of the view that it is up to Government to integrate the informal economy through education and training, appropriate taxation and availability of credits for small businesses.

The Third Plenary Session titled “Strategies to Increase Women’s Representation in Parliaments and Small States” was chaired by the Hon. (Mrs.) Paula Biggar of Prince Edward Island and the four discussion leaders were the Hon. (Mrs.) Maria Doris Ursula Payet-Marie of Seychelles, the Hon. Anthony Arthur Green of St. Helena, the Hon. (Mrs.) Lovitta Foggo of Bermuda and Ms. Kemi Ogunsanya of the Commonwealth Secretariat. There was a general agreement that although women play many important roles in various fields, they are not adequately represented in politics or in Parliaments. It was stated that under-representation of any group in political institutions was considered to be a democratic problem of justice, legitimacy, responsiveness and effectiveness. Therefore, if the decision-making process on any important issue was to be fair and democratic, women must be involved in that process, she added.

She said that discrimination against women is therefore unacceptable and both men and women should play equal roles in politics and reference was made to United Nations' target of 30 per cent women representation in Parliaments as recommended in the Beijing Platform for Action and to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This figure has only been achieved by 15 countries by 2004. The Meeting recognized a number of strategies currently in place to encourage women’s participation in politics including proportional representation, quotas and financial support for women candidates. However, despite these strategies women still remain under-represented in most of the countries.

The Fourth Plenary Session titled “Measuring Progress and Well-being beyond GDP in Small States” was chaired by the Hon. (Dr.) David De Garis De Lisle of Guernsey and the Hon. Claudius J. Francis of St. Lucia and the Hon. Barbara Webster-Bourne of Anguilla were the Discussion Leaders. This Session looked at the GDP and its ability to measure progress and well-being in Small States. The GDP is an important indicator and should not be replaced. It should be considered alongside with other indicators, such as Human Development Index (HDI) which relates to health, literacy rate, life expectancy and standard of living to get a true reflection of a country's progress.

The Committee was in agreement that the GDP is an indicator of economic development but it is not sufficient on its own to be an indicator of social progress. The members agreed that it was
necessary to go beyond this economic indicator, and the progress of people in other spheres should also be considered.

She further stated that the participants discussed about the global trend to measure performance of nations by modern and economic growth indicators. Specific reference was made to social and environmental issues related to rates of life expectancy, unemployment rate, poverty rate, education levels, natural resources, environmental pollution, waste, health and so on. Progress and well-being were identified as subjective terms which held different meanings to different people. The meeting saw the OECD’s Better Life Index as a true measure of a country's development.

In concluding the recommendations of the Plenary Sessions, she expressed her appreciation to the rapporteurs, to the reporters of the host Sri Lanka Branch of the CPA and to the Hon. (Mrs.) Anne Harris for report-writing. The President inquired whether there were any comments regarding the report presented.

As there were no comments, the President invited the Vice-Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians to present their Report.

**The Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija** stated that as the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and the President had to attend to some urgent matters, the Chairperson of CWP had nominated the Hon. (Mrs.) Lovitta Foggo of Bermuda to present the CWP Steering Committee Report. He requested the General Assembly not to find any offence against her nomination.

**The Hon. (Mrs.) Lovitta Foggo (Bermuda)** presenting the CWP Steering Committee Report stated that the Steering Committee was held on 8th, September, 2012 at Hilton Hotel. She stated that it was presided by the President, the Hon. (Dr.) (Mrs.) Sudharshini Fernandopulle and the Chairperson, the Hon. Alix Boyd Knights. The Asian region was represented by Hon. Rosy Senanayake from Sri Lanka. There was Senator Helen Polley from the Australian region, Hon. Myrna Druedger from the Canadian region, herself from the Caribbean region, the Hon. (Smt.) Chandresh Kumari Katoch from the Indian region and the Hon. Dato’ Noraini Ahmad from South East Asian region. Apologies for absence were sent by the Vice-Chairperson, Rt. Hon. Rebecca A. Kadaga of Uganda representing the African region. She stated that the Committee was also assisted by the Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija and Ms. Arlene Bussette, Assistant Director (Communications and Research) and Anna Schuesterl. The meeting began with the traditional welcome by the President hoping that the deliberations of the meeting would be fruitful.

