



GUIDELINES FOR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES REVISED (NOVEMBER 2014)

1. BACKGROUND

The Office of Regional Representative (previously Regional Councillor) was created when the Executive Committee was established in 1967 with the objective of allowing all Branches to, at some time, have representation on the Committee. Each of the seven (now nine) Regions into which Branches were grouped was represented on the Committee by one Member from that Region. There were also on the Committee, in addition to the President, Vice-President, Immediate Past President, the Chairperson and the Treasurer, three General Councillors chosen for three years under Clause 24 (later Clause 19) of the old Constitution for their experience in the Association's work and affairs. The presence of these three Councillors was designed to give the Council's very rapid turnover of membership an element of continuity.

In 1974, the Office of Councillor under Clause 19 was abolished and the number of Regional Representatives was increased to two per Region. At this time the Immediate Past President ceased to attend.

Acting upon a recommendation of a Working Party, the General Assembly, meeting in Nairobi in November 1983, agreed to increase the number of representatives from each Region to three. As in 1974, their periods of service were, as far as possible, arranged so that one Regional Representative from each Region would retire and be replaced by a new Regional Representative each year.

Because of the need for a nucleus of longer-serving Members to guide the Association's affairs the term of a Regional Representative was fixed at three years. It was felt that from the second year in office Regional Representatives would function more effectively, having become acquainted with the work during their first year.

In 1990, the General Assembly agreed to divide the Australasia and Pacific Region into two, separating the Pacific and Australia into two Regions with three Regional Representatives each on the Executive Committee.

In 1995, the General Assembly, meeting in Sri Lanka, adopted a motion from the Executive Committee as follows:

...That the Asia Region as constituted at present have representation increased from four to six but that the Executive Committee should develop further proposals to enable a consistent approach in respect of future developments within the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

In 1996, the General Assembly, meeting in Malaysia adopted a further motion from the Executive Committee as follows:

...That membership of the African Region on the Executive Committee is increased to four,

In 2000, the General Assembly meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom adopted a similar motion as follows:

...That membership of the African Region on the Executive Committee is increased to six.

Other Regions continue to have three Representatives each.

And in 2004, the General Assembly meeting in Canada *adopted a motion to include the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians as a Member of the Executive Committee.* It also agreed that India should form its own Region separate from the Asia Region. Each of the Regions was to be represented by three Regional Representatives on the Executive Committee. This brought to total number of Regions to **nine**.

In 2010, the General Assembly meeting in Kenya, *agreed to elevate the status of the CWP Chairperson to become one of the Officers of the Association.* It further agreed constitutional amendments to make the Chairperson of the CWP one of the Officers of the Association and to enable the CWP Steering Committee to provide an alternate to the Chairperson, should she be unable to attend CPA business meetings. The General Assembly also accepted the recommendation that in the absence of both the CWP Chairperson and the CWP Vice-Chairperson, the alternate would be the Steering Committee Member from the Host Region.

2. DUTIES

The Office brings with it the advantage of giving Regional Representatives the opportunity to get to know the Commonwealth at first hand: as Members of the Executive Committee they meet Parliamentarians from all parts of the Commonwealth and visit Branches both in their own Regions and beyond.

Regional Representatives are expected to attend Executive Committee "mid-year" meetings (usually held in April) as well as those held in conjunction with the annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conferences. They are usually invited to CPA Conferences and Seminars, which are held in their Region, and may visit the Branches in their Region.

It should be stressed that Regional Representatives are expected to stay for the **duration of the meeting** in each case. If they are unable to attend a meeting, arrangements should be made to nominate an Alternate. If for any reason a Representative has to leave the Committee (e.g. losing a parliamentary seat), another person may act in their place. A summary of the position of Alternate and Acting Regional Representatives is set out in **Annex 1**.

Their chief tasks are as follows:

- To seek to create among Parliamentarians in their Region a greater interest in the Association, and among Branches a determination to participate more actively in its affairs.
- To seek to represent the views and concerns of their Region at Executive Committee meetings and to the CPA Secretariat.
- To keep abreast of political developments in their Region and maintain close liaison with Branch Presidents and Secretaries.
- Before a mid-year meeting of the Committee and before the annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Regional Representatives should inquire of Branches in their Region whether they wish any matters to be raised on their behalf.
- Should Members of the Executive Committee wish to propose projects, rules as to their presentation are set out in **Section 5** of this paper (agreed by the Committee at the meeting in Kuala Lumpur, August 1995).

3. TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS AND EXPENSES

3.1 Annual Conferences and Executive Committee Meetings

The CPA Secretariat will meet the cost of travel on a Business Class fare available locally for journeys over four hours by the most direct economic route to the mid-year meetings and to annual conferences. If journeys are less than four hours, the CPA will pay the cost of the most direct economical fare available.

