

# COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES

*“To encourage Commonwealth Parliaments to enable effective and full participation of persons with disabilities at all levels.”*

Find out more here: [www.cpahq.orgour-networks/commonwealth-parliamentarians-with-disabilities/](http://www.cpahq.orgour-networks/commonwealth-parliamentarians-with-disabilities/)



The **Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD)** network supports the capacity of Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff with disabilities to be more effective in their roles. The network also encourages all Parliamentarians to include a perspective mindful of disabilities in all aspects of their role - legislation, oversight and representation - and helping Parliaments to become institutions that are sensitive to issues surrounding disabilities.

**Addressing issues that  
Parliamentarians and  
parliamentary staff with  
disabilities face, in a  
rapidly changing world**



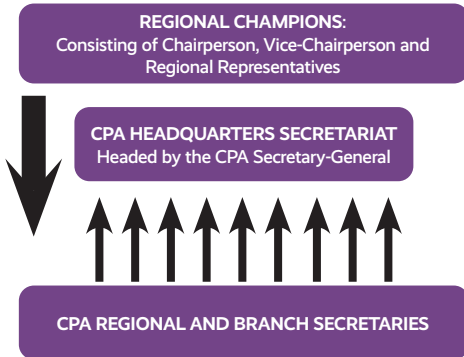
THE NETWORK IN FIGURES

**450M+**  
PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES,  
REPRESENTED BY THE  
NETWORK

**180**  
LEGISLATURES/  
PARLIAMENTS (MAKE UP  
THE NETWORK)

**5**  
YEARS SINCE THE  
NETWORK WAS  
FOUNDED

## How is the CPwD organised?



The network is governed by the CPA's **Constitution**, passed by the CPA's General Assembly in 1993.

- The **Champions** meet twice a year and comprises the Chairperson and nine 'Regional Champions' (representatives).
- The Network's Regional Champions meetings are the ultimate authority of the CPwD.
- The **CPA Headquarters Secretariat**, headed by the **Secretary-General**, administers the CPwD with the support of the Network Coordinator. Support also emanates from **Regional and Branch Secretaries**, usually senior parliamentary staff who mobilise the resources of their Parliaments in pursuit of the aims and activities of the CPA and, by extension, the CPwD.

## What are CPA Branches?

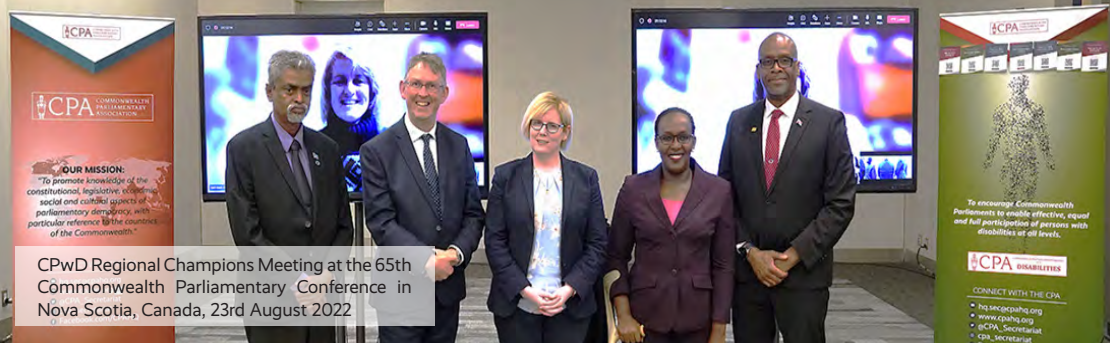
The CPwD is a network within the CPA.

- The CPA represents almost **180** Parliaments and Legislatures in **56** Commonwealth countries.
- The CPA network extends to over **18,000** Parliamentarians and the parliamentary staff that support them.
- The CPA is the only Commonwealth organisation representing **national, state, provincial and territorial Parliaments and Legislatures**.
- CPA-member Parliaments are democratic, law-making Legislatures.
- All CPA Branches are autonomous and regarded as equal.
- The CPA has nine regions: **Africa; Asia; Australia; British Islands and Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic; India; Pacific; South-East Asia**.

## History of CPwD

Recognising the need to increase the representation of persons with disabilities in political institutions, the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) network was established in 2018 to facilitate activities and programmes to champion and increase the representation of persons with disabilities in Commonwealth Parliaments and to work towards the mainstreaming of disability considerations in all CPA activities.





CPwD Regional Champions Meeting at the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Nova Scotia, Canada, 23rd August 2022

In 2022, its elected Chairperson became part of the CPA Executive Committee. The current Chairperson is Hon. Laura Kanushu, a Member of the Parliament of Uganda for persons with disabilities.



Previous Chairpersons include:

- Hon. Dennitah Ghati, Former Member of the National Assembly of Kenya - 2021-2022
- Hon. Kevin Murphy, MLA, Former Speaker of the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia - 2020-2021

## What does the CPwD do?

### Capital Investment Fund

The CPwD Capital Investment Fund is a grant established by the CPA Secretariat in 2021 to improve the accessibility of its member Parliaments.

The priorities for the Fund include, but are not limited to, improving the physical accessibility of Parliaments and the procurement of assistive technology.

Examples of initiatives that the Fund supports include:

- **Improved physical access:** Installation of ramps, automated doors, widened doorways, and accessible lifts for people with mobility impairments.
- **Inclusive communication:** Transcriptions, sign language

interpretation, braille, and screen readers for easy access to information for various impairments.

- **Document accessibility:** Conversion of documents into easy-read formats and implementation of website text-to-speech features.
- **Resting and facilities:** Benches/resting areas in corridors, accessible restrooms, and expanded accessible parking.
- **Enhanced participation:** Provision of hearing loops in meeting rooms to aid those with hearing impairments.

### Inclusive Communications

The network is leading the way in encouraging for Parliaments to become more inclusive for persons with disabilities. In 2020, the **Disability Inclusive Communications Guidelines for Parliaments** were published, guiding Parliaments in sensitising their communications for persons with disabilities.

### Outreach and Engagement

The CPwD actively marks the International Day of Persons with Disabilities across the Commonwealth and supports other global initiatives through many international meetings and events. In recent years, these have included the Global Disability Summits in 2018 and 2022. Most important is the **Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference**, the CPA's annual conference where the Network's Regional Champions meet to discuss the direction and activities of the Network.

The CPwD network also publishes a biannual e-Newsletter to its audience, communicating news on CPwD and related developments.



### Who do we work with?

The CPwD network partners with various organisations in achieving its aims. These include **inter-governmental organisations, regional organisations, academic institutions, non-governmental organisations, professional training bodies, private businesses, think tanks, and other research bodies.**

### Bilateral Support

The CPwD works with individual Parliaments to support them in establishing and strengthening their accessibility and to ensure, through the **CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures**, Parliaments and electoral practices adhere to international commitments, goals, and standards, such as the CRPD and SDG 16.7.



SOME OF OUR RECENT RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS



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We invest in people *Standard*

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