

# TheParliamentarian



Journal of the Parliaments of the Commonwealth

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## Towards a Common Future: Looking ahead to CHOGM 2018

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## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

## Calendar of Forthcoming Events

Confirmed as of 1 March 2018

### 2018

#### March

- 4 to 8 March CPA Post-Election Seminar for the Parliament of Kenya, Mombasa, Kenya
- 12 March Commonwealth Day 2018 – 2018 theme '*Towards a Common Future*', All CPA Branches and at CPA Headquarters Secretariat
- 19 to 23 March CPA Parliamentary Staff Development Programme with McGill University, Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Training, Nairobi, Kenya

#### April

- 16 to 20 April 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) - 'Commonwealth Summit' 2018, London and Windsor, United Kingdom

#### June

- 15 to 23 June 2018 43<sup>rd</sup> CPA Regional Conference of the Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region, Georgetown, Cayman Islands

The publication of a Calendar of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) events is a service intended to foster the exchange of events and activities between Regions and Branches and the encouragement of new ideas and participation. Further information may be obtained from the Branches concerned or the CPA Secretariat. Branch Secretaries are requested to send notice of the main CPA events and conferences to [hq.sec@cpahq.org](mailto:hq.sec@cpahq.org) in advance of the publication deadline to ensure the Calendar is accurate.

Further information can also be found at [www.cpahq.org](http://www.cpahq.org) or by emailing [hq.sec@cpahq.org](mailto:hq.sec@cpahq.org).





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# TOWARDS A COMMON FUTURE: AHEAD OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING 2018

## The Editor's Note

The Commonwealth is a diverse community of 53 nations who work together to promote prosperity, democracy and peace. In April, the UK will host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) when leaders from member countries come together in London and Windsor to reaffirm our shared common values and address the global challenges that we all face.

The Commonwealth theme for 2018 is '*Towards a Common Future*' and the CHOGM this year will focus on delivering a more prosperous, secure, sustainable and fairer future for all its citizens, particularly its young people. The future of the Commonwealth depends on its one billion young people and the CHOGM's priorities will have a strong youth focus.

Across the Commonwealth, we all face common challenges: global trade and investment; cross-border security threats; the effects of climate change on small and vulnerable countries; pressures on the shared Commonwealth values of democracy, good governance and inclusivity.

Parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's membership will come together with heads of government, global leaders, business executives, civil society groups, international and women's organisations and young people for a Commonwealth Summit that also includes four Forums. The Forums – *Business, People's, Women's* and *Youth* – offer an opportunity for Commonwealth dialogue and provide a platform for a wider debate of some of the key issues and challenges, in advance of and alongside the discussions by leaders at CHOGM. For the first time, all of the Commonwealth Forums will come together in the same venue on a single day to discuss shared agendas, forge important new partnerships and celebrate common interests.

The Commonwealth's wide network of organisations – from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians through to the Commonwealth Youth Council and the Royal Commonwealth Society – give the Commonwealth a unique role in responding to the world's global challenges.

This issue of *The Parliamentarian* looks ahead to the



**Jeffrey Hyland, Editor  
*The Parliamentarian*,  
Commonwealth  
Parliamentary Association**

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2018 and Commonwealth Summit in the United Kingdom with a wide range of articles from Parliamentarians and Commonwealth organisations.

We are delighted to feature a message from the **Commonwealth Secretary-General, Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland, QC** ahead of CHOGM 2018. **Rt Hon. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon**, the UK Minister for the Commonwealth looks ahead to the United Kingdom's hosting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2018 and the Commonwealth Summit.

Ahead of the CHOGM 2018, the first Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum took place over four days in February in London with 90 delegates from 30 Commonwealth countries. The

**Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Executive Committee, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP** (Cameroon) addressed the Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum and her speech is included in this issue for her first *View* article in which she speaks about the role that Parliamentarians can play in the Commonwealth. **Hon. James Duddridge, MP** (United Kingdom), the CPA UK Chairperson also writes about the successful Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum which was hosted by the CPA UK Branch.

**Hon. Angelo Farrugia, MP, Chairperson of the CPA Small Branches** (Malta) asks what the CHOGM 2018 events will hold for CPA Small Branches and that all Branches need to work together to achieve these goals. The **CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan** in his *View* article writes about putting democracy at the heart of our common future.

**Hon. Njume Peter Ambang, MP** (Cameroon) gives us the view of a Parliamentarian looking ahead to CHOGM 2018 while **Baroness Elizabeth Berridge** (United Kingdom) discusses how the Commonwealth can be a beacon for Freedom of Religion and Belief.

**Vijay Krishnarayan** (Commonwealth Foundation) looks at the role of civil society groups and their interaction with Parliamentarians as he looks forward to the *Commonwealth People's Forum*.

Ahead of the *Commonwealth Business Forum*, **Rt Hon. Lord**



**Jonathan Marland of Odstock** (Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council) examines how the Commonwealth is becoming one of the world's leading global business networks. The power and potential of Commonwealth scholarships is explored by **Dr Joanna Newman** (Association of Commonwealth Universities) which is of increasing importance especially as one of the key focuses of this year's events is youth.

**Mahendra Ved** (Commonwealth Journalists Association) gives us a journalist's view of the Commonwealth and academic **Dr Eva Namusoke** (Institute of Commonwealth Studies) looks at the challenges of securing a fairer future.

Finally, as the Commonwealth Games 2018 takes place on the Gold Coast, Australia ahead of the CHOGM 2018, **David Grevenberg** (Commonwealth Games Federation) looks at the developmental role that sport can play in the modern Commonwealth.

We also feature a number of different topics in this issue of *The Parliamentarian*. **Joyce Watson, AM** (Wales) provides a contribution as the Vice-Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) and also as a new member of the Editorial Advisory Board for *The Parliamentarian*. Her article examines the difficult problems of modern slavery and how the authorities in Wales have been tackling this global issue.

**Hon. Dr Jiko Luveni**, Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji writes about the CPA Technical Assistance Programme that has benefitted the Members and parliamentary staff in Fiji and has increased parliamentary capacity and awareness.

Climate change expert, **Kishan Kumarsingh** writes about the *Talanoa Dialogue* and the next steps for the global community following the Paris COP21 and regular contributor, **Ravindra Garimella** (Lok Sabha Secretariat, India) gives an interesting insight into the whips system in the India Parliament.

This issue features news reports from the 24<sup>th</sup> Conference

**Above: The previous Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) took place in November 2015 in Malta. It was attended by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth and Patron of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) along with heads of government from the Commonwealth and the host was Hon. Dr Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister of Malta.**

of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth in Seychelles; the launch of the CPA Roadshows for young people in Cameroon; the 6<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Association India Regional Conference in Bihar; and the CPA's Post-Election Seminar in St Helena, one of the remotest legislatures in the Commonwealth. It also features a report of The Gambia re-joining the Commonwealth.

This issue of *The Parliamentarian* also features reports of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) recent activities including the launch of a new exhibition in the United Kingdom Parliament celebrating a century of women's voices; the CWP Africa Region hosting a workshop in KwaZulu-Natal; and the CWP Pacific Regional Mentoring Programme held in New Zealand.

The *Parliamentary Report* and *Third Reading* section in this issue includes parliamentary and legislative news from Canada Federal, Québec, British Columbia, India, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Sri Lanka and Australia Federal.

We look forward to hearing your feedback and comments on this issue of *The Parliamentarian*, on the issues of concern to Parliamentarians across the Commonwealth and to receive your future contributions to this publication.

**Jeffrey Hyland  
Editor, *The Parliamentarian*  
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# PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING 2018

## View from the CPA Chairperson

It is with great honour and privilege that I participate in the Commonwealth Parliamentarians Forum in my capacity as Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association ahead of preparations for the meeting of the Heads of State and Governments of the Commonwealth, scheduled to take place in April this year.

Prior to the formation of the Commonwealth, there have always been shared values, some of which stem from the fabric of our societies and cultures and others which were learned from our various and continuous interactions across cultures. Today, those values - Fairness, Prosperity, Unity, Democracy, Freedom of speech, the Rule of Law and Good Governance amongst others - are embodied by the Commonwealth and remain the driving force in its aim to create a better world. Not just in one state but across nations where human existence strive.

As we evolve as an organisation, so do the different challenges we face. So, while we celebrate our achievements, we should recognise the challenges that we face today as an Association, such as the security threat all over the world, inequality, poverty, hunger, etc.

I am confident that, the Commonwealth is a veritable platform for us to unite in order to efficiently and effectively tackle the issues. Today and during the next three days, our aim here will be to address some of these issues and map out a path to an attainable future.

The reminiscence of the journey which began officially in 1949 still holds great memories of our accomplishments, as we navigate the present, there is bright hope for the future.

### Fairness, prosperity, security and sustainable development

Fairness to me is the key to prosperity, security and sustainable development. Fairness can be considered an impartial and just treatment or behaviour without favouritism or discrimination. Simply put, it's just being reasonable and doing the right thing. There can be no peace without fairness, there can be no meaningful development without peace, there can be no security without peace, and therefore, no nation can prosper without fairness, peace and security. Therefore, our nations can only attain their Sustainable Development Goals when all the above are in place. A just society gives a more secure environment and a well-planned future. All of these begin with the Legislators that we are.



**Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP, Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon**

Every nation must work to maintain a sustainable development that meets our needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. Sustainability therefore, requires capacity building. It is for this reason and many more that the United Nations and many of our member states agreed to design a framework of Sustainable Development Goals which addresses a range of developmental issues that still persist.

All over the globe, security has been a constant plaguing factor. From financial security with the economic meltdown in most African countries and other nations across the globe to terrorism, which have both caused a massive wave of migration and, hence, the refugee crisis. Violent conflicts in some parts of Africa and elsewhere, which include terrorism and the spread of extremist organisations

that operate like loose networks and pose a threat to nations around the world. From another perspective, domestic violence against women and children still persist.

While all these principles of socio-economic theory may seem to have different definitions, the success of one depends largely on the efficiency and effectiveness of the other. What this tells us is, although these principles have different definitions, the interdependence on the outcome of each goes to demonstrate the urgent need for us to use this organisation to stir the world in the right direction.

### Why the Commonwealth? What is its relevance today?

The Commonwealth to some may seem to mean all member states have the same bank account or should have similar living standards. The name Commonwealth however, goes beyond the ordinary. Our diversity is our strength and our shared values our propeller to the future.

Educator and keynote speaker Stephen Covey said: *"Strength lies in differences, not similarities."* As an organisation, we are 53 nations, 2.4 billion inhabitants and over 2,000 cultures strong. That to me is what continues to make the Commonwealth relevant. It is why we are gathered here to today and it's why, if a definite solution to global warming, peace and security, fairness and prosperity is ever to be found, it should be discussed extensively during this forum and beyond.

In an ever changing, growing and challenging world, it is imperative not to forget the relevance of this prestigious organisation in general

and the role of each and every nation in building and shaping a better world and future leaders. From finding new and improved techniques to promoting sustainable development to network governance and the role of the big society.

### Sharing what works, scaling ideas and initiatives and promoting Sustainable Development

Over the next three years, my focus as CPA Chairperson will be on: first working to increase the collaboration (at the CPA level) within member states through constant communication and networking geared towards sharing our various experiences to help improve policy learning and transferability and improve Parliamentarians' insight about 'what works' across the CPA through the use of the CPA Masterclasses to address issues that are common to member states.

Secondly, scaling existing ideas and initiatives through capacity building methods such as more training conferences and a follow-up on awarded scholarships, encouraging my fellow Parliamentarians to work closely with their communities so we can tackle these issues from the ground up and investing in our youths through diverse workshops and scholarship programmes.

Third, collaborating in promoting sustainable development by increasing our efforts in making more practical policy decisions, sharing the stories of our triumphs and failures but most importantly to never stop performing what our duties are, which is dedicating ourselves to our shared vision and purpose. For us to have come this far is definitely indicative that we have been doing a lot of things right.

Allow me to quote Andrew Carnegie, the renowned Scottish-



Images: CPA UK/Ed Telling Photography

American industrialist: *"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organisational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results."*

We are all fingers of the same hand, the Commonwealth. I urge each and every one of us to work to strengthen our collective vision and never cease in our relentless efforts to keep growing and impacting positive change. The road might be rough and the journey long. But I can guarantee you, as long as we walk that road together, we would push and even surpass our limits.

### Strengthening the role of Parliamentarians in addressing these challenges

Heads of State can involve Parliamentarians in the discussion of key issues before such issues are made into policy or binding instruments in particular, like international conventions that require ratification by Parliaments. On issues of safety and security as well as peace-building and maintenance, it is important to involve the Legislatures and Parliaments so as to enforce pro-active laws rather than re-active ones. To strengthen Parliamentarians work, adequate resources for research and capacity building of Parliamentarians remains key.

While thanking my colleagues for placing their confidence on my modest person to lead the CPA, I wish to reiterate my commitment to work in close collaboration with the CPA Secretary-General and his team, the nine regions that make up the Association and all other strands of the Commonwealth to push forward our agenda.

Finally, I wish to thank the CPA UK Branch for inviting me to this very important gathering which, judging from the selected themes promises to be very enriching.

CPA UK Chairperson, fellow panellists, Honourable Members, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to thank you all for your kind attention.

*This article is taken from a keynote speech given by the CPA Chairperson at the opening panel session at the Commonwealth Parliamentarians Forum, ahead of the 2018 CHOGM/Commonwealth Summit, which took place in London, United Kingdom from 26 February to 1 March 2018, organised by the CPA UK Branch and the UK Government.*







# A COMMON FUTURE: WHAT'S IN IT FOR CPA SMALL BRANCHES?

## View from the CPA Small Branches Chairperson

Never has there been a more opportune moment to make full use of the slogan of this year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting of a 'Common Future' and this especially from the perspective of the Small Branches. The Commonwealth has so much to celebrate this year, and it is also very apt that this year's CHOGM will be held in London, recalling the first time the Heads of Government of the Commonwealth met in 1971. The Commonwealth seems to be returning to its roots.

What started as the Commonwealth of Nations has had a lasting impact on the promotion of peace, democracy and human rights, for example in helping to bring about the end to apartheid in South Africa and the end to violence and emergency rule in Pakistan in 2007. It has observed over 140 elections in more than 40 countries since 1980. The Commonwealth is home to nearly one billion of the world's young people, half of its top 20 emerging cities, almost half of the UN peacekeeping contributions and consistently ranks third in the global 'Index of Economic Freedom'.

Taken together, the Commonwealth's common legal systems, language and administrative systems mean that intra-Commonwealth trade benefits from what some have called a 'Commonwealth Advantage', with trade and investment flows increased by up to 20% and the cost of doing business reduced by up to 19%.

Four main goals for the CHOGM biennial meeting were set out: "prosperity by boosting intra-Commonwealth trade; security by greater cooperation to tackle global terrorism, organised crime and cybercrime; fairness through promoting greater diversity and good governance; and sustainability by building resilience among small, developing and vulnerable states to deal with climate change." I would like to look at these from the CPA Small Branches perspective.

The CPA Small Branches have already started working towards some of the above aims. The organisers note that the urgent need for action on climate change is "particularly relevant for the Commonwealth as 38 of our 53 members are small or other vulnerable states."



**Hon. Angelo Farrugia,  
MP, Chairperson of the  
CPA Small Branches and  
Speaker of the House of  
Representatives of the  
Parliament of Malta.**

This is one of the main areas which will be tackled once the Strategic Plan of the CPA Small Branches is approved and launched later on this year, following the CPA Executive Committee meeting in Mauritius. Building resilience among our States and Branches should give us a stronger voice and channel our strength as a team.

Furthermore, during the 36<sup>th</sup> CPA Small Branches Conference held in Dhaka, Bangladesh in November 2017, we were in unanimous agreement that security in our respective Branches is very high on the agenda, where we as legislators are facing an ongoing battle against terrorism, cybercrime and organised crime, both internally and internationally.

The promotion of diversity and good governance remain a horizontal challenge amongst our Branches. With regard to the latter, CPA Branches need to be in a position to ascertain that any measures taken

by the respective governments are such that they are being taken to ensure the greater good and not to advance the cause of some instead of others.

Another challenge will be that of supporting the growth of intra-Commonwealth trade, especially since the United Kingdom will possibly be facing new economic challenges in the light of the upcoming 'Brexit' negotiations. The new situation Britain will find itself in, should be turned into new opportunities for the Commonwealth to strengthen ties and explore new avenues of trade.

CHOGM 2018 and its fringe activities including the Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum and the social fora should be a good occasion to network and share experiences. The CPA Small Branches have acknowledged the fact that we have made the first step towards achieving attainable goals and built upon what was carried through in previous years in order to gain as much momentum as larger and often more developed members of the Commonwealth.

I cannot discuss the CPA Small Branches within the framework of CHOGM 2018 without referring to what has been achieved during the past CHOGM 2015 which was held in my home-country, Malta.

Among the results of the meeting, a Centre of Excellence for the organisation's Small States, based in Valletta has been launched

and currently in its implementing stages. The centre will serve as a reference point and will provide assistance to 31 small states in sectors varying from debt management to assistance in cases of natural disasters.

Less than a year since Malta organized the CHOGM summit, the centre is one of the initiatives proposed by the Maltese government that will be implemented and was agreed upon between the Commonwealth countries. We should look out for any opportunities that this centre for excellence of small states has to offer so that we make full use of this service.

As Commonwealth Secretary-General, Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland, QC said, "We have the most wonderful opportunity here together as a Commonwealth family. We live in troubled and troubling times, and one of the most wonderful opportunities we have is to share our common values, our common future and our common determination to have a world which is worth living, for our children." Small States which the CPA Small Branches represent are working very hard towards becoming as economically competitive and more accessible so that it can put forward a new light for development.

I want to conclude my contribution to this very important publication using former UK Young Ambassador to the Commonwealth Youth Council Leon Ward's words - "The Commonwealth Charter, signed by Her Majesty and endorsed by all member states recognises the potential of the Commonwealth to act as a force for good. To protect our Commonwealth, we have to change it. To make our Commonwealth relevant, states must start pushing one another to change and to improve. It is in the interests of all Commonwealth states to do this. The UK is particularly keen on using CHOGM 2018 to bring the Commonwealth back into relevance. I call on all of you across our Commonwealth to be bolder and truly to be a force for good. Your Commonwealth, my Commonwealth and our



Commonwealth are waiting on you to deliver."

