CPA Update e-newsletter: Looking ahead to the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference and promoting CPA international partnerships

2019 is continuing to be a busy year for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Preparations are well underway for the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, due to be hosted by the Parliament of Uganda and CPA Uganda Branch in September 2019. CPA Branches are encouraged to register their delegations as early as possible.

The 70th anniversary of the ‘modern’ Commonwealth has been marked on Commonwealth Day 2019 and with a number of other events throughout the Commonwealth.

This CPA Update e-newsletter also reports on visits by the CPA Chairperson to Malta and Tanzania; the CPA Secretary-General’s visit to Belize for a series of CPA Roadshows for young people; a CPA Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar in Bermuda; a CPA Workshop in Zambia on Parliaments’ role in ratifying international treaties; a parliamentary staff development programme at McGill University; and a CPA BIM Regional Conference on ‘fake news’ and media freedoms in Guernsey.

This edition of the CPA’s quarterly e-newsletter highlights CPA events and activities from April to June 2019. Images of these events can be also accessed at the CPA’s Flickr website - click here.

If you have any CPA news or events to feature in future e-newsletters, please email communications@cpahq.org.

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Preparations are well underway for one of the largest annual gatherings of Commonwealth Parliamentarians at the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC), due to be hosted by the CPA Uganda Branch and the Parliament of Uganda between 22 and 29 September 2019. The main conference theme will be: ‘Adaption, engagement, and evolution of Parliaments in a rapidly changing Commonwealth’.

The annual flagship event will bring together Parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and decision makers from across the Commonwealth for this unique conference and networking opportunity. The CPC offers the prospect of the coming together of the CPA’s global membership to address the critical issues facing today’s Parliaments.

During the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, there will also be a number of additional conferences and meetings including: 37th CPA Small Branches Conference; 6th triennial Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference; 64th CPA General Assembly; meetings of the CPA Executive Committee; and the Society of Clerks at the Table (SOCATT) meetings.

This year, the conference will also hold elections for the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), the CPA Treasurer and the CPA Small Branches Chairperson for new three-year terms as well as a new one-year term for the CPA Vice-Chairperson.

For further information about the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Uganda please visit the official conference website and the CPA Headquarters website: www.cpc2019.org www.cpahq.org/cpahq/annualconference2019

CPA Chairperson praises the work of the CPA Small Branches network during a visit to Malta

The CPA Chairperson, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP (Cameroon) praised the work of the CPA Small Branches network during a visit to the Parliament of Malta from 13 to 16 May 2019. The CPA Small Branches Chairperson, Hon. Angelo Farrugia, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta welcomed the CPA Chairperson to the Parliament of Malta where he briefed the CPA Chairperson on the various activities carried out by the CPA Small Branches network.

The CPA Chairperson was received by the President of the Republic of Malta, His Excellency George Vella at The Palace, Valletta. The CPA Chairperson also met with the Maltese Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion, Hon. Carmelo Abela, MP to discuss strategies to add value to communities through a more sustainable, prosperous, fair and safe future for the Commonwealth.

To read the full CPA news story please click here.
Celebrations for the 70th anniversary of the modern Commonwealth take place in 2019

The modern Commonwealth came into being 70 years ago with the London Declaration, signed on 26 April 1949. Across the Commonwealth, many organisations, including the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, have been celebrating the 70th anniversary with events throughout the year. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association emerged from the Empire Parliamentary Association, which had been founded in 1911. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association was re-established at a conference in London in October 1948, several months ahead of the London Declaration in 1949 when its new name was adopted.

The 1949 London Declaration was both innovative and bold and emphasised the freedom and equality of its members not just in their relationship to the Head of the Commonwealth but also as a ‘free association of [...] independent nations’ but also in their cooperative ‘pursuit of peace, liberty and progress’.

In the 70 years since this reformulation of the Commonwealth, the relevance and value of the relationship has been reaffirmed and consolidated. Most significant is the expansion of Commonwealth membership from eight countries in 1949 to 53 countries in 2019 with over 2.4 billion people – meaning 33% of people on the planet belong to the Commonwealth. For the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, its membership expanded to 180 Branches including national, state, provincial and territorial Parliaments. The CPA Secretary-General said: “The 70th anniversary of the modern Commonwealth provides us with the opportunity to reflect on what the Commonwealth means to us and our communities and shows us that the Commonwealth can play a vital role in ensuring a better future for all, today and for future generations.”

