This third edition of the Quarterly Report covers the period of March to July 2012. In this issue I will be reporting on my continued tour of the British Isles and Mediterranean Region; visiting Scotland, Wales and the Isle of Man Branches; as well as my attendance at the 126th IPU Conference in Uganda where I represented the CPA as Chairperson. I will also be covering my activities in London where I represented the CPA at the Commonwealth Day celebrations; at the State Opening of the UK Parliament; and at a Loyal Address from both Houses of Parliament.

However, by far the most significant and time-consuming focus of the last four months were the Mid-Year Executive Committee Meeting in Tonga and the Working Party meeting in Quebec; both of which required considerable work both before and after the meetings.

I believe this newsletter should be a personal means of communicating with members and in this light I will also be providing some feedback on a few concerns that have been expressed to me over the last few months. I will also highlight some of my hopes for reforming the Association as a build up to the annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in September.

This issue will be the last Quarterly Report in my first year as Chairperson. The next issue will be published slightly later in September to coincide with the Annual Conference in Sri Lanka.

Rt Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst MP
Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee
In early April I attended the IPU Assembly in Kampala, Uganda. This was my first opportunity to attend as either a parliamentarian or Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee. Whilst there I wanted to see how the IPU ran its Annual Conference and have the opportunity to meet with international delegates in attendance, not to mention Ugandan parliamentarians who are this year celebrating their 50th year of independence.

I was very impressed with the hosting of the overall event which came across as highly professional. The impression I had from many of the meetings was that the IPU seems hampered by the sheer numbers of countries participating; different languages and systems of governance diluted many of the issues covered. The CPA is certainly advantaged in that the majority of countries within the Commonwealth have a version of the Westminster system. I was also disappointed by many of the speakers who simply read from the papers in front of them which restricted the interaction that exists at CPA events.

I was fortunate to meet with Speaker Kadaga who was the host of the meeting and we had a fruitful conversation on CPA matters. I also had the chance to meet with other Speakers leading their delegations. I am grateful to the meeting organisers and the British Group of the IPU for supporting me on my visit.

Following on from my visit to Uganda, I stopped off in Nairobi to meet with Speaker Marende as well members of the Kenyan Women Parliamentary Association, both of which were productive discussions.

126th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly, Kampala, Uganda

BIMR Visit
Isle of Man, Wales and Scotland

After having productive and informative meetings in Jersey, Guernsey and Alderney earlier this year, I continued my visits to three further branches within BIMR. In March I visited the Isle of Man. There I met with the President of the Tynwald, Clare Christian MLC (who is also a member of the CPA Working Party) and the Speaker of the House of Keys, Stephen Rodan SHK (pictured) and enjoyed tours of both Chambers. I was delighted to attend the Isle of Man Annual CPA Dinner as a guest speaker, where I gave a speech on the unique issues affecting small island states and the important role the CPA plays in providing a voice for small states alongside larger nations. A number of CPA issues were discussed over the course of my visit such as the Commonwealth Youth Parliament which the Isle of Man may consider hosting in the future, as well as the possible development of twinning smaller branches to share knowledge and experiences beyond the programmes CPA currently support. Whilst there, I also gave an interview to Manx Radio and saw a rather enlightening demonstration on a Voice Recognition System that Hansard utilises.

My short visit to Wales included meetings with Joyce Watson AM, CPA Branch Chair; Rosemary Butler AM, the Presiding Officer of the National Assembly; and Claire Clancy, Chief Executive and Clerk of the Assembly.

In Scotland, I met parliamentarians with an interest in Malawi and a group of Malawian interns working at the Scottish Parliament. Scotland has a special relationship with Malawi, and it was a good opportunity for me to hear how these two Commonwealth legislatures hope to strengthen their rapport. I also met with the Presiding Officer, Tricia Marwick MSP, and viewed First Minister’s Questions. CPA Scotland raised a number of issues with me such as election-observing, the cost of CPA travel and the need for more teleconferences. They were in favour of having a buddy/partnership system which was also raised in the Isle of Man; an initiative I intend to take forward.
In March, I had the pleasure to formally open the 61st Westminster Seminar on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure hosted by CPA UK at the Houses of Parliament in London. The seminar brought together newly-elected parliamentarians and early-career clerks from across the Commonwealth and I was delighted to meet many of the 60 delegates during the week-long seminar. The seminar programme offered an engaging and challenging exploration of different legislative systems, using the Westminster model as a framework for discussion. It covered a whole gamut of topics ranging from the Committee system to the role of media in Parliamentary oversight. Delegates also participated in constituency visits where small groups were able to discuss local government arrangements and funding in detail with MPs in their constituencies. Many delegates found this to be the highlight of the programme.

