



COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

**SEMINAR FOR
PARLIAMENTARIANS OF 12TH
PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA
REPORT**

10-11 MAY 2022



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PARLIAMENT OF
THE CO-OPERATIVE
REPUBLIC
OF GUYANA



About the CPA

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) connects, develops, promotes and supports parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and the implementation of the enduring values of the Commonwealth. The CPA collaborates with parliaments and other organisations, including the intergovernmental community, to achieve its statement of purpose. It brings parliamentarians and parliamentary staff together to exchange ideas among themselves and with experts in various fields, to identify benchmarks of good practices and new policy options they can adopt or adapt in the governance of their societies.

About the authors

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Acknowledgements

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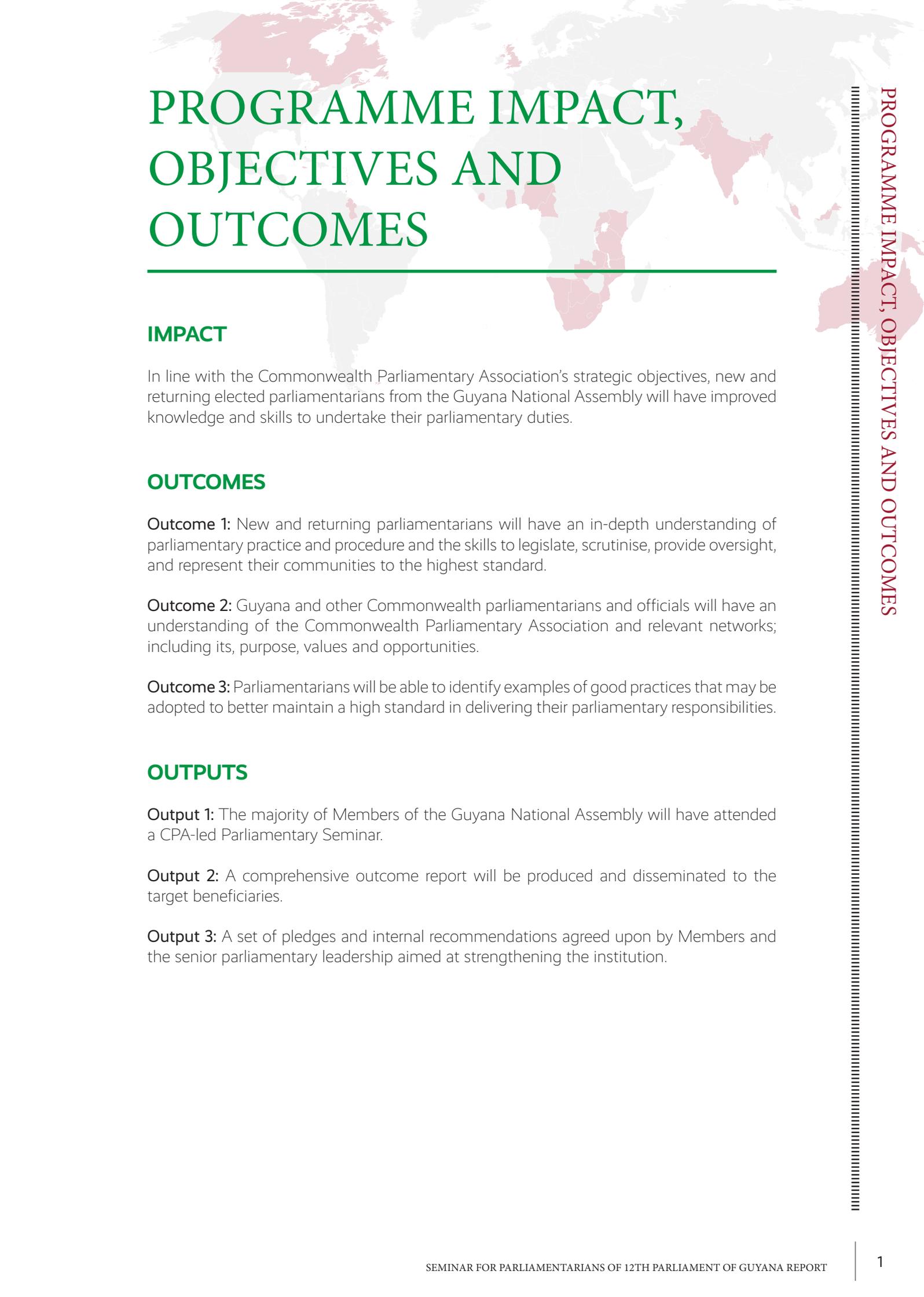
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CONTENTS

PROGRAMME IMPACT, OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES	1
PROGRAMME OVERVIEW	2
PROGRAMME BACKGROUND	3
SEMINAR SPEAKERS	4
PROGRAMME SUMMARY	6
MONITORING AND EVALUATION REPORT	25
SEMINAR PROGRAMME	27
ABOUT THE CPA	35





PROGRAMME IMPACT, OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

IMPACT

In line with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's strategic objectives, new and returning elected parliamentarians from the Guyana National Assembly will have improved knowledge and skills to undertake their parliamentary duties.

OUTCOMES

Outcome 1: New and returning parliamentarians will have an in-depth understanding of parliamentary practice and procedure and the skills to legislate, scrutinise, provide oversight, and represent their communities to the highest standard.

Outcome 2: Guyana and other Commonwealth parliamentarians and officials will have an understanding of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and relevant networks; including its, purpose, values and opportunities.

Outcome 3: Parliamentarians will be able to identify examples of good practices that may be adopted to better maintain a high standard in delivering their parliamentary responsibilities.

OUTPUTS

Output 1: The majority of Members of the Guyana National Assembly will have attended a CPA-led Parliamentary Seminar.

Output 2: A comprehensive outcome report will be produced and disseminated to the target beneficiaries.

Output 3: A set of pledges and internal recommendations agreed upon by Members and the senior parliamentary leadership aimed at strengthening the institution.

Programme Overview

On 10 and 11 May 2022, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Secretariat in collaboration with the Parliament of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana delivered a two-day programme for Members of the National Assembly.

The programme saw the contribution of highly experienced and knowledgeable parliamentarians, Presiding Officers, and clerks from across the globe and was conducted in a hybrid format with some speakers joining via Zoom videoconferencing software.

Throughout the two-day programme, parliamentarians participated in a wide range of sessions that not only focused on enhancing their knowledge and expertise on matters relating to parliamentary practice but also provided them with skills to strengthen their democratic responsibilities in the new parliamentary term.

The Seminar was opened by the following individuals:

- Ms. Hermina Gilgeours, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly
- Mr. Lenox Shuman MP, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly
- Mr Sherlock E. Isaacs, Clerk of the National Assembly
- Hon. Vincent Henry, Member of the National Assembly
- Hon. Dewanchandrebhose Sharma Sharman, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Suriname
- The Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George, Vice-President of ParlAmericas
- Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
- Hon. Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark A. Phillips MSS MP, Prime Minister of Guyana
- Hon. Manzoor Nadir MP, Speaker of the National Assembly of Guyana

The following individuals joined as in-person resource persons delivering the Seminar:

- The Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago
- Janet Routledge, Member of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia
- Artour Sogomonian, Clerk Assistant at the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia

The following CPA staff members facilitated the Seminar:

- James Pinnell, Deputy Head of Multilateral Programmes
- Clive Barker, Programmes Manager
- Avni Kondhia, Executive Assistant



