TOP 10 TIPS FOR NEW PARLIAMENTARIANS

TIP 1. DON'T PANIC!
Though this comes straight out of the Hitchikker's Guide to the Galaxy, the advice is still sound for new parliamentarians. Many will have walked in the same shoes as you, and most, if not all, have come away unscathed. Stay calm and follow the advice below. A good tip, get your bearings. Go to Parliament on day one and each of your rocket ships. Take a seat in the Chamber and congratulate yourself for getting this far. People want you to succeed. Especially all the people that just elected you. It's in their interest that you do well.

TIP 2. REMEMBER WHO YOU WORK FOR
As a parliamentarian you may have to answer to your local political party, your whip, a senior minister, the Speaker, a committee chair and perhaps lobbyists. But the boss of the boss is the people that elected you. You are accountable to them, but you are not answerable. They are the people who can make your career. You must therefore, keep reminding yourself of this process of being elected every four to five years. But you are a democratically elected representative and although decisions are delegated to you to make in Parliament, it is every bit as important that you remember whatever decision you make, they are the ones you have to justify your decision to. However, you cannot please everyone all of the time. There will be a point you think someone is oversensitive and treat them well, they are worth their weight in gold. You never know they may offer advice you didn't even know to ask. No one expects a new Member of Parliament to know all the answers. Don't be embarrassed to ask for help! Seek out clerks and parliamentary officials, yourwhips, former or current experienced parliamentarians or the Speaker. He or she and the committees of the House are there to help. From the very beginning it is essential that you take the time to determine what you will, but more importantly, what you won't do. It is helpful to remember you are human and not just a robot. Look outside of Parliament. Use academics, NGOs, CSOs and most importantly remember the CPA is here to help you! Go on induction trainings, use online courses. What you learn early on will be invaluable for years to come.

TIP 3. SEEK ADVICE
As the saying goes "for God's sake pull yourself together!" Sit and write down what you want to achieve whilst you are a parliamentarian. This might be a one year goal, or for your whole term of office. Be realistic. Identify how you want to do it, what steps are needed, who can help you achieve this goal. Identify every step, but also think of barriers you may face. Talk to your whips, prior parliamentarians, and to try as best as possible to keep your moral compass pointing in the right direction. Follow your codes of conduct, be thorough in complying with Member's interests and ensure what you are transparent and not corrupt in actuality or perception. As a parliamentarian, you are a rolemodel and so ensure you uphold the highest standards. But be warned, "there is no such thing as a free lunch!"

TIP 4. HAVE A PLAN
As a parliamentarian you have to work out what you want to deal with whilst you are in Parliament. This might be a one year goal, or for your whole term of office. Be realistic. Identify every step, but also think of barriers you may face. Talk to your whips, prior parliamentarians, and to try as best as possible to keep your moral compass pointing in the right direction. Follow your codes of conduct, be thorough in complying with Member's interests and ensure what you are transparent and not corrupt in actuality or perception. As a parliamentarian, you are a rolemodel and so ensure you uphold the highest standards. But be warned, "there is no such thing as a free lunch!"

TIP 5. SPECIALISE
A good piece of advice for new parliamentarians is to develop a speciality or an expertise in one or more areas. You will inevitably come across something you did in a previous career or something very important to your constituency. It might be on education, sustainable development, cybersecurity or even agriculture. Specialising in one area will keep abreast of developments in the area and will work with other leading experts. Why is this important? Parliamentarians who become known as an expert tend to be approached more for their input and will often be the first to get called upon in a debate. You might also get on a relevant committee or if you are lucky, a ministerial post. As an expert tend to get recognition from all Members and the Government. You will get asked for your input and will often be the first to get called upon in a debate. You might also get on a relevant committee or if you are lucky, a ministerial post.

TIP 6. DRAW YOUR RED LINES
From the very beginning it is important that you take the time to determine what you will, but more importantly, what you won't do. It is helpful to remember you are human and not just a robot. Look outside of Parliament. Use academics, NGOs, CSOs and most importantly remember the CPA is here to help you! Go on induction trainings, use online courses. What you learn early on will be invaluable for years to come. A good tip, get your bearings. Go to Parliament on day one and each of your rocket ships. Take a seat in the Chamber and congratulate yourself for getting this far. People want you to succeed. Especially all the people that just elected you. It's in their interest that you do well.

TIP 7. KEEP IT CLEAN
What you are standing at an election you often have to come across as a saint. Whiter than white and pure as the driven snow. But as a parliamentarian you are also a human being that can make mistakes and no parliamentarian is immune to mistakes. You will inevitably face some criticism from colleagues, your constituents and others. You'll be told to have a thick-skin and to be impervious to all pressures and problems. At times you will have setbacks. You won't always achieve your goals the first-time around. You will inevitably face bad press, abuse on social media, criticism from colleagues, your constituents and others. You'll be told to have a thick-skin and to be impervious to all pressures and problems. At times you will have setbacks. You won't always achieve your goals the first-time around. You will inevitably face bad press, abuse on social media, criticism from colleagues, your constituents and others. You'll be told to have a thick-skin and to be impervious to all pressures and problems. At times you will have setbacks. You won't always achieve your goals the first-time around. You will inevitably face bad press, abuse on social media, criticism from colleagues, your constituents and others. You'll be told to have a thick-skin and to be impervious to all pressures and problems. At times you will have setbacks. You won't always achieve your goals the first-time around. You will inevitably face bad press, abuse on social media, criticism from colleagues, your constituents and others. You'll be told to have a thick-skin and to be impervious to all pressures and problems. At times you will have setbacks. You won't always achieve your goals the first-time around. You will inevitably face bad press, abuse on social media, criticism from colleagues, your constituents and others. You'll be told to have a thick-skin and to be impervious to all pressures and problems. At times you will have setbacks. You won't always achieve your goals the first-time around.