Having been around for over sixty years, it is now a permanent fixture in the CPA calendar with applications to attend in 2013 having already been made.

Other highlights were the reception in 10 Downing Street hosted by the Minister for the Commonwealth, Rt Hon. Lord Howell of Guildford and in the presence of the Commonwealth Secretary-General. There was a lunch hosted by Speaker, Rt Hon. John Bercow MP followed by a frank and engaging session given by the Speaker on the election, role, political neutrality and outreach work of Speaker.

As a champion of gender equality in parliaments I helped celebrate International Women’s Day on 8 March at a breakfast meeting hosted by the Lord Speaker, Rt Hon. Baroness D’Souza CMG, where delegates were able to share their experiences of being women parliamentarians. This event was very much a precursor to the November Conference on Gender and Politics in London.

The following week, I was delighted to welcome delegates to the 2nd Westminster Workshop, focusing on Public Accounts Committees (PAC). The workshop, taking place 12-15 March 2012, brought together over 60 Commonwealth PAC members, clerks and representatives of national Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs). Delegates had the opportunity to engage with individuals such as Rt Hon. Margaret Hodge MBE MP, Chair of the UK PAC, Amyas Morse, UK Auditor and Comptroller General, and other members and officials involved in the audit and oversight process.

Delegates participated in sessions that explored curbing corruption and fraud, interpreting financial and audit information, media engagement, and barriers to effectiveness. The four day programme was intensive but enjoyable and valuable.

As with the Westminster Seminar, Clerks and Members split into separate specialised sessions to concentrate topics and enhance specific skills.

I believe the promotion of PAC work is an essential component for effective scrutiny of democratic institutions and the strengthening of separation of powers. The CPA has over this year been proactive in supporting branches in developing these Committees. I hope that CPA branches continue to focus on the importance of PAC work through similar seminars and training courses for our members.
Over the last few months a number of parliamentarians have come to me expressing concerns that the UK has too much influence and control over the CPA. Whether these concerns spring from my more proactive involvement as Chairperson (as I am a British MP or something more worrying I am uncertain). Nevertheless I wish to address this concern as no country or region should be seen to have a dominating position within what is an equal family of branches.

Firstly, I think the impression stems from the fact that the Headquarters of our Association is in London. The reasoning is quite obvious as the first branch was founded here in 1911. Having evolved over the many years it remained, but why? Well our Patron is based here and the Commonwealth Secretariat is based here as are the bulk of Commonwealth civil society and local Commonwealth organisations. Additionally, unlike other locations, all Commonwealth countries have diplomatic missions here. On a more personal point as a parliamentarian with a big international airport in his constituency, London is still a major transport hub which enables simpler and more cost effective access when parliamentarians wish to visit/pass through.

But none of this compares to the financial benefit that having the Headquarters in London provides. There are enormous tax and other financial incentives that being a charity based in England affords us. The UK Parliament willingly provides office accommodation and other services at almost no cost to the Association. If the Secretariat had to begin paying for its accommodation, the cost would be astronomical.

I trust that the delegates at CPC 2011 who voted for me noted that whilst I am British, I campaigned on the advantages of my office being located just across the road from the Secretariat; and I had a programme of reforms that I aspire to implement.

I am aware that CPA UK is an extremely active branch in the Association and organises a substantial number of conferences, seminars and Commonwealth-related events. It should also be noted the UK contributes the largest sum of money of any single branch to the Association.

However, all of this can be viewed from different perspectives; I am Chair of the CPA UK Executive Committee as well as the International Executive Committee, so perhaps members might instead view my position as giving the International Association greater influence over CPA UK. To give two examples of this: I am passionate about the Commonwealth Youth Parliament and ensuring it becomes an annual event, it is therefore no coincidence it is taking place again in London in the Diamond Jubilee year; I am also passionate about gender equality, which is why there is an international conference on such a topic in London in November. I cannot force branches to undertake programmes, but I can influence the UK Branch.

Inevitably, the UK does have an impact on the Association for the reasons stated above. I think any influence that might seem disproportionate has been given consensually. I was elected as Chairperson by the Association; the choice of location for the last Annual Conference was approved by the Association. When the Working Party examined whether the Secretariat should remain in London, it was approved without hesitation (although this is still to be confirmed by the General Assembly).