Seminar Speakers

Stephen Twigg
Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

Satpal Gulati
Joint Secretary at the Parliament of India

Hon. Rubagumya Furaha Emma MP
Member of the Parliament of Rwanda

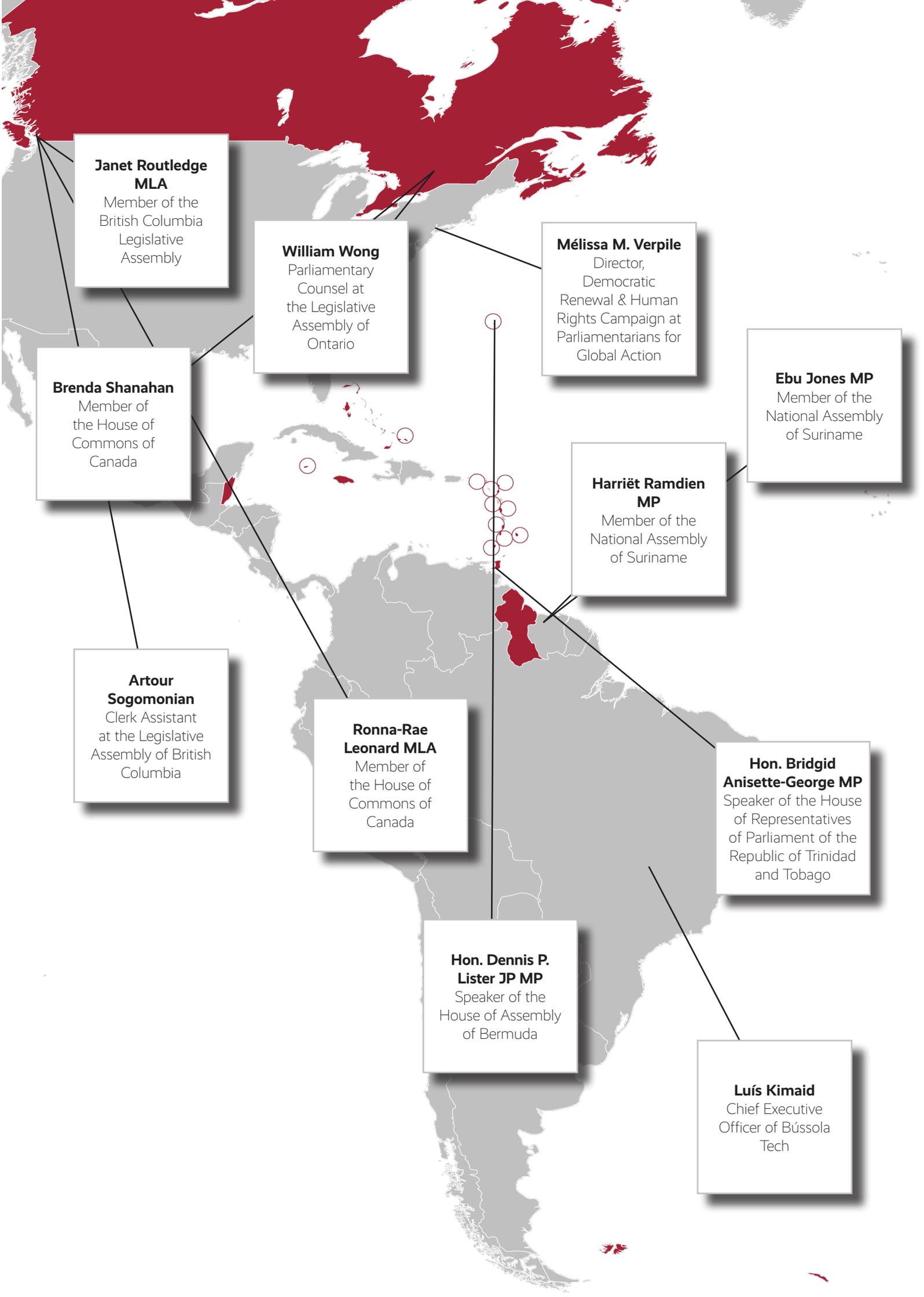
Hon. Collins Dauda MP
Member of the Parliament of Ghana

Dr Anne Gallagher, AO
Director-General of the Commonwealth Foundation

Liam Laurence Smyth
Clerk of Legislation at the House of Commons

T. G. Chandrashekar
Additional Secretary at the Parliament of India

Hon. Beverley Schäfer MPP
Deputy Speaker of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament



**Janet Routledge
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Member of the
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Brenda Shanahan

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the House of
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Member of the
National Assembly
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Clerk Assistant
at the Legislative
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**Ronna-Rae
Leonard MLA**

Member of
the House of
Commons of
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**Hon. Bridgid
Anisette-George MP**

Speaker of the House
of Representatives
of Parliament of the
Republic of Trinidad
and Tobago

**Hon. Dennis P.
Lister JP MP**

Speaker of the
House of Assembly
of Bermuda

Luís Kimaid

Chief Executive
Officer of Bússola
Tech

Programme Summary

This section of the Report provides a summary of the Seminar, capturing key findings from each of the sessions.

Session 1: The Opportunities and Challenges of Being a Newly Elected MP

The opening session saw Members of the National Assembly, Hon. Savitri Sonia Parag MP and Hon. Devin Sears MP share the experiences, opportunities, challenges and lessons learned in their terms, along with The Hon. Speaker Annisette-George MP, who shared her own experience. They provided insight into the following:

- The importance of ensuring that the public is aware of the impact of laws passed by Parliament.
- Conducting oneself in a professional manner, befitting of a public servant.
- Taking time to understand the parliamentary process (e.g. the Standing Orders).

The Members of the National Assembly in attendance were also provided with the opportunity to reflect on their opportunities and challenges during their time in office. These reflections were used as a basis to guide discussions during the remainder of the Seminar. Some reflections included the following:

Opportunities

- Ability to inspire and motivate as well as to **lead change** in Guyana.
- Opportunity to serve citizens of the country.
- To be able to hold the Government accountable.

Challenges

- Understanding and knowing when to apply parliamentary procedure.
- Realising the needs of the public and being able to fulfil these.
- Acrimonious debates between parties.
- Expectation management.

There are a variety of ways in which these challenges can be overcome, which are addressed in this report. The challenge regarding acrimonious debates was noted by several Members and, in response, as mentioned in the session on *Political Parties, Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution*, we would emphasise the importance of activities in Parliament that can be explored through cross-party groups. These groups can meet periodically to discuss how consensus can be achieved on specific policy issues to improve the legislation that is passed. Thereby addressing the concerns of citizens.





The CPA's Top 10 Tips For New Parliamentarians



1: Don't Panic

Many people 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 take a look around. Get comfortable with your surroundings. 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 in advocating for their needs.

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 and a committee chair. But your boss is the people that elected you. You are answerable and accountable to them. It can be easy to forget as you only have to go through the 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 essential that you remember whatever decision you make, they are the ones you have to justify your decisions to. However, you cannot please everyone all of the time, perhaps some of the people some of the time. If you try to make everyone happy, you will probably make nobody happy.





3: Seek Advice

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, your whips, former or current experienced parliamentarians to give you advice and support. Befriend a clerk 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. Look outside of Parliament. Use academics, NGOs, CSOs and most importantly remember the CPA is here to help too. Go on induction trainings, use online courses. What you learn early on will be invaluable for years to come.

4: Have A Plan

As the saying goes "fail to plan, plan to fail". 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 easy wins, but also the more challenging reforms. You might want to change the law or get the Government to change a policy. Pin your plan to your office wall as a reminder. A set of goals are important to keep you on the right track and stop you from getting distracted. You will also have something to measure your performance against. Remember there are no job descriptions for parliamentarians, so its up to you!



5: Specialise



A good piece of advice for new parliamentarians is to develop a speciality or an expertise in one or more thematic areas. It could be something you did in a previous career or something very important to your local area. It might be on education, sustainable development, cybersecurity or even parliamentary procedure. Whatever you decide, take steps to keep abreast of developments and work with other leading experts. Why is this important? parliamentarians who become known 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.



6: Draw Your Red Lines

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 parliamentary-robot. You will have a family, friends, hobbies, maybe even an additional career outside of Parliament. To ensure you have a healthy work-life balance, determine how much time you want to dedicate to being a parliamentarian so that other things don't get pushed to the side. There is often a pressure early on to commit to everything, to attend every reception, every meeting and work very late. But keep a tight grip on your diary, and be willing to say NO.



7: Keep It Clean



When 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 be flawed. Therefore it is important to remember to manage expectations 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 Members interests and ensure what you are transparent and not corrupt in actuality or perception. As a Parliamentarian, you are a role model and so ensure you uphold the highest of standards. But be warned, "there is no such thing as a free lunch!"

8: Keep Positive

Mental health and wellbeing is often overlooked by parliamentarians who feel they should 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, the electorate and others. You'll be told to have a thick-skin and to ignore it, but that isn't always easy to do. Keep sane, remember it's just a job. Remember you have family, friends and others who can support you, and if you need to seek professional support there is no stigma in doing so. Focus on the positives and the small victories. But always put your health first.



9: Read Your Standing Orders!



It might surprise you to note that many Members of Parliament never read their Parliament's rules for procedure. If you want to know the rules of the game then you must take the time to read the Standing Orders. Ask a clerk or colleague for a copy. Read it thoroughly. It will tell you what you can and cannot do, what powers you have, how to conduct yourself in the Chamber, what privileges and immunities you have. They are rules approved by your predecessors. But remember you can change these rules, you own them not the Speaker. Use these for Points of Order which can give you an advantage over your opponents across the floor of the Chamber.

10: What's Next?