Questions arose as to whether the CWP Steering Committee meeting held in 2011 in UK did follow the agenda and aims set out by the CWP. The meeting noted some anomalies and interruptions that took place at the AGM when the Chairperson was giving her submissions. The other matter that was pointed out was that, at that point of time, no photographers had been sent
to take photographs but here in Sri Lanka at every meeting, there was much press and photographers to document the event.

The Members, whose terms of office in the CWP Steering Committee concluded, would be replaced by new Members. The members leaving will be the Hon. Rosy Senanyake, the Hon. Justyne Caruana and the Hon. Lovitta Foggo. Comments were made of the development within the branches and written submissions were put forward. Particularly, oral submissions were allowed for areas which they were unable to provide submissions on time. The commonality of the presentations was that women still do not enjoy 30 per cent representation. Some regions are trying to reach the level needed and to change the attitude of all the parliamentary bodies. Some countries such as Bangladesh, Trinidad and Tobago have introduced quotas and electoral reforms to enhance female representation. Guyana has reached the 30 per cent female representation. The most outstanding issue is that women do not often want to put themselves forward as public officers in Parliamentary bodies. Much activities needed to be done in the spheres of education and networking in order to ensure that the mindset of the public at large and those of us within the Parliamentary bodies is changed and that women would begin to put themselves forward in public office by increasing numbers.

She stated that the CWP Work Programme for 2012 - 2015 was put to the Chair and agreed upon on the main topics such as women in social media, women in health, women in entrepreneurship and women in informal economy. She said that if women can be helped in those areas, female representation in Parliament could be increased to make Parliamentary bodies more democratic and more representative.

A Motion was put forward for an increase in the CPA funding. Efforts will be made before the Executive Committee to get the funding increased. Since there is a principle agreed upon, she expected to carry over the remaining assets for the current year of Sterling Pounds 50,000 for the upcoming budget. She said that the Committee also expects to put forward a Motion to the Chair to have 80 per cent of the budgetary allocation be evenly distributed throughout the regions and to have balance 20 per cent held in a fund to be used for developing an annual CWP brochure, for assisting the Member regions and for increasing their profile by developing a better network system through the head office of the CPA.

She stated that in 2013, the CWP Steering Committee expects to work on topics that will further enhance the role of women in leading positions within the respective communities and within the Parliamentary bodies. It was also stated that the Committee voted unanimously for the Hon. Myrna Driedger to be the Vice-Chairperson of CWP for 2012 - 2013. It was also noted that a new Chairperson will have to be elected at the end of next year to represent the CWP at the next session. She stated that comments were made on the importance of taking efforts to historically document females in Parliaments in public domain as an encouragement to other females. She reported that some members from South African region, looking at the programmes and
strategies of other regions, offered to show their strategies for increasing female representation at local level government. Some of their strategies could be adopted throughout some regions. She said that Canada has done much work in uniting the efforts of female Parliamentarians with a view to making major inroads in terms of female representation.

She stated that the Committee expected to help each other within all regions to get the required level of representation in order to make the respective Parliaments more democratic.

She stated that presentations were made at the Business Meeting to talk about various strategies to increase female representation on the theme of "is there such a thing as a women's Agenda in Parliament? If not, why not? If so what should it be?" Some regions felt that introduction of quotas and reserved seats was not necessary as they thought them to be discriminatory factors whilst other regions felt that such measures are necessary if they are to level the playing field for females. What emerged from that debate was those coming from mature democratic regions were in view that quotas were not necessary whilst those developing democracies suffering economically were in favour of implementing policies to bring about increased women representation more quickly.