CPA Chairperson commends Parliament of Tanzania for achieving the Commonwealth target of over 30% women Parliamentarians

The CPA Chairperson, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP addressed the Parliament of Tanzania and commended the Parliament for its gains in gender equality by achieving 36.7% women Members of Parliament. The current Commonwealth target is to achieve over 30% women MPs. The CPA Chairperson said: “I am particularly proud of the fact that over a third of the Parliamentarians - 36.7% - elected into the Parliament of Tanzania are women. This means that you are doing better than 166 other Parliaments in the world in women’s representation. This is something for you to be very proud of.” During the visit, the CPA Chairperson met with the Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania and CPA Tanzania Branch President, Rt Hon. Job Yustino Ndugai, MP and Deputy Speaker, Hon. Dr Tulia Ackson, MP and also paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania and Patron of the CPA Tanzania Branch, Hon. Kassim Majaliwa Majaliwa, MP.

To read the full CPA news story please click here.
Canadian Parliament hosts Commonwealth Parliamentarians for CPA Executive Committee

The Parliament of Canada and CPA Canada Federal Branch hosted over 30 Commonwealth Speakers and Members of Parliament for the Mid-Year meetings of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association from 11 to 15 April 2019. Members of Parliament representing the nine regions of the CPA - Africa; Asia; Australia; British Islands & Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean, Americas & Atlantic; India; Pacific; and South East Asia - attended the CPA Executive Committee, the governing body of the Association. The CPA meetings enable Commonwealth Parliamentarians to reach beyond their own Parliaments to contribute in a global setting to the development of best parliamentary practices and the most effective policies for parliamentary strengthening.

The CPA Executive Committee meetings took place at the Parliament of Canada in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. The Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP (Cameroon) chaired the meetings and said: “I would like, on behalf of Members of the CPA International Executive Committee, to thank the Parliament of Canada and the CPA Canada Federal Branch for hosting this meeting in Ottawa and for their unwavering support to the CPA.” Members of the CPA Executive Committee were welcomed to the Parliament of Canada by Hon. Yasmin Ratansi, MP, Chair of the CPA Canada Federal Branch.

'Through the CPA, Commonwealth Parliamentarians have a key role to play in supporting international humanitarian law’, says CPA Secretary-General at Red Cross International Humanitarian Law Conference in Rwanda

The CPA Secretary-General has stressed that Commonwealth Parliamentarians should play a key role in the implementation of international humanitarian law in a global context. He said: “The CPA is a community of Commonwealth Parliaments, Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff committed to deepening democratic governance through the promotion of Commonwealth values such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights, international peace and security and good governance as enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter. The implementation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) promotes and upholds a rules-based international system, in which the proper implementation of and compliance with IHL is an important part of the system. The implementation of IHL goes directly to promoting the rule of law and good governance, and its role in contributing to international peace and security, and so Parliamentarians have a key role to play.”

The CPA has been working with the British Red Cross to develop a number of joint projects for Commonwealth Parliamentarians - including a handbook on International Humanitarian Law for Commonwealth Parliamentarians and Parliaments.

The CPA Secretary-General was speaking at the 5th Commonwealth Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) held the Kigali Convention Centre in Rwanda. During his visit to Rwanda, the CPA Secretary-General also met with the Chairperson of the CPA Rwanda Branch Executive Committee, Hon. Senator Nyaghura Margaret, MP and Hon. Mutesi Anitha, MP. Rwanda is due to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 2020.
Parliamentarians in Bermuda aim to strengthen parliamentary democracy at CPA seminar

The CPA has helped strengthen parliamentary practice and procedure for Members of the Parliament of Bermuda with a CPA Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar from 1 to 2 May 2019. The CPA seminar in Hamilton, Bermuda was held to enable current and recently elected Parliamentarians to gain a broader understanding of the principles of parliamentary democracy across the Commonwealth and to strengthen their skillsets.

The CPA Bermuda Branch is one of the smallest legislatures in the CPA’s membership of over 180 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures. The CPA is the only Commonwealth body that works to strengthen small territorial legislatures in the British Overseas Territories like Bermuda as well as working with larger national, state and provincial legislatures.