Members of the Executive Committee are permitted, if they are accompanied by a spouse, to commute their Business Class tickets for two economy class tickets, but the total reimbursement will not exceed the cheapest single Business Class allocation.

Members should obtain at least two quotations where possible and practicable from airlines/agents to buy the cheapest business class fare ticket available locally. The quotations and itinerary should be sent to the Finance Directorate of the CPA Headquarters Secretariat and reimbursement or contribution will be made for the most direct economical route, depending on how the ticket purchased compares with the cheapest quotes obtained by the CPA Secretariat from its travel agents in London, United Kingdom.

Accommodation and meals for Committee Members on these occasions are the responsibility of the host Branch: there is no separate per diem allowance. As a result, Committee Members arriving before the official arrival day or leaving after the official departure day, are responsible for meeting their own accommodation and meal expenses.

A spouse fee will be payable at the annual Conference, and it is the responsibility of the Member concerned to pay this on behalf of an accompanying spouse. A spouse fee is not usually charged at mid-year meetings, but this is entirely at the discretion of the host Branch.

An Alternate or Acting Regional Representative attending an Executive Committee meeting will be entitled to be treated in a similar manner to the Member they are representing.

3.2 Regional Conferences, Seminars and Branch Visits

The CPA Secretariat will meet the cost of the most economical fare available (not business class) for Regional Representatives attending Conferences and Seminars and visiting Branches in their own Region provided the arrangements have been discussed and agreed in advance with the Director of Finance. Regional Representatives who wish to travel in another category may arrange upgrades or find financial assistance from other sources.

On these occasions, the Regional Representative is invariably the guest of the Branch visited. Accommodation and meals are normally provided by the host Branch for the duration of the Conference, Seminar or Branch visit: there is no separate per diem allowance. Branch visits usually last two days.

It is customary for the Regional Representative's own Branch to pay an allowance towards expenses; indeed, in most cases, the Branch meets the Regional Representative's entire travel bill for visits within the Region.

For reasons of economy, Regional Representatives are asked to tie in Branch visits with other journeys they may be making.

3.3 Conditions of provision of issue of tickets and other travel arrangements

Regional Representatives are reminded that they are responsible for the insurance they may require in connection with tickets and travel arrangements made for them on behalf of the Association.

As stated above, accommodation and meals may be provided by host Branches but Regional Representatives are responsible for incidental expenses including entertainment, alcoholic drinks, telephone and fax, laundry etc.

Members are responsible for arranging their own travel and health insurance whilst attending any CPA meeting.

3.4 Frequency of visits within a region

Ideally, each Branch should receive a visit from one of the Regional Representatives each year. However, it is necessary to consider the circumstances (financial and otherwise) of each Branch and an annual visit is often not practicable besides involving Branches in expenditure which they might find difficult to justify. The CPA Secretariat has a small budget available to assist with the travel of Regional Representatives whose Branches are unable to provide assistance. Any arrangements should be discussed in advance with the Director of Finance, who will liaise closely with the Secretary-General.

Regional Representatives from each Region should, therefore, consult with the Secretary-General and each other to coordinate their visits to the various Branches and ensure that the timing of their visit is convenient for and welcomed by each Branch.

4. NATURE OF BRANCH VISITS

On a Branch visit, the Regional Representative's first priority will be to meet the officers and officials of the local Branch and to have a discussion with the Branch Executive Committee, if one exists.

An endeavour should be made to make appropriate courtesy calls and to meet formally or informally the maximum possible number of local Members.

A visit to the Parliament (whether or not it is in session), an interest in its staff, the building itself, the library, and other facilities, would be welcome.

In discussions with the Branch, the Regional Representative will seek to ascertain how active the Branch is, and for this purpose may have in mind such questions as:

- Has the Branch adopted a set of Rules? If so, are they up to date? Is there an Executive Committee? Are regular meetings held? (A Model Set of Rules is maintained at CPA Headquarters and can be made available.)
- Does it produce an Annual Report? If so, are copies sent to the CPA Secretariat in London?
- How many Members receive *The Parliamentarian*, to which every Member of the Association is entitled? Are they satisfied with its content and distribution? Members who wish to, but do not receive it, should be advised to inform the Branch Secretary who will, in turn, inform the Headquarters Secretariat.
- Does the Branch receive other publications, particularly Newsletters, from the CPA Secretariat?
- Is it aware of the information service available at the CPA Secretariat or of the assistance which the Conference Assistance Fund and the Working Capital?
- Are its relations with the CPA Secretariat, with the Regional Secretariat, if any, and with other Branches satisfactory?