To take forward the spirit of this statement, I urge all the CPA Branches, large or small, to support one another and create a common goal so that we can all move on as one, to reach out to one another in order to build a common future together, enshrined within the same principles that brought the Commonwealth together in the first place, amongst which democracy, international peace and security, tolerance, respect and understanding, freedom of expression and good governance, amongst others.

I firmly believe that a 'Common Future' is achievable by seizing new opportunities for strengthening existing ties among the Commonwealth countries. May this not only be a slogan or a cliché, but the target which translates our present actions into our future successes.

**Above and below: The last Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting was held in 2015 in Malta.**







# PUTTING DEMOCRACY AT THE HEART OF OUR COMMON FUTURE

## View from the 7<sup>th</sup> CPA Secretary-General

The long awaited theme of the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 'Towards a Common Future' was announced by the British Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Theresa May in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly Meetings in New York. The theme forms the basis for discussions at this year's Commonwealth Summit, the biennial meeting of Commonwealth leaders last hosted by the UK in 1997. The timing could not be more auspicious; coming against a backdrop of Brexit and a UK pivot towards a 'wider world' foreign policy.

Expectations are running high for a successful Summit which it is hoped will renew and revitalise the UK's trading relationship, amongst other areas, with the Commonwealth family while raising the bloc's profile in the UK especially, amongst young people who are mostly unaware of the nature and benefits of belonging to the world's oldest political Association.

In a 2015 poll of British school children conducted by the Royal Commonwealth Society, only 7% could identify a Commonwealth flag; only 23% could correctly select three Commonwealth countries; and, only 50% could correctly identify the Queen as the Head of the Commonwealth.

With approximately 60% of the Commonwealth's 2.4 billion citizens across its 53 countries currently under the age of 30 years, the importance of young people identifying with the Commonwealth and embracing its values is now urgent and pressing. This is why the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) has led the way through its innovative CPA Roadshows for young people which visit schools and universities across the Commonwealth with Parliamentarians to discuss the importance of democracy and to give voice to the views of our young people.

According to UK Prime Minister May, the 2018 Commonwealth Summit will pursue an ambitious agenda focused on realising a more prosperous, secure, fair and sustainable future for all Commonwealth citizens. Importantly, at a time when trust in government and public institutions is falling, the challenge for Commonwealth leaders will be to lift the Commonwealth Summit from just another international junket into a dynamic empowering global force for good that captures the imagination of all citizens, is transformative of Commonwealth values for their benefit, and which champions change for the marginalised and excluded in our societies while celebrating inclusion and diversity in all its forms, whether based on gender, race, ethnicity, cultural or sexual orientation.



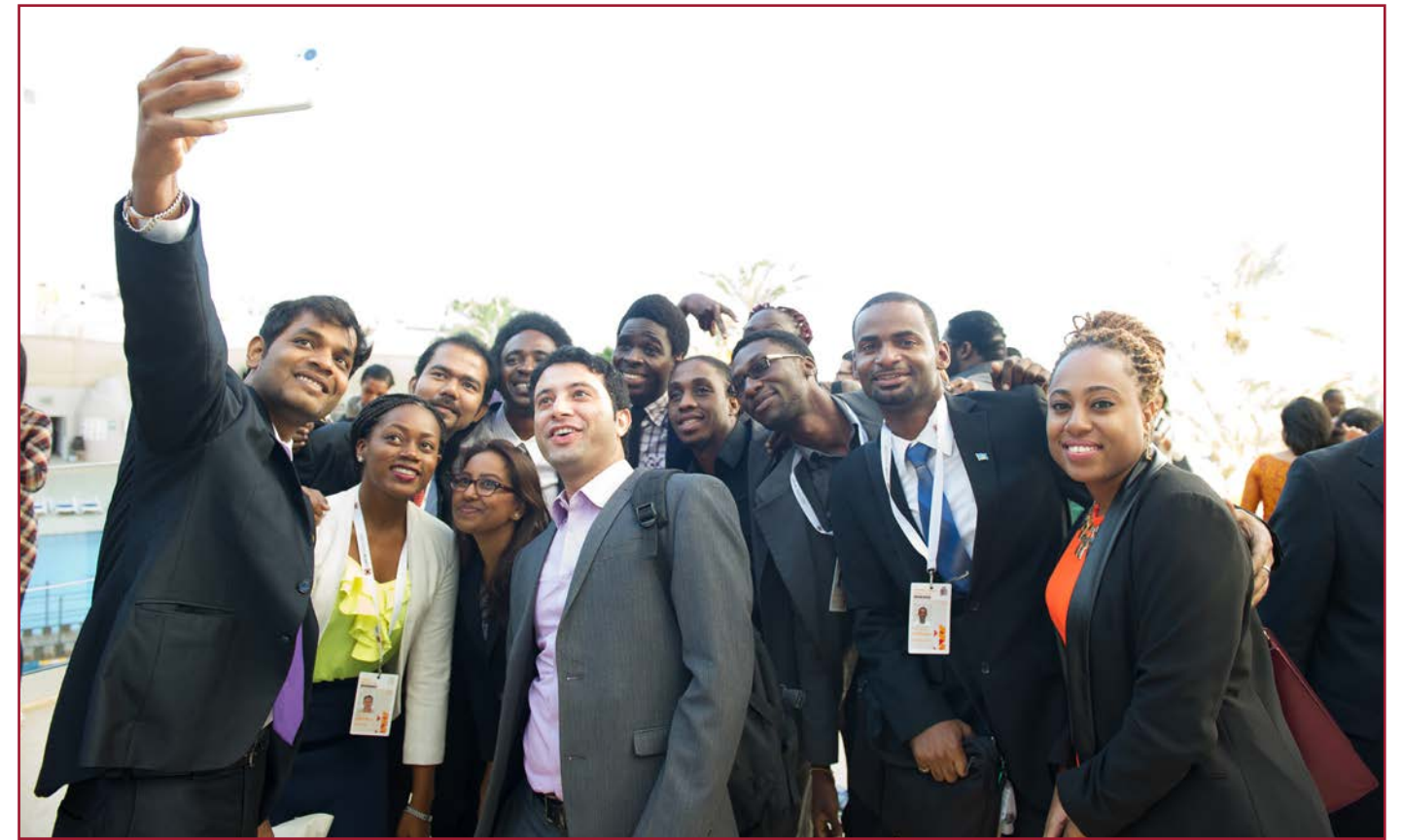
**Mr Akbar Khan**  
Secretary-General of  
the Commonwealth  
Parliamentary Association

The high watermark of the Commonwealth proudly standing against the scourge of apartheid in support of its peoples' needs to be re-ignited again in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the Commonwealth positioning itself strongly and unequivocally beside its citizens in the fight against climate change and the inequities and inequalities that cause so much poverty and injustice in our societies, especially in our small and vulnerable states, which make up over 30 of the Commonwealth's 53 nations.

At a time when several of our core Commonwealth political values including democracy, rule of law and the separation of powers are under attack across many Commonwealth countries, it is vitally important that the upcoming Summit and resulting outcomes help to galvanise the efforts of civil society,

ordinary citizens, the young and old, women and men, academics, Parliamentarians and governments to come together in support of democracy as a central tenet of our common future. A keen focus on realising the development outcomes of the Summit will be essential to renewing and revitalising the credibility of the Commonwealth in the minds of ordinary citizens, many of whom have been left behind by

**"The high watermark of the Commonwealth proudly standing against the scourge of apartheid in support of its peoples' needs to be re-ignited again in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the Commonwealth positioning itself strongly and unequivocally beside its citizens in the fight against climate change and the inequities and inequalities that cause so much poverty and injustice in our societies, especially in our small and vulnerable states, which make up over 30 of the Commonwealth's 53 nations."**



**Above: The future of the Commonwealth depends on its one billion young people. The Commonwealth Youth Forum 2018 will provide an opportunity for the young people of the Commonwealth to build cross-cultural connections and networks, debate the challenges facing its young people, and agree youth-lead initiatives to influence decision makers and ensure young people have a voice in its future.**

globalisation and yet to feel the tangible benefits of belonging to this longstanding 'sleeping beauty' of a political association, especially if the Commonwealth is to survive for future generations.

Central to realising the Summit outcomes lies the key role of Commonwealth Parliaments. Parliaments are unique institutions sitting at the centre of a network of accountability that reaches into the executive and other branches of government, the political party system and to the public. No two Parliaments are the same as each will reflect their own unique historical evolution, but what all Parliaments have in common is a capacity to strengthen democracy by acting as powerful agents of change for the improvement of their nations.

In our Commonwealth, it is the role of Parliaments and our elected representatives to forge, develop and implement the Summit outcomes which should align themselves with the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals. These goals underscore the importance of the close relationship between democracy and development. As the former UNDP Administrator, Helen Clark has stated, the principles which underpin the new development goals go directly to the importance of active, effective, honest and fair governance at all levels and lying at the core of a flourishing democracy are the values of good governance. As a guarantor of democracy itself, Parliament has a duty to represent the people it serves – and it discharges this responsibility by being an inclusive, accountable, open and transparent public institution.