The CPA Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar gave Members of the Parliament of Bermuda an excellent opportunity to learn about parliamentary practice and procedure and to gain a better understanding of the parliamentary system and democratic processes in other Commonwealth jurisdictions.

Hon. Dennis Lister, JP, MP, Speaker of the Bermuda House of Assembly and CPA Bermuda Branch President said at the opening of the seminar: “This CPA Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar is an example of the many benefits that are available to Parliaments within the Commonwealth. It’s the mandate of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to develop, promote and support Parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance. We must continue to evolve a modern democracy so when future Parliamentarians look back at this time, they can clearly see the improvements we are making today.”

To read the full CPA news story please click here.

CPA Secretary-General highlights good governance in Parliament and the positive role of youth engagement in the Commonwealth on a visit to Belize

The CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan has highlighted the advances made in establishing good governance and parliamentary democracy by the National Assembly of Belize during a six-day visit to the CPA Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region member from 4 to 9 May 2019.

The CPA Secretary-General was welcomed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Belize, Hon. Laura Tucker-Longsworth; and President of the Senate, Senator Hon. Lee Mark Chang before attending a series of parliamentary meetings to discuss the CPA’s programmes for the upskilling of Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff and new developments in parliamentary strengthening in the Caribbean Region and in the wider Commonwealth.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives of Belize, Hon. Laura Tucker-Longsworth said: “I am delighted to welcome the Secretary-General and his team from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to Belize. We are working...
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together to focus on the need for the Parliament to modernize and evolve to suit these modern times. The support of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the benchmarking exercise against international standards, developed through the CPA, has been invaluable to us.”

The CPA Secretary-General highlighted the positive role of youth engagement in democracy and stressed the importance of gender equality in Parliament at a series of CPA Roadshows for young people aged 11 to 18 at four schools in the capital, Belize City - Anglican Cathedral College (ACC); Edward P. Yorke High School; St Catherine Academy; and Wesley College. The CPA Secretary-General was accompanied on the CPA Roadshows by the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Belize and the Clerk of Parliament, Mr Eddie Webster who spoke to students about the work of the National Assembly of Belize.

To read the full CPA news story please click here.

CPA workshop for the Parliament of Zambia focuses on Parliaments’ role in the scrutiny of international treaties and agreements

Parliamentarians from the Parliament of Zambia have benefited from a successful two-day workshop on the role of Parliament in ratifying international treaties and agreements, hosted by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Zambia Branch from 19 to 20 June 2019, and funded by the CPA Headquarters Secretariat through its Technical Assistance Programme.

The First Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia, Hon. Catherine Namugala, MP said that the attendance of Members of the Zambia National Assembly at the workshop demonstrated their commitment to the values of the Commonwealth and thanked the CPA Headquarters Secretariat for its financial support for the workshop. The First Deputy Speaker also said that the workshop gives Members an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of Parliament’s role in ratifying international treaties and agreements, and demonstrates the significant role that Parliaments and Parliamentarians play in national decision-making, especially where the distinction between national and international decision-making is slowly fading, with many public matters being settled by means of international law and practice.

The CPA Workshop on the Role of Parliaments in Ratifying International Treaties and Agreements was delivered as part of a CPA Technical Assistance Programme for the Parliament of Zambia and the programme follows the delivery of a successful CPA Post Election Seminar for the Parliament of Zambia in November 2016. For further information about the assistance and workshops available through the CPA Technical Assistance Programme, please contact the CPA Headquarters Secretariat hq.sec@cpahq.org.

To read the full CPA news story please click here.
CPA Parliamentary staff development programme in Canada with McGill University enhances skills for Commonwealth Parliaments

Parliamentary staff from 14 Commonwealth Parliaments have undertaken a staff development programme at McGill University, Montreal, Canada which has been organised by McGill University’s School of Continuing Studies in collaboration with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Created in response to the voiced needs of parliamentary staff, Professor Rick Stapenhurst from McGill University officially opened the residency seminar and described the programme as “a unique tool that builds on the skills and capacity of senior parliamentary staff to help them better serve their Parliaments.”

