CPA SMALL BRANCHES
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

CPA SMALL BRANCHES

"To empower small Parliaments to overcome national and global challenges through cooperation, advocacy and the strengthening of parliamentary democracy and good governance." **Our Mission**

Find out more here: **www.cpahq.org**

The **CPA Small Branches** network represents the smallest jurisdictions in all regions of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) to identify their particular needs and requirements in parliamentary strengthening, development and cooperation. The CPA has a long history of working with its Small Branches and since 1981, has held an annual CPA Small Branches Conference for Parliamentarians from some of the world's smallest Parliaments and Legislatures to promote cooperation and share best practice.

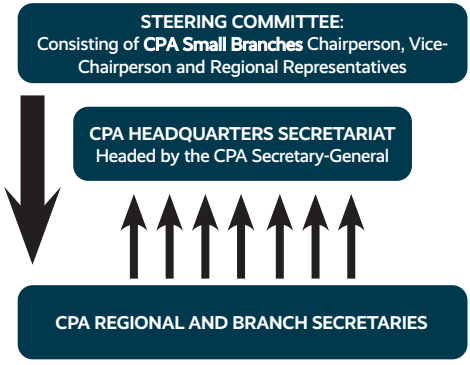
THE NETWORK IN FIGURES

1,000+
PARLIAMENTARY MEMBERS (APPROX.)

40+
LEGISLATURES/ PARLIAMENTS (MAKE UP THE NETWORK)

40+
NUMBER OF YEARS THE ASSOCIATION HAS BEEN WORKING

How is the Small Branches network organised?



- The network is governed by the CPA's **Constitution** established in 1993 and the CPA Small Branches Terms of Reference agreed in 2022.
- The **Steering Committee** of ten Members usually meets twice a year and is made up of the CPA Small Branches Chairperson and nine Regional Representatives.
- The **CPA Headquarters Secretariat**, headed by the **CPA Secretary-General**, administers the CPA Small Branches network 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 network.

What are CPA Branches?

The Small Branches network within the CPA

- The CPA represents more than **180** Parliaments and Legislatures in **53 out of 56** Commonwealth countries.
- The CPA network extends to over **18,000** Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff.
- The CPA is the only Commonwealth organisation to represent **national, state, provincial and territorial Parliaments and Legislatures**.
- CPA members are democratic, law-making Parliaments and Legislatures.
- All CPA Branches are autonomous and regarded as equal.
- There are nine regions of the CPA: **Africa; Asia; Australia; British Islands and Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic; India; Pacific; South-East Asia.**

History of CPA Small Branches

Since 1981, the CPA Small Branches has held its Annual Conference as part of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. Initially as a means to boost cooperation between small jurisdictions within the CPA, the network has continued to grow. In addition to its original remit, the network now delivers a number of programmes in parliamentary strengthening and a range of relevant thematic areas, all towards strengthening the development and resilience in small jurisdictions across the Commonwealth.

In 2016, the elected CPA Small Branches Chairperson became a member of the CPA Executive Committee.

CPA Small Branches Chairpersons include:

- Hon. Valerie Woods, MNA, Speaker of the National Assembly of Belize - 2024 to present
- Joy Burch, Speaker of the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly - 2022-2024
- Hon. Niki Rattle, Former Speaker of the Parliament of the Cook Islands - 2019-2021
- Hon. Angelo Farrugia, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Malta - 2016-2019

What does the network do?

Regional Initiative Funds

Funding for Regional Initiatives is approved in the Small Branches Work Programme annually. Funding is provided specifically to facilitate a clerk exchange, with a focus on strengthening technical capacity of the host clerk and parliament. This is in line with the fund's priority issue areas, identified at the previous Steering Committee meeting. Funding is available for two regions per year.

Sustainable Economic Development

The CPA Small Branches network delivered a Sustainable Economic Development Workshop in Valletta, Malta. As part of the Workshop, a Committee was formed to scrutinise and assess SED across the Commonwealth and developed a set of recommendations. The network pursues these recommendations through a range of workshops and bilateral programmes.

Climate Change

The network is leading the way in pushing the climate change agenda. Over the last few years it has delivered a number of activities and publications for the benefit of its members. Recently, the **Small States and Parliamentarian's Toolkit: A Guide for Effective Climate Change Action** was published and the CPA Small Branches network actively took part in the UN Climate Change Conference.

Most recently, the network, in partnership with UNDP delivered a workshop on Multilateral Climate Negotiations, and a CPA Parliamentary Academy Course has been produced on 'Parliamentary Action on Climate Change in Small Jurisdictions'. The network will continue to pursue a number of activities to further support small Parliaments in adapting and mitigating climate change. The network will work with organisations such as UNESCO and the Commonwealth Small States Centre of Excellence and others to drive this agenda.

Public Financial Management

Formed by McGill University and led by Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the network has undertaken research specifically focused on financial oversight conducted by legislatures of small jurisdictions. Research and resources were published. In addition, the network continues to work with the Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees (CAPAC) in supporting smaller jurisdictions and promoting best practice.

Scholarship Award Scheme

Also part of the network's partnership with McGill University's School of Continuing Studies is the CPA's scholarship scheme which supports Clerks and officials from CPA Small Branches to undertake the annual Professional Development Certificate in Parliamentary Management.

CPA Small Branches Conference

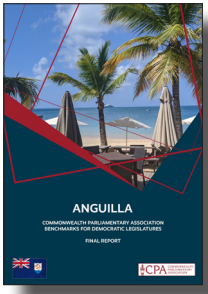
Taking place in advance of the CPA Annual Conference, the CPA Small Branches Conference is an opportunity for Parliamentarians from small jurisdictions to examine and discuss strategies to meet the unique developmental needs of the CPA's smallest Legislatures.

The Conference includes four workshops which seek to build parliamentary capacity and create greater opportunities for the sharing of knowledge, parliamentary strengthening and cooperation across the network.

Who do we work with?

The CPA Small Branches network partners with a wide range of 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.**

SOME OF OUR RECENT RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS



SIGN-UP TO OUR MAILING LIST

CPA COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is an international inter-parliamentary organisation.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

© Commonwealth Parliamentary Association 2026

Cover design and illustrations by Matthew Salik with elements and images sourced from CPA Branches, Shuttershock and Freepik.com.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)
CPA Headquarters Secretariat
Richmond House, UK Houses of Parliament
London, SW1A 0AA, United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)20 7799 1460 | Email: hq.sec@cpahq.org
Web: www.cpahq.org