The run up to the UK Summit in April 2018 will be marked by a number of important Commonwealth gatherings showcasing the potential of the bloc as a global force for good by placing the importance of citizens at the heart of its mission rather than governments.

The first of these important gatherings took place in early November when the Parliament of Bangladesh and CPA Bangladesh Branch

hosted over 600 Commonwealth Parliamentarians at the CPA's 63<sup>rd</sup> annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. This was followed in February this year by the inaugural Commonwealth Parliamentarians Forum with 90 Parliamentarians from 30 countries hosted by the CPA UK Branch.

Critical issues affecting every aspect of the lives of our Commonwealth citizens were discussed with the ambition of deepening democracy and reaffirming a collective commitment to create a fairer Commonwealth that promotes good governance and protects fundamental freedoms as we move towards realising a common future.

**Mr Akbar Khan**  
7<sup>th</sup> Secretary-General  
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

*A version of this article was published in November 2017 in the Bangladesh Daily Star on the eve of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.*



# The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

## CPA Photo Gallery



Above: The first Commonwealth Parliamentarians Forum opened with a panel discussion featuring (left to right) the UK Minister for the Commonwealth, Rt Hon. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon; the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland, QC; Hon. James Duddridge, MP, CPA UK Chair; the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Hon. Emilia Lifaka, MP (Cameroon); and the Deputy President of the Senate of Nigeria, HE Senator Ike Ekwerekadu.

Right: The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, Hon. Darryl Plecas, MLA and the Clerk of the House, Mr Craig James met with the CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan in London, United Kingdom.



Below: The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Headquarters Secretariat held its annual Commonwealth breakfast event at the Parliament of the United Kingdom for partners and supporters with presentations by the CPA Vice-Chairperson, Hon. Alexandra Mendes, MP (Canada) and the CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan to review 2017 activity and to look forward to new projects in 2018.



Above: The Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP, who is also the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon, attended the 6<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Association India Regional Conference held in Patna, Bihar from 16 to 19 February 2018. She is pictured with the CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan and Hon. Robyn Lambley, MLA from the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly who also attended the CPA India Regional Conference. Please see page 16 for full conference report.



Above: Members of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly in Pakistan visited the CPA Headquarters Secretariat to discuss the CPA's Parliamentary Fundamentals Programme on Practice and Procedure and parliamentary strengthening opportunities. The CPA provides programmes for national, sub-national, provincial, state and territorial legislatures to network, share good practice and strengthen the role of Parliament as an institution.



Above and right: CPA Secretary-General Mr Akbar Khan met with the High Commissioner of Kenya to the UK, His Excellency Lazurus O. Amayo to discuss closer collaboration and parliamentary strengthening opportunities between the Kenya Parliament and the CPA. A delegation from the Parliament of Kenya also visited the CPA Headquarters Secretariat ahead of the Kenya Post-Election Seminar.



Below right: The CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan met with Hon. Barry Sheerman, MP, Chairman of Leadership Council of the Global Network for Road Safety Legislators and David Ward, Secretary-General, Global NCAP to discuss their work in road safety and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the role of Commonwealth Parliamentarians in Manifesto #4RoadSafety.

Below right: The Speaker of the Cayman Islands Legislative Assembly, Hon. W. McKeeva Bush visited the CPA Headquarters Secretariat in London to discuss the CPA's parliamentary strengthening work in the region and youth engagement in democracy. The Speaker met with CPA Director of Operations, Mr Jarvis Matiya and CPA Headquarters Secretariat staff members.



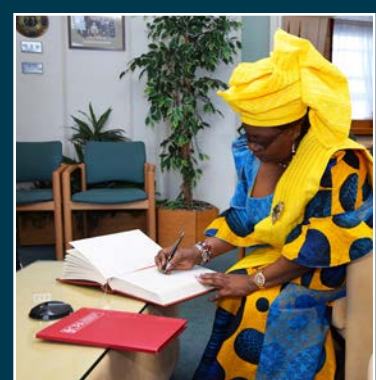
Left: The CPA Chairperson, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP, accompanied by the CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan visited the United Kingdom Parliament and met with Mr David Natzler, Clerk of the House of Commons.



Below: CPA Secretary-General Mr Akbar Khan meets with Professor David Everatt, Head of the Wits School of Governance, University of Witwatersrand in South Africa to discuss the university-accredited CPA Parliamentary Fundamentals Flagship Programme for Commonwealth Parliamentarians. [www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cpafundamentals](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cpafundamentals)



Above and right: The Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon, visited the CPA Headquarters Secretariat on her first official visit to the UK since her election to meet with staff and to receive briefings on current projects.



Above left: The CPA Chairperson, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP, gives an interview to Ms Sue Onslow from The Round Table and Institute of Commonwealth Studies about the modern Commonwealth and the role of the CPA.

Right: The CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan met with Secretary of the Senate of Pakistan, Mr Amjed Pervez Malik to discuss CPA's work across the CPA Asia Region and parliamentary strengthening opportunities.





## Commonwealth Speakers meet in Seychelles for 24<sup>th</sup> Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth

Over 50 Speakers and Presiding Officers from across the Commonwealth have met in Seychelles for the 24<sup>th</sup> Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) which took place from 8 to 13 January 2018 and was officially opened by the President of the Republic of Seychelles, His Excellency Mr Danny Faure. The CSPOC Conference brought together the Speakers and Presiding Officers of 22 bicameral Parliaments and 30 unicameral Parliaments – a total of 74 members from 52 nations. The Speakers from the Parliaments and Legislatures of the Commonwealth participated in working sessions and plenaries, focusing on different topics of discussions on matters of Parliament; providing a forum for the sharing of parliamentary best practices and fruitful collaborations across the Parliaments of the Commonwealth.

Topics varied from discussions on the use of technology to support Members and house business, touching on subjects concerning methods to improve and benefit the Parliaments through the use of technology; the development of efficient social media channels and website portals to ensure that parliamentary information is accessible not only to the parliamentary Members and staff but also to the public to promote democracy and transparency. Other topics debated included the role of the Speaker in parliamentary diplomacy for both regional and international co-operation, emerging security issues for Parliamentarians as well as strengthening parliamentary research for the effective functioning of legislatures.

In his opening address, President Faure welcomed the delegates to Seychelles and expressed his pride that as a Small Island Developing State, Seychelles was hosting the conference. He highlighted the diversity and fundamental unity of all Commonwealth member states, saying: "We are all committed to the values inscribed in the Commonwealth Charter – democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. We are all dedicated to the development of free and democratic societies, and the promotion of peace and prosperity to improve the lives of our people."

The President also expanded on the successful cohabitation in Seychelles, saying: "The Seychelles National Assembly as an essential branch of Government has transformed into an exemplary institution in the region. There are vibrant debates of divergent views, but there is also a new working environment; one where there is dialogue and consultation. And most importantly, mutual respect."

Under the leadership of Honourable Speaker Patrick Pillay, our National Assembly has seen greater transparency, openness and



accountability. The sittings are broadcast live on both television and radio. Through modern technology, citizens are able to directly contact their respective representatives while the debates are taking place, making use of platforms such as WhatsApp and social media. This is permissible by our Speaker. As for the Executive Branch, members of my Cabinet make themselves available to take Private Members' questions from the Leader of the Opposition, and both urgent and 10 days' notice questions from Members of the National Assembly," said the President.

The Speaker of the National Assembly of Seychelles, Hon. Patrick Pillay, welcomed the delegates and encouraged them to experience the Seychelles' unique local culture. Hon. Patrick Pillay also highlighted the work of the National Assembly of Seychelles that has seen greater transparency, openness and accountability. As per the tradition of the CSPOC opening ceremony, the assembled Speakers and Presiding Officers, led by the Speaker of the National Assembly of Seychelles and the Sergeant at Arms, participated in the official Speaker's Procession in their ceremonial robes.

The Conference, being held in Seychelles for the first time, brings together the Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Parliaments and Legislatures of the Commonwealth. CSPOC operates on a two-year cycle, holding a conference of the full membership every two years. It focuses on the sharing of experiences, collaboration, and partnership across the Parliaments of the Commonwealth. CSPOC was created in 1969 and is a separate independent organisation, although many of its participants are also Members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Executive Committee, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP, who is also the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon also attended the Conference and observed the working sessions.

The Speakers and Presiding Officers, accompanied by their Clerks and Parliamentary officials, also visited the Parliamentary Museum and the Chamber of the National Assembly of Seychelles. The visit was an educational tour where the Delegates had an insight into the functioning of the Assembly. Delegates also attended a reception by the President at the State House and a reception with the British High Commissioner, HE Caron Roshler.

The 25<sup>th</sup> CSPOC Conference will be held in Canada in 2020. For more information about CSPOC please visit [www.cspoc.org](http://www.cspoc.org).



With thanks to Ms Alexandria Faure at the National Assembly of Seychelles for information and images for this article.

## Chairperson builds new three year strategy for CPA as she launches CPA Roadshow for young people in Cameroon with CPA Secretary-General

The new Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Executive Committee, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP is building a new three year strategy for her term of office as she welcomed the CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan to Cameroon on his first official visit since the Chairperson was elected in November 2017.