The Hon. (Mrs.) Lovitta Foggo further stated that the Committee also expressed that insufficient time was allocated for them to conduct of the CWP Business Meeting. The Committee wanted it to be extended into a full day's debate as two hours' time is not enough for the items that needed to be discussed. The committee was of the view that it was the time to network each other, share ideas and find ways to develop CWP within the respective regions in order to bring further strategies to increase female representation.

The Hon. Annette King (New Zealand) making some clarifications of the Report presented said that CWP funding has to be reallocated without carrying over since carrying over is not possible. She also said that when they raised a reallocation of Sterling Pounds 7,777 to the Pacific region and about Sterling Pounds 100,000 as a new funding for women's programmes, the Secretary-General delightedly agreed and he was a strong supporter of it.

The Hon. (Mrs.) Lovitta Foggo agreed that the term should be "reallocation" but the word used in the minute was "roll over".

The Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija stated that reallocation is needed when the CWP has not been able to enjoy the services of the funding provided to them and it was simply logical. So, what they have to do is to recommend to the Treasurer and to the Executive Committee. Technicalities of financing can be applied if any funds are not disbursed for a particular year into areas which the CPA should logically reallocate money.

In far as the figure of Sterling Pounds 100,000 is concerned, the Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija agreed that the CWP is in need of moral support. He stated that Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst has
given his support for increasing the funding for CWP. What remains would simply be the technicalities of budgeting and the approval of the Executive Committee. The Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija stated that he is in full support of the proposition.

The Hon. (Mrs.) Ingrid Moses-Scatliffe further requested the Secretary-General of the CPA to increase time allocation for the upcoming CWP Business Meetings as they need more time to discuss the matters related to the CWP. She thanked the Secretary-General for agreeing to bring forward the suggestion to have more time allocation by at least half a day’s on the next Agenda.

The Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija stated that if the CWP needs a full day's time for its business session, they will have to reprogramme various activities. So, it has to be discussed at the Executive Committee. He stated that if the Executive Committee finds means of re-programming the activities, the CPA could always organize it with the host Branch.

The Hon. Request Muntanga (Zambia) stated that the CWP do meet as sub-committees before the Conference. It is important to bring out a programme at the AGM.

The Hon. Lindiwe Maseko (South Africa) thanked the Secretary-General of the CPA for having supported the CWP over the years and for advocating for funding and the Executive Committee also for having alluded to that. She also requested to allocate more time for CWP Business Committee meeting if the CPA is concerned about the issues that would affect women in ensuring more women representation as two hours is not sufficient to do justice for the issues related to women. She reported that especially the Heads of Governments have made a commitment of having 30 per cent of women representation by 2015 in all Commonwealth countries. She mentioned that they allocated a full day's debate for CWP to deliberate on its issues at the CPA Conference in Gauteng. She also mentioned that all regions including South Africa should have programmes that would ensure a consolidation of activities that take place throughout the regions.

The President then invited the representative of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament Mr. Matthew Crow to present their Report. He extended his thanks to the CPA for the support provided for the ordinary young people from ordinary families across the Commonwealth to come together and engage in politics for the first time in a supranational scale. He thanked the International Executive Committee for the commitment it is showing for the CYP.

He stated that there are billions of young people under the age of 25 years and highlighted the importance of investing more in the future generation and also said that the CPA is making clear commitments to that. The CYP is a supra-national organization that continues to grow as an important entity. The CYP is continuing to track new members in the 54 nations across the six regions and continues to progress in it.
He was of the view that we live in a regional world, but not in a global world. He said that it was important to find organizations that could transcend its boundaries of continental affiliations to discuss the concerns that affect people more broadly such as climatic changes.

He said that Conferences of that nature would provide an opportunity for youth to talk amongst one other.

He also said that when Sir Alan addressed the CYP last year he said that human relationships would prove to be one of the most important lessons that we learn at the CYP. Politics is fundamentally about human relationships. It is the building blocks of what we do. He said that politics is about peoples’ ideologies, passions and about exceptional people who come into politics. The CYP has proved to be a generation of achievers among young people of the Commonwealth and there is a generation of conviction leaders in it.