This is probably a strange tip to give someone who has just been elected as a parliamentarian but it's important to consider throughout your term of office what you should do next. Many parliamentarians struggle to adapt to life outside of parliament. How to get another job, what sort of career should you do next, if any, and how to cope in a role that comes with less public attention. This can be very hard for some, so it is useful to always keep in mind that being a parliamentarian is just one job. If you are unfortunate enough to lose an election, or if you want to change careers you should always take the time in advance to focus on professional development. Keep in mind that nothing is forever.



Session 2: The Role of The Speaker and The Role of The Clerk

This session focused on the multifaceted roles and functions of both the Speaker of the National Assembly and the clerk, both within and outside the Chamber. The Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George reflected on her experiences in her tenure and advised on the various ways in which a Speaker can juggle their many responsibilities.

Suggestions were made to the various techniques that the Speaker could use to maintain order in the Chamber and drive change, as well as how the Standing Orders could be used to set precedent. The Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George was joined in discussion virtually by Hon. Speaker Dennis Lister MP, with the perspective of a fellow Presiding Officer in the Caribbean and Artour Sogomonian, providing the perspective of a clerk. Speakers have a duty to ensure that parliamentarians are doing what they are called to do, by governing and moderating discussions within the chamber. This dialogue allows for the transfer of advice and best practices to provide them with the support needed to navigate this position.



Techniques Used by Presiding Officers to Maintain Order in the Chamber

Humour

During a particularly heated debate, it may be useful to use humour to disarm very passionate parliamentarians amidst the commotion. When humour is used tastefully and tactfully, at the appropriate time and manner (not at the expense of any parliamentarian), the temperament in the room can quickly change to mirror your tone.

Inform

When addressing the floor, where you can, make sure to reference the Standing Orders when making rulings. The Standing Orders are the ultimate power (owned by the people) and cannot be refuted. If you make this step habitual, maintaining order will be made easier.

Respect

Remember to speak to your fellow parliamentarians with respect so that the sentiment may be reciprocated.

Silence

Often, when parliamentarians look to you for an answer amidst a vigorous back and forth, the best thing to do, could be to command the attention and respect of the floor by remaining silent. Your silence may be enough and could be echoed.

For the role of the Clerk, the importance of learning and development was emphasised as clerks can often, understandably, prioritise their role in the Chamber in the long-term, and their professional development can be forgotten. As part of the CPA Parliamentary Academy, there are the following courses, among others, that can be completed by clerks and parliamentary staff of multiple levels of experience:

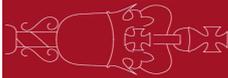
- **Administration and Management of Parliament**
- **The Committee System**
- **Parliamentary Procedure: The Basics**
- **Strategy, Business Planning and Monitoring and Evaluation**

More details on the course can be found here: <https://www.cpahq.org/parliamentary-academy/online-courses/>

Though the roles of Speaker and Clerk differ in many ways, they also overlap in various ways and there is guidance that individuals should be mindful of in either role:

Top Tips for Clerks and Speakers:

- Remain impartial, establishing connections with each party to ensure that each perspective is considered.
- Take time to truly appreciate the Standing Orders, practices and conventions for an understanding of the Chamber.
- Establish relationships with your peers and parliamentary staff to recognise when and how to reach out to someone for support advice.
- Always remember the vital importance of personal learning and development to enhance the knowledge and skills that you can apply to your role.
- Be mindful of your representational capacity outside of Parliament. As a key figure in the legislature, you are seen as a representative of its work in wider society and internationally.



THE CPA PARLIAMENTARY ACADEMY

A Centre of Excellence for Commonwealth Parliamentarians

The CPA has designed a curriculum of online courses specifically for parliamentarians and parliamentary officials intended to strengthen the capacity of parliamentarians and parliamentary staff to fulfil their constitutional and statutory obligations, as well as to enhance knowledge and understanding of the role of Parliament in the democratic governance process. The CPA has brought together over 50 experienced parliamentarians, clerks and external experts from across the Commonwealth to offer their insight and advice on subjects ranging from gender-sensitive budgeting to codes of conduct.

The following courses are available to all parliamentarians and parliamentary staff:

CPA Parliamentary Professional Development Certificate (awarded to those who complete all the courses)

- Induction for New Parliamentarians
- Legislative Process
- Scrutiny, Accountability and Oversight
- Representation, Advocacy and Education

CPA Parliamentary Service Professional Development Certificate (awarded to those who complete all the courses)

- Basic Principles of Parliamentary Procedure
- Committee System
- Administration and Management of Parliaments
- Building Relationships
- Strategy, Business Planning and Monitoring and Evaluation

Courses in 2022:

- *Climate Change and Parliamentary Action in Small Jurisdictions*
- *Effective Women's Parliamentary Caucuses (WPCs) – Key Characteristics*
- *Accessibility of Commonwealth Parliaments to Persons with Disabilities*
- *The Sustainable Development Goals: Parliaments' role in their implementation*

The CPA is also delivering two residency-based courses this year, for parliamentarians, to complement the online courses:

- *Advanced Parliamentary Development*
- *Advanced Professional Development & Skills-Building*

For more information on the courses available/future courses and how to register, please visit: <https://www.cpahq.org/parliamentary-academy/>





Session 3: Codes of Conduct, Transparency and Integrity

This session looked at the importance of establishing an ethical culture within the Assembly, and participants identified examples of good and bad practices in public service. There were also engaging discussions surrounding the role of the Speaker in ensuring debates are conducted respectfully and how parliamentarians can ensure that they can implement practices that actively reflect the Code of Conduct. The session was led by; The Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George MP, Hon. Brenda Shanahan MP, and Ms. Mélissa M. Verpile.

The levels of trust granted to parliamentarians by their electorate has to be considered in all of their actions. With this in mind, Members should ensure that they are mindful of the core tenets of being a parliamentarian in their work.

Enforcement

As part of the effective implementation of a code, an independent system for investigating alleged breaches of the code should be established. The following model is recommended:

Complaints and Investigations

- A complaint alleging breach of the Code by a Member shall be made to an identified office holder, who must refer it to an investigator for an investigation.
- At least one investigator must be appointed by the legislature to oversee the implementation of the Code.
- Investigator(s) shall be appointed on a fixed term and be independent of Parliament, any Member of the Parliament, Government, or political party.
- The Code itself should protect the investigator from removal except for proven misbehaviour or another reasonable grounding.
- A Member and the complainant shall treat any complaint as if sub judice.
- If there is evidence of a breach of criminal law, it must forthwith be referred to the police or corruption control agency as appropriate.
- After investigation, the investigator must present a report to the Presiding Officer (or Deputy if concerning the Presiding Officer) who must determine whether a breach has occurred, and if a breach has occurred, refer the report to the House for further proceedings following its rules.
- If a complaint has become known publicly and has not been upheld, this outcome shall be made public.

Appeal or review

- The Code shall make provision that a Member, against whom a complaint has been upheld, has the right to appeal or review.

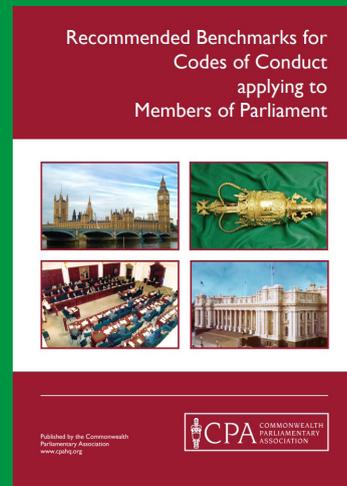
Sanctions and penalties

- The Code shall specify graduated sanctions and penalties for breaches of the Code according to the seriousness of the effects of breaches on the functioning, reputation and legitimacy of the parliament.
- The Code shall specify that a Member convicted of a breach of the criminal law, may in addition be subject to a sanction or penalty if found to have breached the Code.

THE CPA RECOMMENDED BENCHMARKS FOR CODES OF CONDUCT

Designed by experts on the development of parliamentary Code of Conduct and with the knowledge shared from first-hand experience of parliamentarians, the CPA Recommended Codes of Conducts is a tool that aims to develop or strengthen existing provisions affecting the conduct of parliamentarians. It is encouraged that Members access the CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Codes of Conducts for key principles on parliamentary standards.