During the working visit, the CPA Chairperson, who is also the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon welcomed the Secretary-General to the Parliament of Cameroon. The CPA Secretary-General held a number of bilateral meetings including: His Excellency Philémon Yang, the Prime Minister of Cameroon; His Excellency Dr Joseph Dion Ngute, Minister Delegate in Charge of Relations with the Commonwealth;

Hon. Marcel Niat Njifenji, President of the Senate. The CPA Secretary-General also met with Members of the CPA Cameroon Branch. During his stay in Cameroon, the Secretary-General also met with His Majesty Chief Tabetando, President of CPDM Parliamentary Group of the Senate.

The CPA Chairperson and the CPA Secretary-General then travelled to Buea, the capital of the Southwest region of Cameroon and one of the English-speaking regions of the country. Following their arrival, the CPA delegation met with the Governor of the Southwest region before travelling to the Government Bilingual High School at Limbe to launch the CPA Roadshows for Young People for the first time in Cameroon. The school is a secondary grammar school and over 200 students from eight local government schools aged 12 to 18 attended the CPA Roadshow.

An engaging CPA Roadshow session was held providing an opportunity for the young people to learn about the political values of the Commonwealth such as diversity, development and parliamentary democracy; to discuss issues of concern about



the society in which they live; and to find out about the work of the CPA through their questions at the session.

The CPA Roadshows highlight the importance of encouraging youth engagement in the political process and the sharing of Commonwealth political values, especially with the 60% of the 2.4 billion population of the Commonwealth who are aged under 30. The CPA Roadshows held in Cameroon also provided an opportunity to raise awareness of the 2018 Commonwealth Summit due to be held in the UK in April 2018 on the theme of 'Towards a Common Future'.

The CPA Secretary-General said: "I am delighted to visit Cameroon to launch the CPA Roadshow for Young People here with the CPA Chairperson and to engage with local students on the values that unite the Commonwealth. The CPA's public engagement work across the Commonwealth and engaging young people in the democratic process by discussing the importance of the Commonwealth are key objectives of the CPA and our visit to Cameroon has emphasised this."

Feedback from the audience was very positive with one student remarking "The CPA Roadshow was a wonderful experience for me – meeting the Secretary-General and Madam Lifaka was unforgettable. The Secretary-General talked about the values of respect, tolerance, love and equity and I have also heard about democracy, parliament and being a good citizen and to be well educated because it's our future."





## Renewed focus on sustainable development goals and re-commitment to the independence of the legislature at 6<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Association India Regional Conference

Over 100 Commonwealth Parliamentarians from across India have renewed their focus on Parliament's role in the sustainable development agenda and reaffirmed their commitment to the separation of powers between the legislature, the judiciary and the executive at the 6<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) India Regional Conference held in Patna, Bihar from 16 to 19 February 2018.

The Chairperson of the CPA India Region and Speaker of the Lok Sabha, India Parliament, Hon. Sumitra Mahajan, MP reaffirmed the independence of the legislature and stressed the importance of good relations with the judiciary by saying: *"In a parliamentary democracy, the legislative assembly plays a vital role.... the judiciary and the executive are equally important. They are the pillars of democracy and a balance between them is of high importance. Neither can be ignored."* The CPA India Regional Chairperson also announced that four new regional zones would be created in the India Region to conduct zonal regional seminars and conferences for legislators to interact with each regularly across the country in between the biennial CPA India Regional Conference.



*genuine and enduring democracy. As a guarantor of democracy itself, parliament has a duty to represent the people it serves – and it can only do this by being an inclusive, accountable, open and transparent institution."* To read the Secretary-General's closing remarks in full please visit [www.cpahq.org/cpahq/speeches](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/speeches).

The CPA Regional Conference was hosted by the CPA Bihar Branch and the Hon. Speaker of the Bihar Legislative Assembly, Vijay Kumar Chaudhary, MP and the conference was also addressed by the Chief Minister of Bihar, Hon. Nitish Kumar and the Governor of Bihar, Satya Pal Malik.

The CPA India Regional Conference brought together Speakers and Members of Parliament from the national Parliament of India (Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha) and thirty one state and provincial legislatures across India, one of the most populated regions of the Commonwealth. Representatives also attended from Uganda, Australia and other Commonwealth countries.

To see highlights of the closing ceremony please visit: <https://youtu.be/xda9EjxWfJE> (Footage by Rajya Sabha TV).



The new Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP, addressed Members at the opening ceremony. The CPA Chairperson said that Parliamentarians must be part of the sustainable development agenda as they can play a vital role in its implementation. She also expressed her delight that her first official overseas conference as the new Chairperson since her election was in the CPA India Region.

The CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan, who also attended the conference during his first official visit to India, addressed the closing ceremony of the conference and said that the legislatures of the CPA India Region can be a role model for the many democracies in the Commonwealth. He said: *"Parliamentarians and therefore Parliaments play a critically important role in embedding respect for the separation of powers and creating the conditions for sustainable development. An effective parliament can promote robust, inclusive economic growth and nurture*



Images: CPA Bihar Branch.

## Commonwealth Parliamentary Association embeds good governance and democracy in St Helena, one of the remotest legislatures in the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) has helped to strengthen parliamentary practice and procedure for the St Helena Legislature following the recent elections in July 2017 through a CPA Post-Election Seminar for newly elected Members from 20 to 27 January 2018. One of the remotest legislatures in the CPA's membership of over 180 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures, the St Helena Legislature is in the British Overseas Territory located on a small island in the Atlantic Ocean with a population of 4,500 people.

On 26 July 2017, St Helena held transparent, free and fair elections which demonstrated the Territory's commitment to the democratic ideals and standards upon which the Commonwealth is founded and the ideals enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter.

The CPA is the only Commonwealth body that works to strengthen territorial assemblies and legislatures such as the St Helena Legislative Council as well as working with national, state and provincial legislatures. The CPA provides a key platform to develop good parliamentary practice in St Helena and other self-governing UK Overseas Territories and to share good practice between similar legislatures across the Commonwealth.

The CPA Post-Election Seminar saw Members of the St Helena Legislature provided with an excellent opportunity to ask questions about parliamentary practice and procedure. It provided Members with a better understanding of the parliamentary system and democratic processes in other Commonwealth jurisdictions.



The seminar was opened by Hon. Eric Benjamin, MLC, Speaker of the Legislature of St Helena and Her Excellency Lisa Phillips, Governor of St Helena. Hon. Derek Thomas, MLC, former CPA Executive Committee Member, and Ms Meenakshi Dhar, on behalf of the CPA Headquarters Secretariat made addresses. Commitment to improving democratic processes in the legislature was demonstrated by the active participation in the seminar of Councillors, both new and those returning to the House.

The five newly elected and seven returning Councillors heard from experts from across the Commonwealth at the CPA Post-Election Seminar including: Hon. Barry House, Former President of the Legislative Council of Western Australia; Mr Roger Phillips, Clerk of Tynwald, Secretary of the House of Keys and Counsel to the Speaker, Isle of Man and the Attorney-General from St Helena.

The CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan, in a message delivered on his behalf by Ms Meenakshi Dhar from the CPA Headquarters Secretariat, said: *"The CPA Post-Election Seminar in St Helena demonstrates the CPA's commitment to our Small Branches and to the territorial legislatures that we represent. The CPA Post-Election Seminar is emblematic of the mutuality of learning among CPA members, small and large, which is so much part of the life blood of the CPA family. I am delighted that the CPA is able*

*to share good practice with local Members on issues such as the importance of Codes of Conduct as a tool to help address the trust deficit in Parliaments; the importance of gender equality in parliament; and the essential role that an effective Committee can play. This peer-to-peer learning and bringing together of expertise from across the Commonwealth, goes to the heart of the CPA's key strength as an Association."*

Hon. Eric Benjamin, Speaker of the Legislature said in his closing remarks: *"The week-long Seminar has been educational and greatly beneficial as Councillors have engaged in constructive exchanges with the visiting CPA resource team who have shared with us how different Legislatures across the Commonwealth operate. I believe that Councillors will reflect on how some of the ideas shared can be implemented here in this House to help improve the way in which we function and better represent the people of St Helena."*

Following the CPA Post-Election Seminar, the CPA Roadshow for Young People was launched at Prince Andrews School in St Helena as part of the CPA Roadshows tour of Commonwealth schools and universities. Over 300 students discussed the importance of the Commonwealth and parliamentary democracy with the visiting CPA delegation and local Councillors, Derek Thomas, Christine Scipio-O'Dean and Cruyff Buckley. The CPA Roadshows provide an opportunity for young people to learn about the political values of the Commonwealth such as diversity, development and parliamentary democracy; the role of St Helena Councillors in representing the issues of concern to the people of St Helena and the work of the CPA.



Images: St Helena Government Press Office/CPA Headquarters Secretariat.





# TOWARDS A COMMON FUTURE: COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING 2018



**Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland, QC** is the sixth Commonwealth Secretary-General assuming office in 2016 as the first women to hold the position. She trained as a lawyer, was the first black woman to be appointed as a Queen's Counsel and at 35, was also the youngest woman QC. She joined the UK House of Lords in 1997 going on to serve as a Minister in the Foreign Office, Home Office and Lord Chancellor's Department. She was appointed as Attorney General in 2007 – the first woman to hold the post since it was created in 1315.