Mr. Matthew Crow stated that social media has placed an important part in the continued functionality of the Fourth Commonwealth Youth Parliament. Mr. Matthew Crow further stated that the CYP is still active in the Facebook and twitter in communicating with each other which has made an important progression fundamentally about human relationships. Politics, even at the level of CYP is fundamentally about human relationships.

As a Local Government Councillor for a small District Authority in UK, he emphasized that his role is to work with developing communities trying to engage in the way that the Council works. His view was that young people are politically engaged in many ways more actively than ever before. He stated that earnest and friendly discussions of the CPA would draw the attention of young people right across the organization. Though young people might not engage in traditional party politics, their membership is growing in the charity and voluntary organizations. Political parties could learn from that. He said that the CYP always extends its admiration towards the CPA for its advocacy of democracy throughout the Commonwealth countries.

He stated that young people have a lot to be proud of CPA programmes such as the Youth Ambassadors for Positive Living Programme, Diploma in Commonwealth Youth Development Work and Training and Rehabilitation of Child Soldiers, Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiatives. Commonwealth Games have inspired the young generation to achieve their goals. He said that the Commonwealth song really captures the spirit of the Commonwealth being the voice of young people and it would also guide them into a better future.

He said that CYP no longer waits for its turn to lead matters as it is in Parliament forming networks that would enhance governance throughout the Commonwealth.

Mr. Matthew Crow, in conclusion, stated they were in the process of handing down that torch to the next generation of which the flame is true commonwealth.
As there were no further comments, the President moved on to GA 17 - "Elections due at the General Assembly" - and invited the Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija, Secretary-General of the CPA to speak on it.

**The Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija** said that he wrote to the Regional Secretaries inviting nominations to Regional Representatives and Standby Branches. He noted that the Vice-Patron was always appointed by the Executive Committee and the President and Vice-President are also elected by the Executive Committee, but the Regional Representatives and the Standby Branches are elected by the General Assembly. So, he requested the General Assembly to approve nominations of the Regional Representatives and Standby Branches as listed in the paper. He further requested the regions which have not provided information to send their nominations as soon as possible in order to have a correct record of the Regional Representatives and Standby Branches. It was seconded and approved.

The President then moved on to GA 18 - "Future Meetings" - and invited the Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija, Secretary-General of the CPA to speak on it.

**The Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija** informed that Cayman Islands Branch has offered to facilitate the Mid-Year Executive Committee Meeting for 2013. He was very grateful of the offer made by Cayman Islands and stated that it was a very welcome gesture. He further noted that they would welcome offers for the year 2014 onwards in that category so that they could plan where their Executive Committee Meetings, particularly the Mid-year meetings, will be held.

He stated that they do not have venues from 2015 onwards for the Annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. He stated that the CPA accepted the invitation from Singapore to host the 24th Annual Parliamentary Seminar from 27th May, 2013 to 01st of June, 2013. Then, he requested the General Assembly to take a note about those venues and consider offers in respect of those not yet determined.

The President then called upon the Hon. Mninwa Johannes Mahlangu, the Vice-President of the CPA, our next year's host, to brief the Delegates about the forthcoming Conference in South Africa.

**The Hon. Mninwa Johannes Mahlangu** announced that South Africa is very excited to host the Conference in 2013 at Johannesburg and he humbly invited all the Delegates to attend the Conference.

When President asked whether there were offers to host the Mid-Year Meeting or the Plenary, the Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija said that the Annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference will be hosted by the Republic of Cameroon in the year 2014. It was seconded and approved.
The President moved on to GA 19 - "Presentation of Plaques to Retiring Members of the Executive Committee" - and called upon the Secretary-General to speak on that.

The Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija stated that at a General Assembly Meeting held in Jamaica way back in 1978, it was agreed that retiring Members of the Executive Committee should receive a plaque in recognition of their service and the Malaysian Branch very generously offered donating the plaques since then each year. He then invited the Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst to present the first plaque to the Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa, Speaker of Sri Lanka Parliament and the outgoing CPA President.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst offering the plaque as a tribute to the Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa thanked Sri Lanka for hosting the Conference with generosity and warm hospitality and appreciated the superb and effective organization of this major event. He further praised His Excellency the President, Hon. Speaker, Hon. Deputy Speaker, Secretary-General and all the staff for making it a happy Conference.

The Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija once again thanked Malaysia for providing plaques every year and requested a Representative from Malaysia to come forward to offer the plaques on behalf of the Hon. Dato’ Hj Mohd Nassuruiddin B Hj Daud, MP, Malaysia, South-East Asia.

He then mentioned the list of names of Parliamentarians who were to receive plaques:

- Hon. Muyali Boya Mary epse Meboka, Member of Parliament, Deputy Whip, Cameroon, African Region Representative from 2009 to 2012.
- Senator the Hon. John Hogg, President of the Senate, Australia, Australian Regional Representative from 2009 to 2012.
- Hon. Hugh Bayley, MP, United Kingdom British Island and Mediterranean Regional representative from 2010 to 2012.
- Mr. Joe Preston, MP, Canada, Canadian Regional representative from 2009 to 2012.
- Hon. Meira Kumar, Member of Parliament, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, India, Indian Regional Representative from 2009 to 2012.
- Hon. Datuk Ronald Kiandee, Member of Parliament, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Malaysia, South-East Asia Regional Representative from 2009 to 2012.

He also mentioned the names of the Representatives who received the pewter plaques:

- Hon. Tammy Jean-Jacques, Member of Parliament from Dominica, the Caribbean, the Americas and the Atlantic Alternate Regional Representative from 2011 to 2012.
- Hon. Sada Soli Jibia, Member of Parliament, Chairman of the Inter-Parliamentary Relations Committee of Nigeria, African Regional Representative from 2009 to 2011.
The President then moved onto the last item GA 20 - "Any Other Business".

Hon. Lord George Foulkes of Cumnock of UK moving a resolution sought the unanimous support of the Assembly to make a request at the Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting next year and at the Commonwealth Games Federation to consider how the lessons learnt at the 2012 Paralympics Games can be incorporated into the organization of future Commonwealth Games. He talked about the importance of recognizing the unprecedented success at London 2012 Paralympics Games which exceed all expectations. He said that the Paralympic Medalists are now treated in the same way as Olympic medalists and the United Kingdom produces stamps commemorating the Paralympians just as much as the Olympians and even the post offices are painting the post boxes in gold of the towns and cities from where the gold medalist Paralympians came from.

He stated that it might be more appropriate if we could have a Commonwealth Games for people with disabilities and proposed to run it concurrent with the Commonwealth Games, and it was agreed.

The Hon. Kenneth Marende (Kenya) stated that over the years, a practice appears to have emerged to circulate the papers for plenary sessions at the eleventh hour depriving them time to get acquainted with the documents. So, he proposed that to circulate the data papers not later than the second day from opening of the Conference so that the Members can familiarize themselves with the Agenda. He further stated that if this is not accepted and if the ex-co cannot concede to this, they will be compelled to propose an amendment to the Constitution.

It was agreed and seconded.

The Hon. (Dr.) William F. Shija informed the continuing Executive Committee Members, incoming Members and all their alternates that immediately after the Closing Ceremony, there will be a meeting of the new Executive Committee that afternoon at Committee Room C of the BMICH.

He informed that there had been a request made to bring forward the Final Plenary Session which was scheduled to be held at 14 hours on "The Role of Social Media in Modern-day Politics" so that it could be held from 11.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. The speakers for that Final Plenary Session had been consulted and they had agreed to the adjustment. He only wanted the agreement of the Assembly, and it was agreed.

The President then declared the General Assembly closed.

(The Meeting Adjourned)