The document is accessible from: <http://www.cpahq.org/media/3wqhbbaad/codes-of-conduct-for-parliamentarians-updated-2016-7.pdf>



From left to right: Hon. Ronald Cox, Member of the National Assembly, Hon. Collins Dauda, Member of the Parliament of Ghana, and Hon. Manzoor Nadir, Speaker of the National Assembly



Session 4: The Committee System

This session was a great opportunity for parliamentarians to learn more about the role and importance of committees in effective scrutinising government. The speakers gave an overview of the system and why it is important to have a well-functioning system, placing particular emphasis on the role of the Public Accounts Committee. The importance of transparency and public engagement with the Committee process was stressed throughout.

The session was led by Hon. Gail Texeira MP, who spoke in her capacity as Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Janet Routledge MLA, Artour Sogomonian, and featured a recorded presentation by T. G. Chandrashekar, of the Parliament of India.

Committees increase parliament's capacity by allowing it to consider a wider range of issues at once and delve deeper into a specific sector of the economy. Committees undertake inquiries, question government ministers, publish reports and call for matters to be debated in the Chamber.

Public Accounts Committees (PAC)

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) provides an excellent example of a committee where the aforementioned guidance should be exemplified. These committees ensure accountability in the scrutiny of government expenditure and hold them to account for the efficiency and effectiveness of public spending. They do this by examining the value for money of Government projects, programmes and service delivery. Like all committees, transparency of the PAC should be practiced to ensure the confidence of the public.

It is encouraged that lay members are invited to sit on the PAC, and the motivation behind this arrangement is to encourage scrutiny of the government's financial decision-making through the aid of external members who are neutral actors and are neither politically motivated nor under the heel of the executive.

HANDBOOK ON LAY MEMBERS FOR COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTS

This Handbook serves as an information resource on the adoption of lay members into parliamentary systems. To meet the challenge of public engagement in parliamentary procedures, lay members sitting on Parliamentary Committees, boards and commissions enhances their crucial role in ensuring the Parliament functions effectively.

The document is accessible from: https://issuu.com/theparliamentarian/docs/cpa_handbook_on_lay_members_final



The Chair of the committee plays a vital role in leading the committee towards achieving the mutual committee goals. They are typically the voice of the committee and are responsible for ensuring projects and spending decisions align with the mandate of the PAC. They must remain impartial and act independently to the goals of their political affiliates.

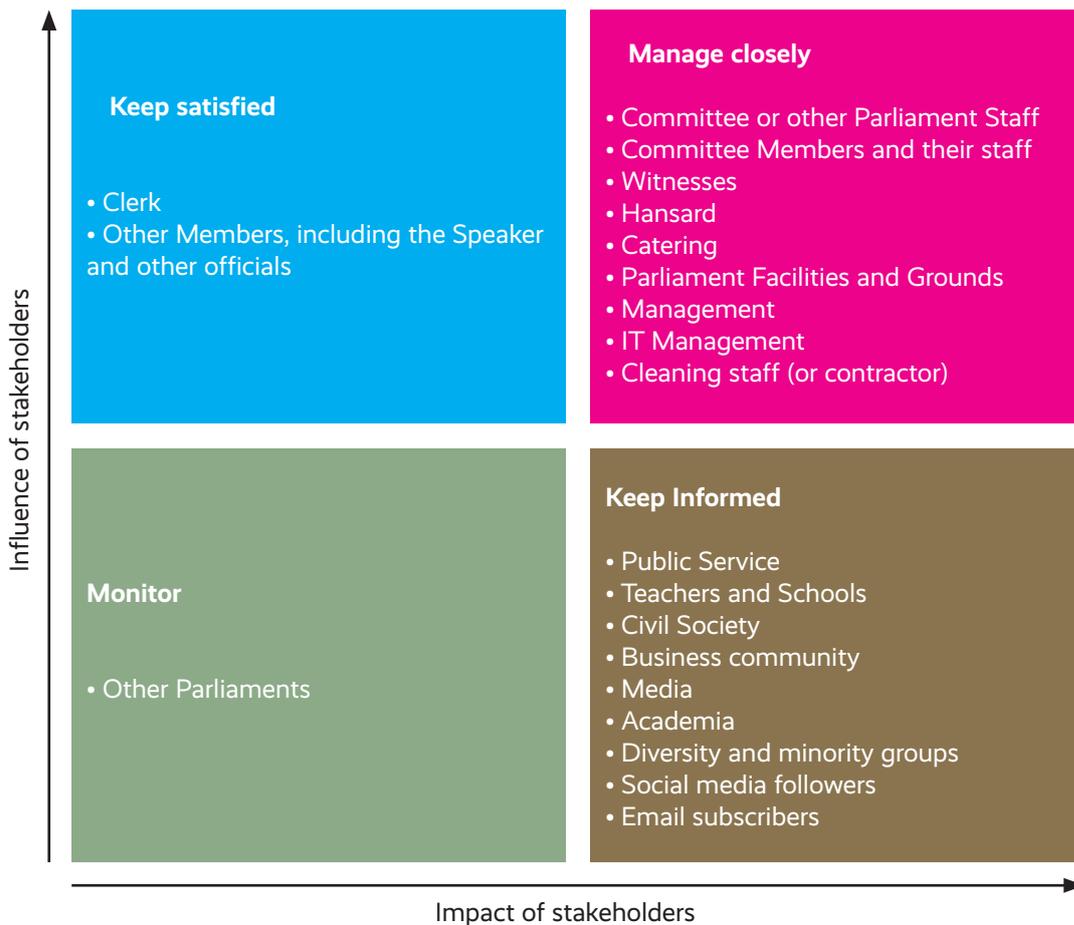
Session 5: Access, Outreach and Representation

This session addressed the various modes of outreach that the Parliament should consider using to effectively interact with citizens and share information about parliamentary activities. Equally, the session focused on equipping Members with outreach techniques that should be adopted and used to strengthen their engagement with the public.

It is always important to be accountable to all citizens, no matter how directly responsible a parliamentarian is. Members must engage with citizens to ensure that their **voices are being heard and views are being represented** in Parliament. This is particularly important when Members take the elevated responsibility of ministerial posts.

It can be challenging for busy parliamentarians, clerks and parliamentary officials to find time to come up with creative ways to engage their communities. The **CPA Engagement, Education & Outreach Handbook for Commonwealth Parliaments**, with the support and cooperation of national and subnational legislatures across the Commonwealth, can assist with this.

For example, the Handbook provides the following guidance for engaging key stakeholders that parliamentary staff tasked with public engagement should be mindful of:



The Handbook can be found following the link: https://www.cpahq.org/media/sbif14kt/engagement_education_outreach-handbook_final.pdf

If you would like a deeper understanding of various engagement channels and how to best utilise them, as well as techniques for making your voice heard - be sure to check out our **Representation, Advocacy and Education** Parliamentary Academy course. More details on the course can be found here: <https://www.cpahq.org/parliamentary-academy/online-courses/>

Session 6: Scrutinising Technical Legislation

This session was a great opportunity for parliamentarians to look at capacity building and how improving their skills in scrutinising complex laws can enhance the overall legislative process. The importance and value of pre- and post-scrutiny were emphasised throughout the session. Ms. Ronna-Rae Leonard, speaking in her capacity as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, was joined in the discussion by Mr Liam Laurence Smyth, the Clerk of Legislation in the UK House of Commons and Stephen Twigg, the Secretary-General of the CPA.

To fulfil the democratic function of being a parliamentarian in holding the government to account, Members must seize every opportunity for scrutiny. This means that you engage in the task of undertaking legislative scrutiny and commit to a detailed examination of an early draft of a Bill before the final version is drawn up by the Government. Your task of scrutiny does not end when once the Bill has become a law and been put into effect. To produce good legislation that works, post-legislative scrutiny should be carried out, which is the effort to scrutinise how a new law has worked in practice since it came into force.

Parliamentary staff should be aware of the following three stages of a post-legislative scrutiny inquiry:

Planning stage

In the planning of the inquiry, the following matters must be decided:

- What is the remit of the inquiry/which laws will it assess?
- What should the timeframe be for the inquiry?
- Which stakeholders should be engaged with as part of the inquiry (e.g. government agencies that implement the law).

It is also important at this stage for the necessary background research and data collection to take place.

Implementation stage

As the inquiry begins, the following activities will take place:

- Drafting the report
- Liaising with the media to raise public awareness of the inquiry.
- Consultations with the aforementioned key stakeholders relevant to the respective law(s).
- General reviews of the legislation.

Follow-up stage

As the inquiry comes to its conclusion, the following other activities should take place:

- Policy follow-up to the inquiry.
- Evaluation of the lessons learned from the inquiry process.
- Distribution of the report, making it accessible to the public.

The evaluation of the process itself is an often neglected but crucial part of this stage, as it strengthens the quality of future inquiries.