My view is that perhaps it is time for a change. The Eminent Persons Group Report did recommend to the Commonwealth Heads of Government that Commonwealth organisations should look at having their Headquarters outside the UK. I should welcome any branch willing to host the Secretariat and were able to provide the same benefits. Either way, I hope this article eases the minds of those who feel concerned and that this expression of my view is helpful.
OTHER MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

My first significant meeting in March representing the CPA was with the Commonwealth Secretary-General, HE. Kamalesh Sharma. This was my third opportunity to discuss CPA and ComSec matters. We would also meet again in July.

In mid-March I had the opportunity to catch up with John Loughton, who is closely involved in youth development on behalf of ComSec, especially in Sri Lanka. The same day I met with the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, Carl Wright, and we discussed how the CPA can work more closely with his organisation especially with regard to CHOGM.

The CPA Treasurer, Hon. Marwick Khumalo MP, was also in London for a pre-ExCo meeting examining the finances of the Association. We caught up on other matters of importance.

Prior to my visit to Uganda, I met the Ugandan High Commissioner, HE. Joan Rwabyomere, with whom I discussed my thoughts on Ugandan politics and my intention to meet Speaker Kadaga.

In July, I met with the South African High Commissioner, H.E. Dr Zola Skweyiya, shortly before my trip to Johannesburg.

I also received a visit from the Maldives Acting High Commissioner, H.E. Ahmed Shiaan, who briefed me on the developments in the Maldives and the complexities associated with the resignation of President Nasheed.

In relation to CPA programmes and funding I met with my colleague the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development, Stephen O’Brien MP.

In May I met with new Executive Committee representative from Guernsey, Deputy Mike O’Hara, who is replacing Deputy Bernard Flouquet who lost his seat in the latest elections.

From Canada, I welcomed Senator Mike Duffy, who dropped in on Parliament whilst on holiday to the UK. Later, I would meet Senator Segal, who was in London attending the attending the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Meeting.

Over the last three months I have had the pleasure to speak to a number of delegates who were guests of CPA UK. In March there was an inward visit from Isle of Man. These newly-elected parliamentarians undertook a three day programme to learn more on the procedures in Westminster and to meet their Parliamentary counterparts.

In the same month I met a small delegation from Canada who were in London to discuss economic and trade development.

Also in March I met eleven delegates from Ghana who were in London to attend the Climate Change Capacity-building Programme. The purpose was to build awareness of the UK’s and Ghana’s national and parliamentary engagement with climate change decision-makers.

In April I met a delegation of women parliamentarians from Afghanistan and Pakistan. It was a landmark programme because of the inclusion of parliamentarians from Afghanistan. It had the aim of enhancing the empowerment of women parliamentarians within the political and developmental processes. In attendance was the CPA Vice-Chairperson, Dr Nafisa Shah, and whilst she was in London, I took the opportunity to catch up with her on CPA matters.

In July, I met briefly with another delegation from Pakistan comprising parliamentarians and representatives of PILDAT. They came to examine UK national security strategy and civil military relations.

Throughout this period, I had many regular meetings with the CPA Secretary-General and staff to discuss CPA policy and future developments.

Finally, in June I had the pleasure of addressing Commonwealth Scholars as part of a reception run by the Council for Education in the Commonwealth.
In mid-March it was announced that His Majesty King George Tupou V of Tonga had died. This sudden and sad news left me feeling that to have the Executive Committee meeting in Tonga might be considered insensitive during the official mourning period and that too much pressure would be placed on the officials in Tonga, whose priority should be to their Monarchy and the transition of rule. However, despite my worries I was relieved when Speaker Lasike and the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly reaffirmed their commitment to continue to host the meeting. I believe it is a testament to the people of Tonga that they were prepared to go ahead, and on behalf of the Executive Committee I express my sincerest gratitude.

Throughout my stay in Tongatapu the displays of mourning, the black and purple cloth, covered the Island and highlighted to me how much the nation was saddened by the King's death. King Tupou V's reign started with great upheaval for Tonga but he was an inspirational leader who sacrificed personal power for the enhancement of parliamentary democracy. He moved his country forward and although his reign was all too short, he left an important legacy for his people.

From my brief encounter with King Tupou VI, I am confident that reform will continue and I believe I share the thoughts of all the CPA when I wish His Majesty a long and productive reign.

The meeting in Tonga was the first full meeting of the Executive Committee, all the Sub-Committees and the Working Party since it met in July. I shall not go into detail on every issue, but there were a number of key discussions that were of particular note.