The Commonwealth is about involvement and inclusiveness. It works, and makes other things work better, because our people share ideas at every level. We co-operate, provide mutual support, and are able to work together easily and rise above difference and division because shared inheritances have made our systems of law, government, and education very similar, and we speak a common language. Above all, we are committed to the values of the Commonwealth Charter: democracy, development, sustainability, and respect for the rights of all.

April 2018 promises to be one of the most momentous months in modern Commonwealth history and development. First there will be the Commonwealth Games in the Gold Coast, Australia, bringing together thousands of athletes from across Commonwealth nations and territories set in every continent and ocean. Their diversity, and the goodwill of sporting competition at the 'friendly games' will for the millions watching be a showcase of everything the Commonwealth is and does.

The focus then shifts immediately to the other side

of the world, from Australia to the United Kingdom, for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. This speaks eloquently of the range and reach of the Commonwealth. From the Pacific to Europe, from Africa and Asia to the Caribbean and the Americas, the people of the Commonwealth connect and work together at multiple levels and for many purposes, yet with shared goals and towards a common future.

The summit meeting of the leaders of the 53 independent countries of the Commonwealth family shows the cooperation and commitment at its highest level – including to agree a Commonwealth Blue Charter to protect our oceans, and to serve the needs of the marginalised and vulnerable by building resilience. The focus will be

on working towards a future that is fairer, more prosperous, more sustainable, and more secure. Alongside the Heads of Government Meeting, there will be Commonwealth forums for youth, women, business and civil society.

This range, this connection, the inclusiveness and vitality, attract participation by Parliamentarians and students, human rights defenders and investors, advocates for social and economic change, health workers and environmental campaigners - there is room for everyone. Wherever we live, learn, work or play in the Commonwealth, there are ways for each of us to become involved and to celebrate our Commonwealth identity by connecting with others and working towards a common future.



Image: CPA/UK/Ed Telling Photography



## The Gambia re-joins the Commonwealth

The Gambia re-joined the Commonwealth in February 2018, almost five years after leaving the organisation. The West African nation's return was marked by a flag-raising ceremony at Marlborough House, the London headquarters of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Gambia's ambassador to the UK now becomes its High Commissioner, signifying Commonwealth membership. Both the new High Commissioner and Commonwealth Secretary-General, Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland, QC attended the flag-raising ceremony.

Speaking about his country's return to the Commonwealth, The Gambia's High Commissioner to the UK, His Excellency Francis Blain said: *"I am thrilled to represent my country as it formally re-joins the Commonwealth after an absence of several years – and to become High Commissioner rather than Ambassador. The Gambia looks forward to being able both to contribute to and benefit from the collective wisdom of the Commonwealth family of countries, and to playing an active role in supporting the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the many other organisations and initiatives that flourish as expressions of Commonwealth connection."*

*The Government and people of The Gambia will also draw on all that the Commonwealth collectively has to offer, assisting in practical ways to address a wide range of pressing issues – including protecting the environment and tackling climate change, and the empowerment of women and young people."*

The decision to begin the process of applying for readmission was made in February 2017 by President Adama Barrow, who came to power following elections in December 2016.

In December 2017, the Parliament of The Gambia unanimously affirmed the country's desire to rejoin the Commonwealth, fulfilling one of the final steps in the organisation's membership process.



The country's application was unanimously supported by the previous 52 member states and The Gambia will now be invited to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April 2018 in London.

Commonwealth Secretary-General, Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland, QC said, *"When The Gambia left in 2013, the heads of government expressed their regret in its leaving the Commonwealth family. We've looked forward to The Gambia's return and were delighted when, after his election victory in December 2016, President Barrow pledged to return. The Gambia's application to re-join has been unanimously accepted by all 52 member states, who welcome back their brothers and sisters to again play their full part in the Commonwealth family."*

*With thanks to the Commonwealth Secretariat for news story and images.*







# LOOKING AHEAD TO THE UNITED KINGDOM HOSTING CHOGM 2018 AND COMMONWEALTH SUMMIT



**Rt Hon. Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon** is the UK Minister for the Commonwealth and UN and the UK Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict. He has previously been the Minister for Aviation and Trade, for Skills and Aviation Security, for Countering Extremism, and Local Government and Communities. He was a Government Whip and Lord in Waiting to HM the Queen. He was previously a Councillor and Cabinet Member in the London Borough of Merton and had a 20 year career in the City of London working in banking and finance.



As the UK's Minister for the Commonwealth, it gives me great pleasure to contribute to this special issue of *The Parliamentarian*, in advance of the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) here in London in April.

It promises to be a month of wonderful celebration of the modern Commonwealth. It will start with two weeks of Commonwealth Games on Australia's Gold Coast, where athletes from 70 nations and territories will gather for a festival of elite international sport. The Games will be followed by the week of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting here in the UK, concluding with celebrations across the Commonwealth to mark the 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on Saturday 21 April, and her incredible service to the Commonwealth family over more than 60 years.

As host country, we in the UK have the privilege of welcoming national leaders, foreign ministers, business people, civil society representatives, and, perhaps most importantly, young

people from every corner of the Commonwealth to our country for the summit.

We are particularly delighted to also be welcoming our friends from The Gambia to London, following their return to the Commonwealth in February. I had the great privilege of visiting The Gambia a week after the country officially re-joined this wonderful association, where I was delighted to present His Excellency President Adama Barrow with a formal invitation to the summit from our Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Theresa May, MP.

We are proud to see The Gambian flag flying, once again, outside Marlborough House. Their delegation will be welcome guests in London and I know you will join me in congratulating them on their successful return to the Commonwealth.

The summit provides the 53 members of the Commonwealth with the opportunity to build upon the important work started in Malta in 2015 of rejuvenating this unique organisation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to make it relevant to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth has deep

roots and profound strengths. Over seven decades, it has helped newly-independent countries develop their national institutions, make economic progress and share common experiences, through the networks across a range of areas and disciplines.

Home to one third of the world's population, some of its fastest growing economies and accounting for one-fifth of global trade, the Commonwealth is an exceptional 21<sup>st</sup> century network. It has a tremendously diverse membership which shares a belief in being a united force for good in a turbulent world. With two thirds of its population under the age of 30, it also has extraordinary potential for global influence.

We want April's summit to drive progress towards realising this incredible potential. We in the UK have been working closely with our fellow member states and with the Commonwealth Secretariat on the formal agenda for the summit. Together we have agreed that its broad focus will be on four policy areas: prosperity, security, sustainability and fairness.

The official theme of the summit has also been agreed – *Towards a Common Future* – reflecting our shared desire to put the interests, values and ambitions of the Commonwealth's young people at the heart of all we do across the 53 nations.

Indeed, it is important to remember that this summit will involve the entire Commonwealth family, not only those who have the great privilege of leading its member states, but also civil society, communities and faith groups.

The four Commonwealth Forums that will start the week – on Business, People, Youth and Women – demonstrate this well. Taking place over three days, these will offer an opportunity for people from across the Commonwealth to come together and debate some of the key issues and challenges facing us all. For the first time, all four forums will convene in the same venue for one of the days, allowing cross over between the delegates, speakers and discussions.

The UK appreciates the excellent work that is being done by the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council, the Commonwealth Foundation and the Commonwealth Secretariat to organise and prepare for these important events.

The forums will be followed by meetings of Commonwealth Foreign Ministers and the official Heads of Government Meeting. These will take place in Lancaster House, Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, which Her Majesty The Queen has graciously offered as the location for the Leaders' Retreat on the Friday of summit week.

This will be one of the largest gatherings of national leaders that the UK has ever hosted. However, as we all know, the Commonwealth is much more than simply a collection of



Images: CPA UK/Ed Telling Photography

member states and a secretariat.

The third element of the Commonwealth is the network of links between its people. Indeed, we in the UK believe that one of the Commonwealth's great strengths lies in the many institutions and people who work together across our borders. These connections are often organised by the more than 80 organisations that are officially accredited to the Commonwealth and the vibrant diaspora communities that exist across it.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is an outstanding example of the power of this third pillar. One of the Commonwealth's fundamental values is a commitment to representative democracy, as outlined in *Article 1* of the Commonwealth Charter. For more than a century, CPA Branches have upheld this commitment, acting as a powerful voice and advocate for Parliaments across the Commonwealth.

The fact that CPA now works with over 180 Parliaments and legislatures and its 17,000 members is a testament to how successful you have been in pursuing this mission.

By enabling the Commonwealth's political leaders to share their varied

experiences, your efforts strengthen and enhance standards of governance around the world and, as a result, help to improve standards of living for all Commonwealth citizens.

I was delighted to see this important work first-hand during the recent Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum hosted by the CPA UK Branch in London.

The meeting gave ninety delegates from over thirty Commonwealth Parliaments the opportunity to discuss a range of issues around the four areas that leaders will focus on in April. Importantly, it has also provided those Parliamentarians with a chance to raise awareness of the summit and influence their national debates ahead of it.