This intensive professional development programme includes a one-week residency seminar followed by expert-moderated online courses and is attended by senior parliamentary staff from across the Commonwealth. The programme offers parliamentary staff the opportunity to obtain a Professional Development Certificate in Parliamentary Management and covers a diverse range of topics including: Parliamentary Administration, Parliamentary Research and IT, Parliamentary Committees, Public Financial Management and Corporate Management of Parliaments. The following CPA Branches were represented at the programme this year funded by the CPA Headquarters Secretariat: Australian Capital Territory; Bangladesh; Belize; Cook Islands; Manipur; Northern Territory; Ontario; Scotland; Sierra Leone; Trinidad and Tobago; and Western Cape. The CPA Pakistan, Nigeria (Federal) and Kenya Branches self-funded their participants on this year’s programme.

To read the full CPA news story please click here.

CPA Regional Conferences

Commonwealth Parliamentarians examine impact of ‘fake news’ at 48th CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Conference in Guernsey

Over forty Parliamentarians from thirteen Commonwealth countries and territories met in Guernsey to discuss the impact of ‘fake news’ and the media challenges for Parliamentarians and democracy. The 48th CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Conference, was hosted by the States of Guernsey and CPA Guernsey Branch from 19 to 22 May 2019 in St Peter Port. Parliamentarians discussed digital disinformation in the Commonwealth and the importance of quality journalism in the reporting of Parliamentary proceedings and elections.

The regional conference was opened by the Bailiff and Presiding Officer of Guernsey and CPA Guernsey Branch President, Sir Richard Collas and Parliamentarians were welcomed by Deputy Lyndon Trott, Chairperson of the CPA Guernsey Branch who said: “We are very excited to have so many high-quality speakers with us in Guernsey and we are also pleased that as well as delegates from the CPA BIM Region, we have a large number of observers from other parts of the Commonwealth. It’s a very relevant topic and I think our Guernsey meeting will showcase what is best about the CPA.”

To read the full CPA news story please click here.
Visitors to the CPA Headquarters Secretariat and CPA meetings, April to June 2019

Pakistan delegation visit CPA Headquarters

The CPA Secretary-General met with a parliamentary delegation from Pakistan headed by Hon. Rehana Laghari, Deputy Speaker of the Provincial Assembly of Sindh. The delegation of Members from Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa visited the CPA Headquarters Secretariat in London, UK during a visit to the United Kingdom Parliament.

Western Australia MP meets CPA Secretary-General

The CPA Secretary-General met in London, UK with Hon. Alison Xamon, MLC from the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia to discuss the Member’s campaigns to raise awareness on mental health and suicide prevention and the role that Parliament can play in these important issues.

The Parliamentarian is the quarterly Journal of Commonwealth Parliaments published by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and features articles and news written by Members of Parliament, parliamentary staff and global experts across the Commonwealth about international issues.

COMMONWEALTH AT 70: CELEBRATING A CONNECTED COMMONWEALTH

Few could have imagined seventy years ago, when the London Declaration was signed to create the ‘modern’ Commonwealth, that we would be reflecting on the successes of the Commonwealth many years later and looking forward to a renewed global partnership for the future. The origins of the Commonwealth stretch back much further than 70 years, but the signing of the London Declaration in 1949 marks the point at which the legacy of the British Empire was replaced with a partnership of equal member countries sharing a set of principles and values that was later enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter.

The annual celebration of Commonwealth Day has been celebrated around the Commonwealth on the second Monday in March every year since the 1970s and this year, the celebrations also included the 70th anniversary of the ‘modern’ Commonwealth. The 2019 Commonwealth Day theme focused on ‘A Connected Commonwealth’ which offers opportunities for the people, Parliaments, governments and institutions of the Commonwealth to connect and work together at many levels through far-reaching and deep-rooted networks of friendship and goodwill. CPA Branches and Regions across the network of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association marked Commonwealth Day 2019 in many ways and reports of these activities can be found in this issue of The Parliamentarian.

The Parliamentarian focused on the 70th anniversary of the modern Commonwealth by reflecting on the successes of the Commonwealth and looking forward to a renewed global partnership for the future. Contributors included: Commonwealth Secretary-General, Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland, QC; the Foreign Ministers of Trinidad and Tobago, Rwanda and Malta and the UK’s Minister for the Commonwealth. Other topics features included LGBT+ rights in many Commonwealth countries, political and procedural challenges of a post-conflict Parliament and the importance of effective financial oversight in Commonwealth Parliaments through PACs. This issue marked the 20th anniversary of the Scottish Parliament.

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Further information can also be found at www.cpahq.org/cpahq/parliamentariancurrentissue

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