1. **Status**
   After some considerable time, the Secretariat had finally procured a report on the cost implications for the Association, listing the options for an Exempt Charity, Company or International Organisation. The Working Party and Executive Committee noted the paper and decided to review the matter in its entirety at a later date. Due to the close proximity of the next Working Party meeting to the Annual Conference and the insufficient time left, it was agreed that an additional meeting should be held in July in Quebec. At this meeting, it would be decided which status is most appropriate for the Association. (See page 8).

2. **Staffing Matters**
   Since becoming Chairperson, I have made no secret of the fact that I am committed to having a Programmes Director. I believe that this role, which existed in the past, is vital to ensure adequate coordination of our programmes, to generate income and to develop partnerships. This was one of the key aspects of the organogram that the Secretary-General presented. Although the Committee agreed to the creation of this post, implementation will be further considered in Sri Lanka.

3. **Commonwealth Youth Parliament**
   I am pleased to say that it was agreed this would become an annual event. The first in sequence will be in London in December 2012 as a Diamond Jubilee event. We have a responsibility to encourage younger generations to become involved in politics and learn about the importance of parliamentary democracy.

4. **Survey of Services**
   As an Association with such a large membership, it is important that we constantly review what we do and meet the demands placed on us. We should therefore listen to the parliamentarians who participate in our programmes. By having a survey on an annual basis we will ensure the Association maintains a high standard and meets the needs of its stakeholders.
On my return from Tonga, I met with the Speaker of the New Zealand Parliament, Rt Hon. Lockwood Smith MP. Also present at the meeting was the former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth and current Commonwealth Special Envoy Rt Hon. Sir Don McKinnon; Sri Lankan Speaker, Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa (President of the CPA); Dhammika Dasanayake, Secretary-General of the Sri Lankan Parliament; Hon Annette King MP; Hugh Bayley MP; David Agius MP and Moana Mackey MP. We updated the Speaker on what took place in Tonga and the forthcoming activities for the CPA. He showed a keen interest in the CPA and suggested a number of reforms the CPA might wish to consider for the future.

I had another opportunity to meet the Speaker when he and a delegation from New Zealand visited London in July.
The Working Party met for the final time on the 13 July in Quebec. Over one and a half days, it deliberated on the final recommendations which are to be put to the Executive Committee and General Assembly in Sri Lanka.

After twenty years of considering what would be the most appropriate status for the Association it was agreed that remaining as a charity was no longer suitable whether registered or unregistered. Instead, an alternative structure should be devised which would meet the criteria that the Working Party proposed as essential; see the final recommendations below.

1. That the Branches of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association establish a new non-charitable organisation (with non-diplomatic status) in order to reflect more accurately the international profile of the organisation, maintain the unity of the Commonwealth family of Parliaments and Legislatures, espouse aims and objectives similar to the existing organisation and also promote democracy and human rights, which are not charitable purposes.

2. That legal and other advice be obtained to determine the legal status of the new organisation and the implications of its establishment, including the cost and the processes required to manage this new initiative and that the proposal is achievable having regard to charity law restrictions on the use of charitable funds.

3. That advice be provided to the Executive Committee on how this may be achieved no later than the 2013 Mid-Year Meeting of the Executive Committee and that the Executive Committee prepare a resolution for presentation to the 2013 General Assembly.

Ultimately, and based on the consent of the General Assembly, it seems that the Association may become a form of company. Whilst there remain some concerns that much of the financial benefits (such as tax exemption), will be lost, reducing the amount available for programmes. However, I am pleased that at last there seems to be some momentum and a clearer way forward.

When I stood as Chairperson I promised to resolve the status issue, but I had begun to think that no consensus would be found. This issue has, in my opinion been poisoning the Association. I now hope that the matter will be closed by CPC 2013.

I take the opportunity on behalf of the Chairperson and the other members of the Working Party to thank Wilson Solicitors, Eric Phindela from South Africa and the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office for their advice and assistance. I plan to go on working closely with the Association's legal advisors to ensure that the proposal will provide the best long-term solution.

The second day was taken up with consideration of a number of different proposals, such as the creation of an Audit Committee. I regret the Working Party was not prepared to go all the way and recommend one. It does seem odd that an Association such as ours which promotes institutions like Public Accounts Committees and the need for financial accountability seems unwilling to implement such a body for itself, especially when dealing with public money. However, I am hopeful that the recommendation for an interim body to assess whether one is needed will eventually lead to the creation of an Audit Committee in some form.