*If you would like a deeper understanding of legislative processes from around the Commonwealth and how their practice can improve that of the National Assembly - be sure to check out our **Legislative Process** Parliamentary Academy course. More details on the course can be found here: <https://www.cpahq.org/parliamentary-academy/online-courses/>*

Session 7: Services and Resources

This session was a great opportunity for parliamentarians to learn first-hand about the services and facilities available to them and the various ways that these resources could be improved more broadly, with examples from Parliaments across the Commonwealth. Mr Sherlock Isaacs, The Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George MP and Hon. Collins Dauda MP.

Some relevant publications can be found under this section of the Parliament's website:

<https://www.parliament.gov.gy/publications>

If you have any research requests or need access to any additional documents, you should always speak to the relevant parliamentary staff members at the Clerk's Office. Not only will they support you by giving access to the documents you need, but the staff may also have the invaluable institutional knowledge you need from their experience. Equally, ourselves at the CPA Secretariat remain open and available to support parliamentarians and staff of the National Assembly with the various services that we offer, including:

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH SERVICE (CPRS)

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Research Service (CPRS) offers Parliaments and parliamentarians a research service on a range of specialist subjects.

The CPRS will conduct or commission research from across our Commonwealth Branches, which will seek to compile comparative information about parliamentary practices. The service is offered to all Branches, and we invite input from all Branches.

Members and staff of the National Assembly are encouraged to utilise the research services provided by the CPA through CPRS.



From left to right: Artour Sogomonian, Clerk Assistant, Janet Routledge, Member of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly, Hon. Lenox Shuman, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Gail Teixeira, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Member of the National Assembly



Session 8: Administration and Financing of Parliament

This session served to emphasise the importance of parliamentary independence through the Assembly's administration and financing. Parliaments, that have a more robust process of scrutinising the expenditure of the Executive, perform better in Transparency International's *Corruption Perceptions Index*.¹

Key considerations for parliamentarians when addressing public financial management (PFM)

What? - Is government expenditure being aimed toward and is the government getting value for taxpayers' money. A clear breakdown should be provided for Parliament that satisfies its scrutiny.

Who? - Has/will the government procure a service or product from and has due diligence been done in researching the background of the contractor (e.g. with a robust tender process).

Why? - Perhaps most importantly, why is government expenditure being directed in a certain way, and what will be the benefit?

As explored in the session on *The Committee System*, a key to effective and robust parliamentary scrutiny of PFM is the work of Public Accounts Committees (PAC). These committees play an important role in ensuring that there is accountability in the scrutiny of government expenditure.

PACs, as mentioned under the session on *The Committee System*, are an important area for bipartisan collaboration on public financial management. An avenue for the National Assembly to gain assistance with their PAC would be the Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees (CAPAC). CAPAC was founded in 2015 at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) as a network for strengthening public financial management and accountability. CAPAC assists PACs by making clear, not only for committees themselves but for Parliaments and governments, what is good practice concerning fellow Commonwealth PACs.



Should you wish to learn a little more about the administration and financing of Parliaments, you can register for the **Administration and Management of Parliaments CPA Parliamentary Academy Course**. In this course, you will learn about the complex systems of administration and management that make parliaments effective institutions, but also effective employers. It covers the importance of Human Resources as well as ethics and standards within parliament and financial management, i.e. parliamentary budgets and financial accountability.

You can register your interest on:

<https://www.cpahq.org/parliamentary-academy/academy-registration-form/>

To view all other courses, visit:

<https://www.cpahq.org/parliamentary-academy/online-courses/>

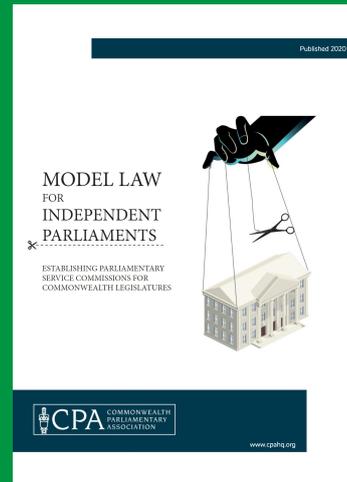
To learn more about the CPA Parliamentary Academy, see the previous section from the session on Services and Resources.

¹ Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/1997>) is an index published annually by since 1995 which ranks countries by their perceived levels of public sector corruption determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys.

MODEL LAW FOR INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENTS

When reviewing your administration of Parliament with the Latimer House Principles in mind, you should consider how to empower Parliament so that greater control over parliamentary affairs is in the hands of the legislature. This will ensure that Parliament has the administrative, operational and financial resources it needs to function effectively. The Model Law for Independent Parliaments can certainly shed some more light on this issue. It was designed as a Parliamentary Service Commission Bill that sought to create a parliamentary corporate body to oversee the institution of Parliament.

Inspiration can be taken from this document, which can be found following the link: https://www.cpahq.org/media/usdnwcqp/model-law-for-independent-parliaments_final.pdf



But, how do you determine what is considered international best practice for the administration of your Parliament?

The CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures is a useful guide that identifies the international best practices regarding how a Parliament should be administered and financed; from ethical governance through to pay and remuneration.

The document can be found following the link below: <https://www.cpahq.org/media/10jkk2nh/recommended-benchmarks-for-democratic-legislatures-updated-2018-final-online-version-single.pdf>



THE CPA BENCHMARKS ASSESSMENT

Benchmarking is best done by an entity independent of Parliament for the most honest and accurate evaluation, which is why the CPA conducts their own, independent benchmarking assessments for legislatures. The CPA representatives liaise with yourselves (parliamentarians), parliamentary staff, civil society organisations and other stakeholders to better understand the administration of your Parliament. Although this might not be the most comfortable process, it is the most rewarding. A report is produced after this assessment and the Parliament is given a set of recommendations to improve their parliamentary practices and ensure that they align closely with international best practices. The report is owned by your Parliament and the recommendations are to be actioned by your Parliament at its discretion.



Session 9: Innovating for 21st Century Parliaments

How parliaments confront the challenge of modernising their facilities with the new technologies that are available, is a question that many legislatures are contending with in 2022.

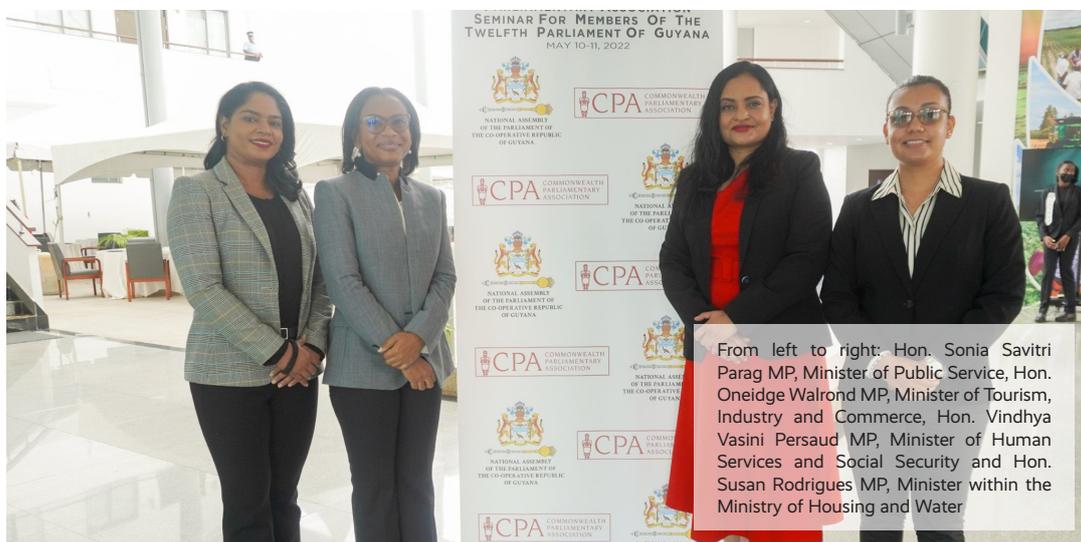
Technological reforms implemented by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario were presented with a particular look at its committees, which have seen the most advances since the emergence of COVID-19. One of the Legislative Assembly's parliamentary committees passed a motion which allowed committees to meet via digital means (such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Cisco Webex).

The CPA Secretariat has previously undertaken work on technology and innovation in Parliament with its Toolkit for Commonwealth Parliaments on responding to COVID-19:

TOOLKIT FOR COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTS AND LEGISLATURES ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND DELIVERING PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

Developed to provide parliaments with various measures and recommendations that can be adopted by both the legislature and its parliamentarians to continue to deliver on the institutions' role of scrutinising legislation and delivering democracy during a global pandemic.