Of course, Regional Representatives will always bear in mind the fact that Branches are autonomous and nothing they say or do should interfere with that autonomy.

It is essential that, before a visit is embarked upon, the Regional Representatives or the Secretary-General clear with the Branches concerned about the feasibility of the visit and the terms on which it is undertaken.

It is hardly necessary to stress that Regional Representatives must always consult the Secretary-General, before undertaking any travel likely to involve the Association in possible expense.

5. PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL OF PROJECTS AND EXPENDITURES PROPOSED BY MEMBERS

5.1 Background

When a project is developed by the Secretariat, internal financial disciplines require that comparative costs be obtained by the staff member(s) responsible independently and jointly with Director of Finance, the latter of whom will then make a full financial analysis. Obviously, very minor or non-project expenditures may not need such analysis but because matters of principle and policy may be involved, it has been requested of all staff that the two latter officials mentioned be kept fully informed from as early a stage as possible especially because changes may be needed in the budget.

The financial analysis may be followed by a request for quotations or tenders to be obtained. It is now the system in the Secretariat that if a Board sits to examine such matters, a report would then be made to the Secretary-General, on the advice of the Director of Finance, regarding the final decision so made.

5.2 Procedures to be used by Members

A Member who wishes to bring a project or proposal to the attention of the Committee is therefore required to forward, at least eight weeks in advance of a meeting, all available details to the Secretariat (either directly to the Secretary-General or through the Secretary of the Subcommittee concerned).

The project will then be examined from the point of view of policy as well as that of feasibility and finance as described in the preceding section. If details are found insufficient at this stage, the Member will be requested to provide further information and may be informed that a delay in submission to the Committee could result.

When the Secretary-General has received the proposal, it will be examined with his/her Management Team. A decision is then made and the Member will be kept informed that the project is being submitted to the Committee or will suggest variations. It will be open to the Member to insist that the project should be submitted to the Committee without delay, along with the Secretariat analysis even if this is adverse.

The project details will be made available to the Subcommittee concerned and to the Finance Subcommittee. The paper which is presented to the Executive Committee/Subcommittees will, among other things, make a definite recommendation as to acceptance, rejection or amendment and will also comment on whether it would be appropriate to call for quotations/tenders.

On receipt of a decision from the Executive Committee to proceed, the Secretariat will take necessary action to include the matter in the Budget and will report back on progress at the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

POSITION OF ALTERNATE AND ACTING REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

SUMMARY OF CURRENT CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION

Under the current Constitution,

1. A Regional Representative takes up an appointment for three (or possibly two) years [Articles 23 (1) and (2)],
2. If a current Representative is unable to attend a Meeting then an **Alternate** may attend. An Alternate is nominated as such by the Branch of the Representative in question - no election by the General Assembly is involved or envisaged. A decision regarding an Alternate has to be made for each separate meeting [Article 25 (1)(b)],
3. If a Regional Representative leaves the Executive Committee for whatever reason (e.g. resignation, losing a parliamentary seat), then another person may **act** in their place. An **Acting** Regional Representative is nominated as such by a Branch - no election by the General Assembly is involved or envisaged [Article 23(7)],
4. An Acting Representative cannot act beyond a General Assembly as that body is required to fill every vacant post. The only exception to this is that a post may be filled by a Branch but the name of the appointee could come later. [Articles 13(2)(f) and 23(5)].
5. Where a Branch is unable to nominate an Alternate or Acting Regional Representative, the Constitution allows for the Region's stand-by Branch to do so under specified circumstances.

The use of the term "Acting" is necessary because the Representative's replacement may only be appointed by the General Assembly but may be required to attend an earlier Executive Committee Meeting, whether "stand alone" or immediately prior to a General Assembly.

The terminology of appointment should be noted: Alternate and Acting Regional Representatives are "nominated" by Branches while permanent Regional Representatives are "elected" by the General Assembly.

A Branch may not nominate an Alternate if a post is vacant nor may it nominate an Acting Representative if the current representative is in post. Nor, it may be added, is it possible for the General Assembly to elect an Acting Regional Representative - the Constitution does not allow for this.

There are further restrictions on Alternates attending an Executive Committee meeting immediately preceding a General Assembly [Article 25(3)(b)]. The Alternate Representative at the Executive Committee Meeting has to be first a delegate to the General Assembly and Plenary Conference. The presence of an Alternate Regional Representative therefore results in the loss to the Branch of one vote at the General Assembly. This is in keeping with voting practice in Parliaments where proxy voting does not exist.

Finally it may be noted that where a vacancy exists, it is possible for one person to attend as an Acting Regional Representative and for a different person to be appointed when the filling of the vacancy comes up before the General Assembly.