The Working Party also produced recommendations on the Coordination Committee, a new Mission Statement, rotation of officers of the Association and the attendance of Multinational Parliaments and Regional Secretaries at ExCo and Annual Conferences.

However, looking at the Working Party Draft Report, I am disappointed that so few recommendations have been made. In my opinion, many of those that have been made could have been decided by the Executive Committee, saving many hundreds of thousands of pounds. Overall it seems that the Working Party, which was created to review then entire Association, became bogged down by the status issue. Nevertheless, now that the Working Party process is virtually complete, there are now no excuses for putting off decisions. We must now move on and make this Association fit for purpose in its second century.

Finally, I thank Speaker Chagnon and Deputy Speaker Houda-Pepin and the International Relations Team who were willing to host the Working Party meeting in Quebec. It was achieved at extremely short notice, and on top of having to organise the Canadian Regional Conference. However, on behalf of the Working Party I am extremely thankful and appreciative.

**42nd Conference of the British Isles and Mediterranean Region, Edinburgh, UK**

In June I attended the BIMR Regional Conference both in my capacity as Chair of CPA UK Executive Committee and Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee. Although I could only stay for a short period due to a Three Line Whip back at Westminster, I did take the opportunity to address the delegates at their dinner and answer their questions on the CPA.

Whilst there I also had the chance to catch up with future CPA Executive Committee members from the region, who will be at CPC 2012 in Sri Lanka.
43rd Africa Region Conference, Gauteng, South Africa

At the beginning of July I attended the Africa Region Conference. Due to the Olympic Torch being carried through my constituency, I was only able to stay for a short time. However I intended to make the most of my time in Johannesburg.

Whilst at the Conference I met members of the Consultative Committee, a Committee set up to examine progress on the status issue and concerns about the working relationship between me, as the Chairperson and the Secretary-General. I made clear the importance I attach to a close partnership between Chair and the Secretary-General.

I was very pleased to participate in this meeting, and I hope I alleviated any concerns that existed. Such Committees are a good idea and I should be happy to meet with other Committees if regions feel their existence necessary.

After the meeting I attended a welcome reception.

50th CPA Canadian Regional Conference, Quebec City, Canada

After the Working Party, I attended the Canadian Regional Conference. This was the first regional conference I have had the pleasure to attend in Canada. I found it to be extremely informative and a worthwhile experience. Two particular aspects stood out for me: the CWP General Meeting, which I had the honour of addressing, and the proposal brought before the Conference on partnering the Canadian Region with the Caribbean Region.

I was impressed with the work and future plans of CWP Canada in undertaking outreach work and their desire to promote their activities and agenda. In a similar vein I learnt what CWP Africa has been achieving, including their impressive newsletter which had recently been produced.

I believe that CWP International could certainly take note of these developments. I feel that CWP International needs more resources (see page 12) and I will propose a number of reforms for the attention of the CWP Steering Committee.

After I had the honour of speaking at the Opening Ceremony, I managed to catch the end of the first session in which Joe Preston MP, proposed an exciting new project. As with the Australia Region and its successful implementation of its Pacific Parliamentary Partnership Programme, so the Canadians would wish to replicate this initiative with the Caribbean Region. The proposal was met with enthusiasm and I look forward to the programme being delivered.

The following day I participated in the Opening Ceremony, and later met with the Chairman of the Council of Provinces, who also happens to be the CPA Vice-President. We had a productive meeting and discussed a range of issues. I later had the opportunity to meet a number of Sub-Regional Groups.
Diamond jubilee celebrations

London in 2012 has seen and will continue to see a number of amazing and historic events. I have been very privileged as Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee to represent the Association at a number of these occasions. I hope in some way I have been able to raise the public status of the CPA and promote its work amongst the many international parliamentarians, diplomats and other organisations I have had the opportunity to encounter.
On Commonwealth Day I met the Speaker of the House of Trinidad and Tobago, Hon. Wade Mark MP. Later the same day I spoke at a CPA Secretariat event to celebrate the theme of 'Connecting Cultures', I also attended the Commonwealth Day Observance in Westminster Abbey, in the presence of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. The ceremony was organised to a high standard and with over a thousand students present, it was clear that young people are at the heart of the Commonwealth.

Recently a number of people have suggested to me that the CPA could do more to celebrate this occasion. An idea proposed was to have every CPA member Parliament and Legislative Assembly initiate a Commonwealth Day debate in their respective chambers to raise awareness of the Commonwealth and the CPA. I plan to submit this proposal before the General Assembly as a resolution that those present will be committed to trying to achieve in 2013.

