**63rd COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE (CPC)**

**DHAKA, BANGLADESH**

1-8 NOVEMBER 2017

**PROGRAMME: DAY 4**

**DAY 4: SATURDAY, 4 November**

<table>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>0900 - 1030</td>
<td>Arrival of all Delegates, Observers, Accompanying Persons and Society of Clerks-at-the-Table and other participants</td>
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| 1030 - 1045 | Morning Tea/Coffee  
Venue: Inside the meeting room (Antara) |
| 1300 - 1400 | BUFFET LUNCH  
Venue: Grand Ballroom Lohori (Lobby Floor), Radisson Blu |
| 1400 - 1700 | Main Executive Committee Meeting cont’d  
Venue: Antara, Lobby Floor, Radisson Blu |
| 1530 - 1545 | Afternoon Tea/Coffee  
Venue: Inside the meeting room |
| 1700      | CLOSE  
Dinner at respective hotels |
Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury Opens the 36th Small Branches Conference

The opening of the 36th Small Branches Conference included a welcome speech by Hon. Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP, Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee. “I am honored to be here this morning,” she began. “CPA works with the Small Branches in all the regions and we extend full cooperation in strengthening parliamentary democracy,” explained the Chairperson. She stated that the priorities of the CPA lie with supporting the Small Branches in their problematic areas. “A number of Small Branches in the Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic region are unable to attend this conference because of the catastrophic hurricanes that hit the region a few months ago. Our thoughts are with the members of the branches during this period,” she emphasized. She also congratulated Hon. Angelo Farrugia MP for being the first elected Chairperson of the CPA Small Branches.

Welcome Speech of the Small Branches Chairperson

Hon. Angelo Farrugia MP

Climate change is a scary reality to some of the more vibrant Commonwealth Small Branches. So our Small Branches meeting will focus on the key areas and development activities, with measurable outcomes. This will build parliamentary capacities for our Small Branches of the CPA and create a greater and more constant opportunities for the sharing of knowledge, parliamentary strengthening and cooperation across networks of the CPA. As you know, out of over 180 branches in the CPA, 43 of us are the Small Branches, as in, those island states with a population of half a million or less.

We have a pressing need for small parlements and legislatures within the CPA, to come together to address the common difficulties, common strength and the shared experiences of the assembly. We attempt to enhance good governance, as well as parliamentary governance for our citizens. All CPA Small Branches need to learn to appreciate their strengths as small legislatures, being small enough to be able to work with other governments, yet be influential within the regions. The new approach will focus on the key areas on how to achieve these objectives, and will strengthen and promote the CPA Small Branches network for the benefit of its members.

Hon. Angelo Farrugia MP
Chairperson of the CPA Small Branches Speaker of the Parliament of Malta

In Conversation with Robyn Lambley, MLA

Robyn Jane Lambley is a former Deputy Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Australia. She was elected to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, representing the division of Anakara for the Country Liberal Party in a 2010 by-election following the resignation of Josiah Carney. In the 63rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC), she is representing the Northern Territory of Australia in the Small Branches Conference.

How do you think the proposals and strategies that are being endorsed are going to help develop your territory?

See, these are very broad recommendations. They are neither very specific nor very targeted at this stage. For this particular session, which is focused on logistics and infrastructure of small jurisdictions, these recommendations are very wide-ranging. So these references are there to encourage, inspire information sharing, networking, and to develop more creative and strategic styles to have solutions for the challenges within the jurisdiction. Since they are very broad, and not giving any specific direction necessarily, they act more like global statements. They are given to encourage smaller jurisdictions to work together and have a more proactive approach to make initiatives possible.

How hopeful are you about incorporating the ideas that are proposed and sanctioned?

These conferences are about the people. We are placing our proposals in front of the public. But one needs to know and understand that we also interact behind the scenes. We are here for networking with people from all over the world. I am essentially in the same business as everyone else. We are here to manage and govern the jurisdictions as the active members of the parliament.

The proposals are really inspiring and positive. We outlook forward to implement them as per requirement.

Do you believe the recommendations from today’s session are for the better future of the Small Branches in terms of development and progress?