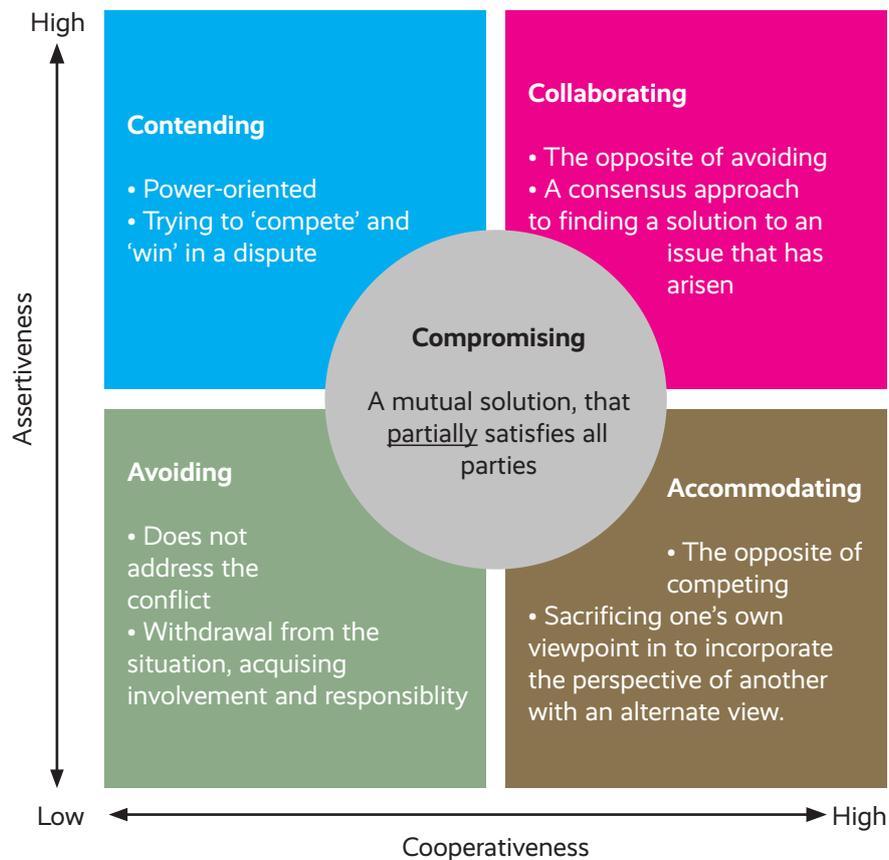
Members are encouraged to access the CPA COVID-19 Toolkit to obtain a guide on how parliament can convene digitally. The document is available from: <https://www.cpahq.org/media/gb1athp1/cpa-toolkit-covid-19-coronavirus-e-version.pdf>



Session 10: Political Parties, Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution

This session explored how conflict resolution can be brought about between political actors when there is a strong political division, and how to build a bipartisan working approach. Mr James Pinnell led the conversation and was joined by Janet Routledge MLA, Hon. Collins Dauda MP, Hon. Rubagumya Emma MP and Harriët Ramdien MNA. Each speaker shared the various strategies and techniques that can be implemented to achieve conflict resolution.

In understanding conflict resolution generally, the following Thomas–Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument provides a model for understanding how, as an individual, parliamentarians can respond when confronted with a dispute with a fellow Member.



As part of this model, the following approaches are considered:

- 'Contending' behaviour: this approach deploys a high degree of assertiveness and a low degree of cooperation. It is a power-oriented approach used when a dispute is considered a 'zero-sum' game, where only one party can gain from the outcome of the dispute.
- 'Avoiding' is a method of low cooperation that results in the cause of the dispute not being directly addressed. Though this method is reasonable on occasions, in the long-term it only results in lose-lose outcomes. An example of this might be not participating in a parliamentary debate on a contentious issue in anticipation of the disputes that may arise.
- 'Accommodating' is the opposite of contending, where an individual sacrifices in a dispute to appease the other party. However, this approach also results in a win-lose outcome.
- 'Compromising' is a both moderately assertive and cooperative way of resolving a conflict. It assumes that a win-win scenario is not possible, and therefore both parties gain and lose something as a result of this approach. An example of how this approach might be



deployed in Parliament between parties would be if there were a trade-off between parties on amendments that they both will accept to a piece of legislation, with both parties ceding ground.

- ‘Collaborating’ is the primary way of achieving win-win outcomes. It involves care and concern for the other party in the dispute by aiming to ensure a convergence of both parties’ interests.¹

Would you like to learn more about navigating, managing, and cultivating relationships to be able to work effectively with a range of internal and external stakeholders, colleagues and other parliamentary staff? You may be interested in the Building Relationships Parliamentary Academy Course. More details on the course can be found here: <https://www.cpahq.org/parliamentary-academy/online-courses/>

¹ Huseynov, T., 2010. Mountainous Karabakh: New paradigms for peace and development in the 21st century. *International Negotiation*, 15(1), pp.8-9. Accessible from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309313477_Mountainous_Karabakh_New_paradigms_for_p#pf3

Session 11: Inclusion and Participation

The final session of the workshop focused on the importance of the inclusion of minorities in the processes of parliament and, in particular, the representation of indigenous communities.

The discussion raised the following points regarding the inclusion of minorities in parliament:

- Interactions with pressure groups and the role that they play in campaigning from civil society for parliamentary reform. Parliament as an institution must be **aware** of the demands and interests of these groups.
- The importance of ensuring that minorities can **access parliament both remotely and physically**, by developing detailed information and communications about its processes and activities.

Women’s Representation

“Gender-sensitising” Parliaments is a key driver for the inclusion of women in Parliament as a workplace. The Gender Sensitising Parliaments Guidelines of the CPA’s Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) network was designed to encourage Parliaments to look into priority areas that need to be strengthened to help legislatures to become effective gender-sensitive institutions. Members are encouraged to access the CWP Gender Sensitising Parliament’s Guidelines to understand the necessary conditions for parliaments to deliver on their responsibility to reach the standard of gender sensitivity and to identify the actors and means through which reforms are implemented. The document is available from: <https://www.cpahq.org/media/s20j1lws/cwp-gender-sensitizing-guidelines.pdf>

Accessibility of Parliament to Persons with Disabilities

Both the physical and online infrastructure and the general environment in parliament, play a key role in ensuring that persons with disabilities are granted equal access to its processes. Structural changes to parliament buildings, such as lifts, ramps and handrails, when met with digital and more audiovisual facilities, such as the use of braille, sign language and screen readers, ensure that people can access the institution if they work there or are simply visiting.

The CPA Secretariat has directly supported these changes by Parliaments with the Capital Investment Fund of its [Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities \(CPwD\)](#) network. Each year, CPA Branches can bid for up to £10,000 to support initiatives, like those mentioned above, to improve the access of their institution.

Youth Engagement

The Speaker's 2nd *National Youth Debating Competition*, which convened around the time of this Seminar, provided a great opportunity for young citizens in Guyana to develop skills that they may use in future to run for public office. This event, in addition to the national youth parliament, is a great example of a project that the Parliament should engage with as its participants act as conduits for the interests of the broader young population in Guyana when engaging with Parliament.

Integrating the work of parliament into civic education via the school curriculum is also essential, parliaments and parliamentarians can pursue this with relevant government ministries. A good example of a tool for this would be the CPA's Teachers' Resource Pack on Commonwealth, Parliament and Democracy, available from: https://issuu.com/theparliamentarian/docs/commonwealth_class_cpa_resource_parliament_and_dem