While the voices of today were busy in London, the voices of tomorrow were making themselves heard in the ninth Commonwealth Youth Parliament in Jersey. This annual programme has firmly established itself in the CPA calendar as an opportunity for young people from across the Commonwealth to network with like-minded peers and get a sense of what it feels like to sit in a democratic Parliament.

As I saw such an impressive and diverse mix of Parliamentarians gather for

Above: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, UK Minister for the Commonwealth addresses delegates at the first Commonwealth Parliamentarians Forum, which took place in London, UK ahead of the CHOGM 2018.

the forum in London, I was reminded of the power of the Commonwealth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: as a global network of people and countries united by their shared values and common hopes for the future.

This April will be a moment for all of us, from every corner of the Commonwealth, to demonstrate the positive role this network must play in bringing about a more peaceful, progressive and prosperous world.

It was Eleanor Roosevelt who famously said: "*The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.*"

The beauty of the Commonwealth is clear for all to see. I hope we can work together to help turn this ambition into a reality. We look forward to welcoming the Commonwealth family of nations to London!

For more information about the CHOGM 2018 and Commonwealth Summit in the UK please visit [www.chogm2018.org.uk](http://www.chogm2018.org.uk).





# FIRST COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS' FORUM HELD AHEAD OF CHOGM 2018



**Hon. James Duddridge, MP** is the Chair of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK Branch (CPA UK). Since 2005, he has been the MP for Rochford & Southend East. Before politics, he pursued a successful business career in the private sector and was a banker with Barclays both in the City of London and in Africa, working in the Ivory Coast and Botswana. He was also a founding member of the highly successful national polling firm *YouGov*. He has held positions in government as a Government Whip and was Foreign Office Minister between 2014 and 2016.



During a cold and snowy week in the United Kingdom, nearly 100 Commonwealth Parliamentarians and youth delegates arrived in London for the first ever Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum, hosted by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK (CPA UK).

It was the first time that Parliamentarians were given the space to explore and discuss the themes and issues ahead of an upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), which will take place in April this year.

The UK-hosted CHOGM 2018 will see leaders from member countries of the Commonwealth convene in Windsor and London to reaffirm our common values, address the global challenges we face, and agree how to work to create a better future for all of our citizens. With 53 independent countries and 2.4 billion people, of which 60% are below the age of 30, it is no surprise that this CHOGM will have a strong focus on youth.

The theme for the Commonwealth this year - *Towards a Common Future* - explores how the Commonwealth

can be revitalised to maintain its relevance with four sub-themes: sustainability, fairness, security, and prosperity. It is vital to involve Parliamentarians in these discussions, so that Commonwealth democracies can also feed into CHOGM 2018 via their governments. Set in three different venues - Church House, the Parliament of the United Kingdom and the City of London's Guildhall - delegates were immersed in CHOGM 2018 themes, which shaped the Forum programme.

Using varied techniques, the Forum brought out and shared best practice among Commonwealth Parliamentarians in a way that has not happened before. There were opportunities to collaborate, to apply new learning, and to grow networks.

The Speaker of the UK House of Commons, Rt Hon. John Bercow, MP hosted an evening reception enabling delegates to network and hear from the UK Foreign Secretary, Rt Hon. Boris Johnson, MP, in a speech on the future of the Commonwealth. Later that week, delegates also heard from other high-profile speakers including the Leader of

the UK Opposition, Rt Hon. Jeremy Corbyn, MP and Amb. Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The Forum not only brought together Parliamentarians, but also 11 bright and ambitious youth delegates, highlighting the significance of a future-oriented and renewed Commonwealth. Hearing their perspectives on pressing issues was both refreshing and energising; it kept the youth focus of the Commonwealth at the heart of discussions and sessions, and held Parliamentarians accountable.

I chaired the opening panel session of the Forum and there was a clear message from the guest speakers: that the Commonwealth holds significant value, whether historical or future-oriented, for all Parliamentarians and all citizens within its 53 nations.

The guest panellists had unique roles within the Commonwealth, including: the UK Minister for the Commonwealth, Rt Hon. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland, QC, the Deputy President of the Senate of Nigeria, HE Senator

**"It was the first time that Parliamentarians were given the space to explore and discuss the themes and issues ahead of an upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), which will take place in April this year. Set in three different venues - Church House, the Parliament of the United Kingdom and the City of London's Guildhall - delegates were immersed in CHOGM 2018 themes, which shaped the Forum programme."**

Ike Ekweremadu, and the newly-elected Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Hon. Emilia Lifaka, MP (Cameroon), who reminded delegates of our shared principles and allegiance to the Commonwealth Charter.

The Charter was the subject of a mock chamber debate. Its relevance and challenges were discussed allowing both Parliamentarians and youth delegates to air constructive



Images: CPA UK/Ed Telling Photography

thoughts and ideas on how to improve the Commonwealth in practice. Insightful suggestions were made about reforming the language of the Charter in order to integrate gender equality as a key principle.

As one of the three cross-cutting themes, gender equality was cleverly weaved in throughout the Forum. It wasn't discussed as an isolated subject but rather an area that should be represented throughout, as with the other two cross-cutting themes of inclusivity and youth.

As Parliamentarians, we have a mandate to represent citizens from all walks of life and to ensure they get the best possible standard of living. We do this by holding the government of the day to account on matters such as the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Whether it means forming Implementation Committees or involving Parliamentarians in the scrutiny and reviews of international conventions, the Forum enabled Parliamentarians

to generate and share these parliamentary strengthening ideas.

Transparency emerged as a recurring theme, and for good reason. Our relationships with our constituents define our roles. It is essential that we relay information to our constituents with transparency in order to build that foundation of trust. UK Parliamentarian, Rt Hon. Maria Miller, MP, Chairperson of the Women and Equalities Select Committee, made an important point about how our engagement should extend beyond our voter base into schools and among young people who are beginning to learn about how Parliament functions. Our roles should not be on a pedestal but understood widely amongst our communities and particularly those groups who are underserved by their current government.

During a session on government transparency and evidence, Emily Hayter, Programme Manager at INSAP, detailed the many ways in which evidence informs policy, and the

technology revolution means that data is more accessible than ever before. Transparency is a key theme, therefore, not only for purposes of engaging our constituents and building relationships with those who we represent. It is also crucial to the way we measure and monitor our work and that of the government: evidence-based findings have become the gold standard for information.

By the start of the third day, specific topics were given well-deserved focus: climate change, global health, conflict prevention, modern slavery, and more. The split sessions enabled delegates to delve deeper into subjects of their choice ranging from global health, peace and security, inclusivity and freedom of religion. On another day these subjects included: youth engagement, legislative change and smarter and more inclusive cities.

It was clear that climate change was at the top of the agenda for many of the island nations, as they bear the brunt of





its damage yet receive minimal funding to support their green initiatives. When delegates had the chance to witness each other's pitches and pleas on the final day, it became clear that a concrete take-away of the Forum would be an initiative to take action on climate change proposed by a youth delegate and sponsored by a Parliamentarian from the Cayman Islands. A letter is being sent to the UK Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Theresa May, MP, as the current Chair of the Commonwealth, which has been signed by over 50 Commonwealth delegates calling for a Climate Change Committee to be formed.

A session dedicated to young people explored representation and whether youth should be considered as a demographic or generation. Seeing the readiness of youth delegates to take action in areas where Parliamentarians may be hesitant made me question: *are we cautious because of our parliamentary experience, or in spite of it?*

Having a vocal youth delegation immediately made us more accountable – we were speaking about our plans for their futures.

One of my highlights of the Forum was the lively session led by Martin Kalungu-Banda, author



and Leadership Consultant, who challenged everyone on their views of leadership. After watching a short clip of an orchestra playing, there were conflicting views on who the leader was: the singer or the conductor. This sparked a lively debate. The thought-provoking exercise concluded that leadership should be a shared enterprise where we rely on one another's strengths.

Anna Geyer from *New Possibilities* spent the week building a mural of *The*

*Commonwealth Body* and visual minutes throughout the Forum. She illustrated thoughts and ideas which were then presented to delegates for their continual use.

The Forum's varied techniques for engaging Parliamentarians didn't stop there. Director of the *Thought Collective*, Tong Yee, led a self-reflective session that not only set the tone for the rest of the Forum, but using his personality analogies of a *'Lover, Jester, Warrior and King/Queen'*, he also impressively

cross-referenced these with the four CHOGM 2018 themes. This exercise allowed everyone in the room, Parliamentarians and youth delegates alike, to better understand their relationships to these themes. Rarely do facilitators manage so effectively to get Parliamentarians to let their guards down!

Throughout the Forum, Parliamentarians were inspired to take an active role in the delivery and implementation of the CHOGM 2018 outcomes, and to ensure that actions are not only proposed, but also concretely followed up on.

Fellow Parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth have now returned to their countries, better informed to influence and encourage their respective governments.

CHOGM 2018 will take place in April in London and Parliamentarians must now

ensure their governments are well-equipped with the views of their democratic institutions in order to effectively represent their citizens.

The next two years will be an opportunity for us in the UK to remind everyone that the Commonwealth is alive and kicking with a secure, sustainable, fair and prosperous future for generations to come.