I believe that when I come to these kind of conferences, particularly in this one, I extract myself from my own jurisdiction and start thinking collectively. The limitations for me are bordered within the Northern Territory. It is difficult overcoming the challenges of providing services to the remote parts of the territory. Like Bangladesh, we are facing challenges in terms of providing different logistics and infrastructure services to people. Here, we come with our own perspectives and a set of challenges, and at the end we use other people’s insightful ideas and solutions to help our own territory. It is basically an exchange and an educative process through which we learn to hope for a better future.
A Chat with Juan Watterson
Hon’ble Speaker of House of Keys, Isle of Man

Juan Paul Watterson is a Speaker of the House of Keys and a Member for Rushen in the Isle of Man, which is notable for having the oldest parliament in the world. He has been elected to the House of Keys at 26 years old, and is an exemplary figure for youth representation in parliaments. In this interview, he talks about CPC, his experiences and shares advice for young politicians.

CPC and it goes to show that passion does pay off. Our future generations of politicians can be inspired with youth parliaments and I certainly was. That Commonwealth Youth Parliament was one of the things that made me get into politics.

There has been a lot of talk about involving the youth in politics, and this year CPC is actually hosting a youth roundtable consisting of young speakers. What do you think of this decision?
It is essential. My colleague Claire Batterson is going to be on the panel for that and we’re glad to have a chance to talk about the youth in the Isle of Man. Bear in mind that a large proportion of the Commonwealth is under the age of 35, so it is important that we reach out to those people. They are the politicians of our future and we shouldn’t ignore them.

For someone who is interested about the Small Branches, could you give a brief introduction?
The Commonwealth is a conglomeration of 52 sovereign nations, which translates into about 180 branches, and out of 43 of those are the Small Branches. It is an opportunity for us small nations to get together from all over the world to share common issues and share solutions.

What are your hopes for the 63rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference as a whole?
We plan to actually implement a way of bringing together these small nations and dealing with the topics that we have been talking about. Out of the wider plenary, we are actually going to be able to escalate Small Branches Conference into plenary sessions to make all the larger nations more aware of some of the issues that smaller branches are facing and so they do not lose sight of these 43 branches. They may not always deal with them on a daily basis and raise awareness on how their actions will affect their nations.

Do you have any messages to the young people who are budding politicians?
Speaking of personal experience anyone can do it and you should always try. And it is a fantastic thing to be involved in. I am lucky to have gotten into it at the age of 26. If you are inspired to it, you are more likely to not regret doing it!

How do you like Bangladesh so far?
My first impression is absolutely brilliant. It is certainly warmer then where I come from, and from the moment I got off the airplane, I have been treated fantastically. Brilliant service so far.

You’re from the Isle of Man, the oldest parliament in the world. Tell us something about it.
 Initiated by the Vikings in the 10th century, Isle of Man was formerly the Kingdom of Mann and the Isles. It survived the Norwegians, Scots, English and we’re still there as a tiny independent nation a thousand years later, which is something we’re very proud of.

A few years ago you were a part of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament. Share your experience with us.
I attended the Commonwealth Youth Parliament in 2000 and was elected in 2006, as a 26-year-old. This is my third

36th CPA Small Branches Conference
The CPA Small Branches are a group of nations and territories that are members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). The 36th CPA Small Branches Conference is being held this year, and it is focusing on the problems faced by them as a result of climate change, infra-structure challenges and the role of Parliament in combating corruption.

The official opening ceremony of the 36th Small Branches Conference took place on the second day of the 63rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) 2017. The ceremony started with a performance that represents the importance of the earth is for us and how climate change is affecting it. Hon. Angelo Farrugia MP, Chairperson of the CPA Small Branches, was the first person to address the importance of the Small Branches being a part of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and attending the CPC. The Small Branches include Isle of Man, Cook Islands, Barbados, etc. with a population of half a million or less. Out of the 180 member Branches of CPA, 43 are Small Branches.

These Small Branch are amongst the smallest nations and territories in the world and contribute to the least to climate change. However, at the same time they are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Therefore, it is essential that they work with the bigger nations to achieve the common goal of reversing the negative outcomes of this natural phenomenon. In the opening of the 34th CPA Small Branches Conference, Mr. Akbar Khan, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, further emphasized the presence of the Small Branches, along with Hon. Dr. Shilin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP, Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee.