CPA Flag

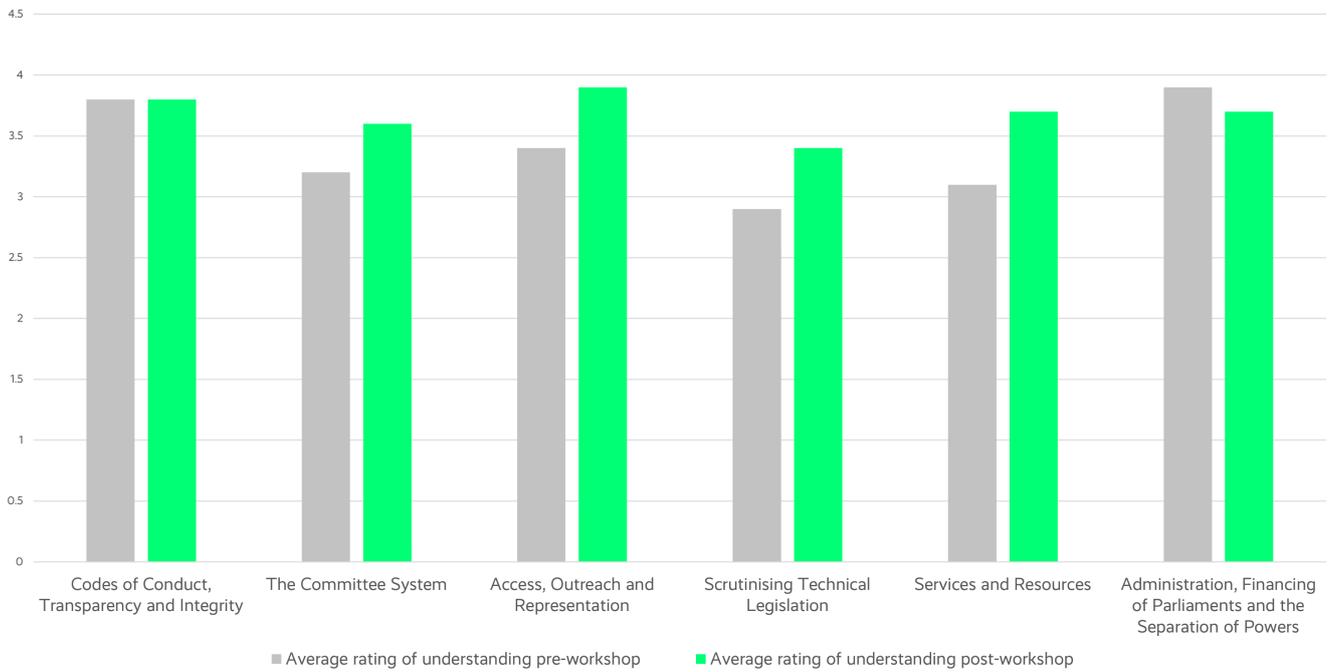


Monitoring and Evaluation Report

During the week, Members were provided with the opportunity to give ongoing feedback on the sessions and to recount any expectations and insights. Members were also invited to complete pre- and post-assessment forms, and their results can be found in the graphs below.

The feedback provided by Members on the programme was positive. Members of the Assembly were satisfied with the format of the sessions and were extremely pleased with the quality of the various resource persons who delivered the sessions. Members were questioned on their levels of knowledge related to pertinent issue areas on parliamentary practice and procedure. In the pre-assessment forms, many parliamentarians stated that they sought to gain an understanding of peacebuilding in Parliament and to improve their knowledge of codes of conduct, which were addressed in sessions 3 and 10.



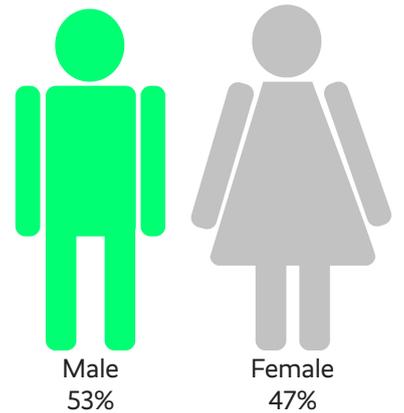


Overall, levels of knowledge and understanding increased in almost every area. A six-month follow-up with the participants of the Seminar will be conducted to see how Members are using the skills they learned during the Seminar and applying them in practice.

“The knowledge gained will allow me to be a better Member of Parliament.”

Hon. Ganesh A. Mahipaul MP, Member of the National Assembly

Gender of Speakers



21 female and 24 male speakers participated in the Seminar.

“All the sessions were useful and interesting. This new knowledge and information combined will be used to enhance my participation in the National Assembly.”

Hon. Haimraj B. Rajkumar MP, Member of the National Assembly

Seminar Programme

TIME

SESSION

OPENING OF THE SEMINAR

Participants will be introduced to the format of the seminar and asked to fill in a survey to record their expectations and learning processes.

Prayer:

Ms. Hermina Gilgeours, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly (in person)

Welcome:

Hon. Lenox Shuman MP, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly (in person)

Remarks:

Mr. Sherlock E. Isaacs, Clerk of the National Assembly (in person)

Hon. Vincent Henry MP, Member of the National Assembly (in person)

Hon. Dewan Chandrebhose Sharman MNA, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Suriname (in person)

The Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George, Vice-President of ParlAmericas and Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (in person)

Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (virtual)

Hon. Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark A. Phillips MSS MP, Prime Minister of Guyana (in person)

Closing remarks:

Hon. Manzoor Nadir MP, Speaker of the National Assembly (in person)

The official opening will be chaired by Ms. Carleeta Charles, Parliamentary Executive Officer of the Parliament Office.

09:00-10:00

DAY 1 - 10 May 2022

SESSION 1: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF BEING A PARLIAMENTARIAN

In this session, participants will identify the opportunities and challenges of being a Member of Parliament. The outcomes from this session will form the basis for the wider programme.

Speakers:

The Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (in person)

Hon. Devin Sears MP, Member of the National Assembly (in person)

Hon. Savitri Sonia Parag MP, Minister of the Public Service (in person)

10:00-10:45

Further reading:

[Top Ten Tips for New Parliamentarians](#)

[CPA Parliamentary Academy: A Centre of Excellence for Commonwealth Parliamentarians](#)

[The Parliamentarian - Journal of Commonwealth Parliaments](#)

10:45-11:00

Refreshment Break

SESSION 2: THE ROLE OF THE SPEAKER AND THE ROLE OF THE CLERK

The roles of Speaker and Clerk of any parliament are crucial to its functioning. In this session, the multifaceted nature of both roles will be examined by considering examples of best practice from around the Commonwealth, including ways for addressing the conduct of Members.

11:00-12:00

Speakers:

The Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (in person)

Artour Sogomonian, Clerk Assistant at the British Columbia Legislative Assembly (in person)

Hon. Dennis P. Lister JP MP, Speaker of the House of Assembly of Bermuda (virtual)



SESSION 3: CODES OF CONDUCT, TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY

Public trust in elected representatives is crucial to good governance and a modern, open and democratic society. This session will look at the importance of maintaining high ethical standards and commitments to transparency and integrity, whilst also looking at the importance of maintaining the discipline and responsibility of Members to the integrity of Parliament.

Speakers:

12:00-13:00

The Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (in person)

Hon. Brenda Shanahan MP, Member of the House of Commons of Canada (virtual)

Ms. Mélissa M. Verpile, Director, Democratic Renewal & Human Rights Campaign, [Parliamentarians for Global Action](#) (virtual)

Further reading:

[CPA Benchmarks for Codes of Conduct](#)

[CWP Anti-Harassment Policy Guidelines: A Toolkit for Commonwealth](#)

[Parliaments](#)

[The Nolan Principles](#)

13:00-14:00

Lunch

SESSION 4: THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM

This session will be a practical opportunity for parliamentarians to learn more about the committee system and the importance of parliamentary scrutiny. This session will also look at how reports should be written and how to ensure recommendations are actioned and lead to real impact.

Speakers:

Hon. Gail Teixeira MP, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance (in person)

14:00-16:00 *Janet Routledge MLA, Member of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly (in person)*

Artour Sogomonian, Clerk Assistant at the British Columbia Legislative Assembly (in person)

Mr T. G. Chandrashekar, Additional Secretary, Lok Sabha, Parliament of India (recorded presentation)

Further reading:

[Effective Select Committee Members - Institute for Government](#)

[Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees Portal](#)

SESSION 5: ACCESS, OUTREACH AND REPRESENTATION

This session will focus on the important role a parliamentarian has in representing. The session will also give participants an insight into how to engage with wider stakeholders to get input into the way the Parliament works whilst utilising the public, organisations and specifically the media to encourage information dissemination.

16:00-16:45

Speakers:

Janet Routledge MLA, Member of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly (in person)

Dr. Anne Gallagher, AO, Director-General of the [Commonwealth Foundation](#) (virtual)

16:45

End of Day 1



TIME

SESSION

SESSION 6: SCRUTINISING TECHNICAL LEGISLATION

This session will look to provide Members with the skills and knowledge for navigating complex legislation and holding the Executive to account on technical matters. The session will see contributions from panellists before moving to questions from Members in the audience.

09:00-09:45

Speakers:

Liam Laurence Smyth, Clerk of Legislation, UK House of Commons (virtual)

Ms. Ronna- Rae Leonard MLA, Member of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly (virtual)

Stephen Twigg, CPA Secretary-General and former Member of the UK House of Commons (virtual)

SESSION 7: SERVICES AND RESOURCES

This session will be an opportunity for Members to learn more about the services and facilities available to them. Members will also have the opportunity to discuss some of the resource challenges the Assembly faces and to understand the services and resources parliamentarians would need to better carry out their roles.