Our Patron, Her Majesty The Queen would continue to play a key role in other events that took place in London. On Tuesday 20 March, both UK Houses of Parliament presented loyal addresses to Her Majesty to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Her Accession to the Throne. I was delighted to be in the audience to hear the addresses and after the ceremony I was invited to the Royal Gallery to introduce Her Majesty to long-serving UK parliamentarians. I was also pleased that CPA UK was mentioned in the Lord Speaker’s address: “For we must remember that Your Jubilee will be celebrated with joy in your other realms and territories, and throughout the rest of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth as we know it today is of course one of the great achievements of your reign and under Your leadership continues to flourish, with a membership of 54 countries. It is still growing. It is a tremendous force for good in the world and we are aware of its special personal significance to you.

Many of us present here today take an active part in the work of the United Kingdom Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. We work to share our experiences, to learn from one another, and to promote democracy.

But our efforts are as nothing compared with those of Your Majesty in the service of your beloved Commonwealth. Over the years you have visited all but two Commonwealth countries—some, many times—and attended all Heads of Government meetings since 1997. We look on with admiration and pride at the triumphs of some of Your recent tours and it is significant that members of the Royal Family are representing You this year at the Jubilee celebrations being held in all those lands in which You are Head of State.”

In May the UK Parliament had its State Opening which was another high point of the calendar for me, particularly as it came after the longest parliamentary session in the UK since 1949. At a closing joint reception, I welcomed Ambassadors and High Commissioners and spoke on the role of the CPA within the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Day Message 2012
From the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Executive Committee

Commonwealth Day is a time for reflection and renewal. This year its celebratory aspects are enhanced by recognition of the Diamond Jubilee of the Head of the Commonwealth, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. She has epitomised the centrality of the Commonwealth’s achievement of binding together peoples from across the globe in a free association which seeks to uphold the rule of law, freedom of speech, respect for human rights and parliamentary democracy.

So far so good. Yet in looking forward we recognise that many challenges still face our parliamentarians if the primacy of good governance is to be asserted. Wrongs need to be addressed and standards raised for the full potential of our Commonwealth to be realised. Knowledge of what we are capable of achieving should spur us to multiply our contacts and deepen our mutual understanding.

Above all we must excite and enthuse that vast proportion of our peoples who are under the age of 25. Their impatience for advancement must be allied to a belief that good governance is the indispensible requisite for economic, cultural and social progress. In our free association of countries we can all help each other and thereby gain strength. Not just this year, but on future Commonwealth Days our aim should be to swell the chorus of approval and the number of those who gain hope from our continued cooperative efforts.
What Lies Ahead...

Over the period leading up to the September Conference I will be putting together a number of proposals that I believe are essential for the future success of the Association. These proposals, will I hope, enhance the Association externally and will show us to be worthy of the reputation many feel we deserve. These proposals which will be presented to the Executive Committee, will cover the following areas:

- The CWP - I believe it needs more financial and staff resources allocated to it;
- The Research and Communications Service has the potential to be the cornerstone of information sharing and promotion. It must be enhanced, it needs to be refreshed and reinforced
- We must engage more with the Commonwealth Heads of Government, be seen to be more active and interactive. We must be present in force in Sri Lanka 2013 and show that the CPA is one of the most important and influential members of the Commonwealth
- and much more...

With the Ministerial Taskforce encouraging the Commonwealth Secretariat to direct its parliamentary strengthening work towards the CPA, now is a perfect time for us to step up to the mark.

I believe that when our members demand a different status for the Association, they really want greater respect and an enhanced role with all the influence that comes with it. They want the CPA to be a Commonwealth leader. I intend to work towards that end.

Contact me

I am eager to be as accessible as possible, so please contact me as often as you want if there is an issue you wish to discuss.

My contact details are as follows:

Rt Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst MP
1 St Stephens Tower
Palace of Westminster
London
SW1A 0AA

Tel: +44 (0) 207 219 5214/3340
Email: alan.haselhurst.mp@parliament.uk
or matthew.salik@parliament.uk
Web address:
www.cpahq.org/cpahq/mem/default.aspx
www.siralanhaselhurst.net/

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A free hardcopy version is available upon request.
If you would like to contribute to any article or have any feedback, please contact:
Matthew Salik, CPA UK, Westminster Hall, Palace of Westminster, London, SW1A 0AA
Tel: +44 (0) 207 219 5464, email: matthew.salik@parliament.uk