Due to the recent hurricanes that devastated a few of the Small Branches in the Caribbean region, they couldn’t be present at the conference, which further emphasized the need to battle climate change. This also pinpointed just how important it is to support the Small Branches. The main objective of the Small Branches Conference is to highlight the problems faced by them. A presentation was given by Hon. Angelo Farrugia MP at the conference that discussed in depth the problems faced by the Small Branches and how to assess these issues further. These local discussion sessions aim to integrate a thematic process of building capacity which involves the youth, enhances communication and monitors methods of eliminating issues.

After a general introduction of the aim of the Small Branches in the CPA, the 1st plenary took place. The core ideas of the plenary were to focus on the importance of sharing ideas between the Small Branches, as well as learning, assisting and establishing transparency. Other things that are also ensured are accountability in governance, being strategic in using the limited funding available and improving cooperation between jurisdictions to improve services. Once the plenary ended, the delegates voted on the ideas that will be endorsed by the conference.

The Small Branches Conference is very important for the Small Branches as they are the areas most affected by any changes in the climate. Compared to the larger nations, a single natural disaster can have a huge impact on their economic development. It usually takes longer for them to cope with these disasters and go back to their previous condition. Thus, they require the help of the bigger nations to combat these predicaments. This example of working together shows unity and networking that is the main purpose of the international organizations associated with the CPA. Yesterday was the first day of the Small Branches Conference and it was a success as far as the objectives of the CPA are considered. The Small Branches Conference will continue on Day 3 of the 63rd CPC, which will address many other significant issues that remain to be discussed.
Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) is a network of women parliamentary members, which is an integral part of the CPA, dedicated to the better representation of women. It not only aims to ensure better and more positions for women in decision making and parliament, but also brings forward an important message. No matter what, women cannot be ignored for the development of the world. Established in 1989, the CWP promotes and administers gender equality, as well as encouraging women to stand for election in parliamentary legislations. The CWP Steering Committee met yesterday at the 63rd CPC.

2nd day of the 63rd CPC through photographs

Know Bangladesh

Resolute Efforts on Empowering Women

It won’t be far fetched to admit that in the current Bangladesh, various programmes and projects have been initiated for the empowerment of women. Such development is one of the most crucial aspects of the nation’s progressive vision. Transforming Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021 (known as Vision 2021) necessitates women’s engagement in political and social activities in order to have a self-sufficient and independent society. The current government is dedicated to accomplishing the MDGs 2015 of gender equality and women empowerment by facilitating gender parity in primary and secondary education at the national level. This progress has been possible due to explicit government interventions focusing on female students. They were provided with stipends, exemption of tuition fees (in rural areas), and different facilities for girls at the secondary level. Thus, the UNDP has commented that ‘Bangladesh has made significant progress in promoting the objectives of ensuring gender equality and empowerment of women’. We appreciate the current political situation where the key positions are held by women, namely the Head of the Government and the Chief Speaker at the National Parliament. Three Ministries, Home, Agriculture and Women Affairs, formed under the 2014 Cabinet are led by women. In the 10th Parliament following the 2014 elections, we have 69 women parliamentarians of whom 50 are on the reserved seats and the rest have been elected directly. The government has been working persistently to provide women with all the social and economic conveniences by creating spaces for active participations. To accelerate women’s economic authorization, comprehensive initiatives like tourism, creating job opportunities, confirming contribution in labour market etc., encouraging women entrepreneurs have been made obligatory. Not only these, but a variety of allowances have been designated for divorced, destitute and disabled women, and also for mothers who are on maternity leave.

Women’s active participation in agriculture and harvest has been encouraged by providing them access to different agricultural technologies, loans for small span harvest, gardening, nurseries and bee-keeping. Entrepreneurs are also fortified by giving financial incentives.

One of the principal steps taken by this government to strengthen women’s dignity has been the formulation of National Women Development Policy 2011, where it allows provision for women to get equal share of property and avail prospects for business. This policy preserves the rights for every woman irrespective of their religion. A woman’s full control over her land, property, income, education, health, inheritance and opportunity to earn and spend has been certified by this policy. Not only this, the government is also combating violence against women. If any woman faces violence at her home, she will have access to the one stop crisis centers in the seven divisions who provide medical treatment, legal assistance, support and rehabilitation to the victim.

All these positive steps indicate the fact that we are steadily developing a society where female children are not considered burdens anymore. A woman is the symbol of progression and liberty. Women’s active participation in decision making – be that domestic or political – is now the indicator of an optimistic Bangladesh that works relentlessly to empower its women.