09:45-10:30

Speakers:

The Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (in person)

Mr. Sherlock E. Isaacs, Clerk of the National Assembly of Guyana (in person)

Hon. Collins Dauda MP, Member of the Parliament of Ghana (in person)

10:30-10:45

Refreshment Break

DAY 2 - 11 May 2022

SESSION 8: ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCING OF PARLIAMENT

This session will emphasise the importance of parliamentary autonomy through robust and effective leadership structures, services and finances, with specific reference to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The session will also highlight the CPA's Model Law for Independent Parliaments and the value of establishing Parliamentary Service Commissions.

Speakers:

10:45-11:30

Janet Routledge MLA, Member of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly (in person)

Artour Sogomonian, Clerk Assistant at the British Columbia Legislative Assembly (in person)

Further reading:

[CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures](#)

[Model Law for Independent Parliaments: Establishing Parliamentary Service Commissions for Commonwealth Legislatures](#)

[IPU Comparative research paper on parliamentary administration](#)

SESSION 9: INNOVATING FOR 21ST CENTURY PARLIAMENTS

This session will look at how emerging trends and technologies can be utilised to aid and improve parliamentary practices and procedures, and how they can be used as a catalyst for modernisation, improved transparency and greater representation. The session will see showcases from other parliaments as well as a wider consideration of how the Parliament of Guyana may implement its innovations.

11:30-12:15

Speakers:

Luís Kimaid, Chief Executive Officer of [Bússola Tech](#) (virtual)

Mr. William Wong, Parliamentary Counsel, Office of the Clerk, Legislative Assembly of Ontario (virtual)

Hon. Beverley Schäfer MPP, Deputy Speaker of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament (virtual)

Mr Satpal Gulati, Joint Secretary, Lok Sabha, Parliament of India (virtual)



12:15-13:30 Lunch

SESSION 10: POLITICAL PARTIES, PEACEBUILDING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

This session will look at how parties organise their Members, the role of Members, planning and business management within parties and how to employ political diplomacy to achieve mutually beneficial results. This session will also look at conflict resolution between political actors when there is a strong political division and how to build a bipartisan working approach.

13:30-14:15

Speakers:

Janet Routledge MLA, Member of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly (in person)

Hon. Collins Dauda MP, Member of the Parliament of Ghana (in person)

Hon. Rubagumya Furaha Emma MP, Member of the Parliament of Rwanda (virtual)

Ms. Harriët Ramdien MNA, Member of the National Assembly of Suriname (in person)

SESSION 11: INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION

Parliaments that are reflective of the population which they serve will be seen as more legitimate by the public and better placed to represent the interests of the people. This session will look to highlight the importance of achieving and maintaining a diversity of perspectives within parliament, and the benefits to the legislative and oversight functions of parliament. The session will also address current outreach initiatives of the parliament, with a particular focus on the youth engagement of the legislature.

14:15-15:15

Speakers:

The Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (in person)

Ebu Jones MNA, Member of the National Assembly of Suriname (in person)

Hon. Manzoor Nadir MP, Speaker of the National Assembly (in person)

Alisha Todd, Director General of ParlAmericas (virtual)

Mr. Andy Richardson, Information Specialist, Inter-Parliamentary Union (virtual)

DAY 2 - 11 May 2022

OFFICIAL CLOSING/FEEDBACK AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

15:15-15:45

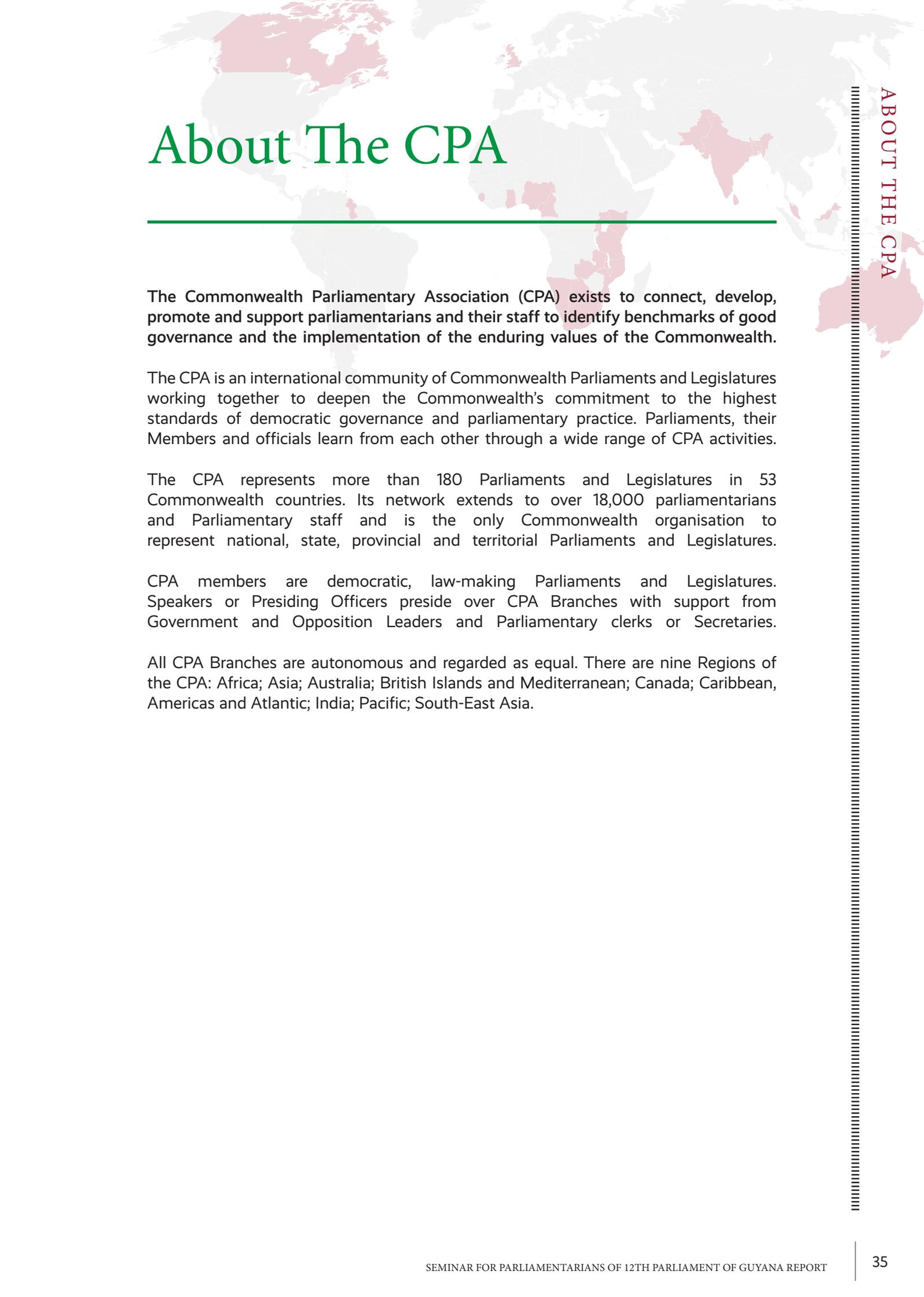
Participants will be given the opportunity to share what lessons were learned and what knowledge and skills they will be able to use going forward.

At the end of the programme, official closing statements will be delivered by nominated Members from all three political parties sitting in the National Assembly, before hearing closing speeches from the Clerk and the Hon. Speaker of the National Assembly.

19:30

Dinner Reception (End of Day 2)





About The CPA

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) exists to connect, develop, promote and support parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and the implementation of the enduring values of the Commonwealth.

The CPA is an international community of Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures working together to deepen the Commonwealth's commitment to the highest standards of democratic governance and parliamentary practice. Parliaments, their Members and officials learn from each other through a wide range of CPA activities.

The CPA represents more than 180 Parliaments and Legislatures in 53 Commonwealth countries. Its network extends to over 18,000 parliamentarians and Parliamentary staff and is the only Commonwealth organisation to represent national, state, provincial and territorial Parliaments and Legislatures.

CPA members are democratic, law-making Parliaments and Legislatures. Speakers or Presiding Officers preside over CPA Branches with support from Government and Opposition Leaders and Parliamentary clerks or Secretaries.

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 Atlantic; India; Pacific; South-East Asia.



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