Now that the first Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum has been a success, we (as well as many of the delegates) hope there will be a Forum ahead of the next CHOGM in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2020.



Images: CPA UK/Ed Telling Photography

## DECLARATION OF THE FIRST COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS' FORUM

CPA UK BRANCH, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, 26 FEBRUARY – 1 MARCH 2018

The UK Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA UK) hosted the first ever Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum in London, from 26 February to 1 March 2018. 90 delegates from 30 Commonwealth countries met 50 days ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2018, also taking place in London, from 16 April. The following Declaration reflects their discussions and decisions over four stimulating days.

- The Commonwealth and its nations are like a body. Parliaments and Parliamentarians are essential to the future health and success of that body.
- The Commonwealth Charter is the essential skeleton for the Commonwealth body. It has as its first core value and principle Democracy; its second Human Rights. The Charter asserts that Parliaments are essential elements in the exercise of democratic governance. Delegates committed to playing the roles assigned to them by the Charter, including upholding and promoting democratic cultures and practices, and being accountable to the public in this regard. They represent the people, and must reflect the people's priorities.
- The values and principles of the Charter are the heart of the Commonwealth body. Parliamentarians must help ensure that Commonwealth Governments live up to those values and principles, including the Rule of Law, backed by an independent, impartial, honest and competent judiciary; and Freedom of Expression, including through a free and responsible media. The
- Latimer Principles remain an excellent basis for ensuring accountability and transparency.
- Parliamentarians can be the hands of the Commonwealth body, to make things happen. Delegates committed to return to their countries ready to do all they could to positively shape their country's approach to CHOGM 2018 and its four, inter-dependent themes. They committed to continuing that campaigning work beyond CHOGM 2018, in particular for the period of the UK's period as Chair-in-Office until 2020. They will press for the proper resourcing of this work.
- Parliamentarians can act as the intelligent head of the Commonwealth body. Delegates committed to seeking and sharing the knowledge and information which their people need. They supported the holding of a second Forum, early enough to influence CHOGM 2020.
- Delegates committed to playing their particular role to support and scrutinise progress by the Commonwealth and its members towards the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Delegates drew inspiration from the presence of youth delegates from a variety of Commonwealth countries. They committed to promoting greater engagement with and by young people in pursuit of the Commonwealth's values and principles. This should be one example of the Commonwealth's strength through diversity and inclusivity, as well as through its unity in action.



Left: UK Leader of the Opposition, Rt Hon. Jeremy Corbyn, MP addresses delegates at the first Commonwealth Parliamentarians Forum.





# TOWARDS A COMMON FUTURE: A VIEW FROM A PARLIAMENTARIAN



**Hon. Njume Peter Ambang, MP** was elected as a Member of the National Assembly of Cameroon in 2013. He was a CPA Cameroon Branch Member who welcomed Parliamentarians for the 60<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Yaoundé in 2014. He was previously a teacher trainer and held several positions in mostly rural areas of Cameroon including Inspector of Primary and Nursery Education of eight sub-divisions and Coordinating Inspector for Primary, Nursery and Teacher Education for the South West Region.

A more prosperous future for its citizens has always remained a constant challenge for the leaders and governments of the world today. To achieve this goal, several strategies are being put in place which include promoting trade and investment as a means to drive economic growth which will lead to job creation and better living conditions for its citizens. This is the common vision of all the member states of the Commonwealth of Nations.

The Commonwealth is home to over 2.4 billion people, making up nearly one third of the world's population. Of this population, 60% are under the age of 30. These young people need to be guaranteed of a better future. The Commonwealth can provide this assurance to its growing young population and make itself a model of a union of a diverse prosperous people in the world.

The prosperity of this diverse great Commonwealth family can be guaranteed through the putting into practice of effective and realistic mechanisms that will enable member countries work together as a people with a common future, a common destiny and a common vision.

In the words of Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh *"the strength of our Commonwealth lies in its unity of vision of pluralism, liberalism, democracy and political institutions amid the diversity in race, ethnicity and religion."*

A more prosperous future for our citizens in the Commonwealth can be made possible but will depend greatly on our will to sincerely work together in various domains of policy which will include:

- **Creating a multilateral free trade area:** During the colonial era, there existed the preferential trade regime within the British Empire among Commonwealth nations under the Imperial Preference System. This system and the great spirit behind it was dismantled after World War Two due to changes in geopolitics and the pattern of global trade, and the United Kingdom's entry into the European Economic Community. Today, however, due to
- the evolution of the global economy, the creation of a multilateral free trade era should be given serious consideration as an appropriate response to improving on the economies of member states of the Commonwealth of Nations. Recent statistics show that the 53 Commonwealth members combined exports of goods and services are valued at around US \$3.4 trillion (£2.7 trillion), which is about 15% of the world's total exports. If Commonwealth governments should seek and engage in strengthening dialogue, networking and collaboration on trade and economic issues between member states, a more prosperous future for the citizens of this great family can be a reality.
- **Genuine cooperation in the fields of education, fight against corruption and innovative technology:** Low-quality education is an endemic problem in most developing countries including those in the

Commonwealth. This is one major contributing factor to the poor economic advancement of these countries. Quality education, which is usually measured in terms of cognitive skills, has a very high correlation to economic growth. In fact, a recent study by Hanushek titled *'The Long Run Importance of School Quality'* shows large economic gains associated with improvements in education quality. It becomes therefore imperative and compelling for developing Commonwealth countries to start designing policies to improve educational outcomes. Co-operation in this area is very necessary. In fact, developing countries need good schools with good curricula that will provide an enabling environment for students to study and acquire the necessary skills and capacities that will enable them obtain good jobs. The prevalent situation in most developing Commonwealth countries especially in Africa is that where one finds many schools with few and sometimes unqualified teachers, several schools



with very poor infrastructure, and schools providing pupils and students with a curriculum that does not enhance the development of critical and creative skills. Such a schooling system does not produce a strong work force. Consequently, we find many young people who are unemployed but have high school and university certificates that do not make them qualified for the job market.

Sustaining economic growth

will require fiscal discipline. Corruption, bad governance and the lack of accountability are the ills commonly responsible for the dismal economic growth in most sub-Saharan Commonwealth countries.

Fighting these ugly forces will greatly contribute to improving economic growth and thus provide more jobs for our growing and young population. Sharing success stories and experiences in these domains among Commonwealth member states is necessary and will encourage the commitment in using the

resources of the countries for the general interest of the citizens.

The agricultural sector offers the greatest potential for poverty reduction and job creation in most sub-Saharan Commonwealth countries. Innovation is however necessary

**Above and below: The 60<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon in October 2014 with Parliamentarians from across the nine regions of the CPA.**

to design new models for investment. What is therefore needed is the transfer of innovative technologies within the Commonwealth member states that will lead to structural transformation in the agricultural sector. This will make agriculture more profitable and will encourage many young people to be engaged in this sector.

In conclusion, Commonwealth member states should have the dream of making this family a model of cooperation in development in the world. Through a strong spirit of commitment of working together in trade and investment, education, fight against corruption and the transfer of innovative technologies, Commonwealth governments can guarantee a more prosperous future for their citizens. After all, these aspects are inherent in the vision and mission of the Commonwealth.







# HOW CAN THE COMMONWEALTH BE A BEACON FOR FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF?



**Baroness Elizabeth Berridge** is a Member of the UK Parliament's Upper House, the House of Lords and Project Director of the Commonwealth Initiative for Freedom of Religion or Belief. In the UK Parliament, she Co-Chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief and sits on the Select Committee for Social Mobility and the Ecclesiastical Committee. Additionally, she is a member of the International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief and sits on the London Policing Ethics Panel.

The Commonwealth is a unique family of nations bonded by history, a stated commitment to free, open and democratic societies, and an extensive network of relationships. The Commonwealth covers more than 2.4 billion people in 53 countries spanning six continents. As the balance of world power shifts away from Europe, the member states of the Commonwealth are growing in importance, consequently so is the opportunity for the Commonwealth to act as a force for human rights on the world stage.

A vital, but sadly often neglected, human right is freedom of religion, thought and conscience as enshrined in *Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) and the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights. This neglect is within the Commonwealth where according to Pew Research Centre around 70% of the people living in the Commonwealth currently experience high or very high levels of government restrictions on freedom of religion and belief (FoRB). What is even more concerning is that 88% of the Commonwealth live in

countries where there are high or very high levels of social hostility towards and between religious groups. This is a problem that affects members of all faiths, and it is an area where most faiths are also guilty of persecution. This is an area where every country should engage in careful reflection of their conduct and laws, the UK itself has high levels of social hostility towards some religious people, shown especially in high levels of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.

The Commonwealth Summit theme for 2018 is *'Towards a Common Future'*, highlighting the importance of young people to the Commonwealth. More than 60% of the Commonwealth is under 30 years old and the UK Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Theresa May said on 19 September 2017 *"we will put young people at the heart of our Commonwealth."* However, it seems that too many young people across the Commonwealth are currently growing up without their Article 18 rights and thinking of those who hold no faith or have a different faith as 'other.'

This could be a serious impediment to the future that we hope to build together. As

well as damaging the autonomy of the individual to explore their spiritual development, restrictions on FoRB can cause immense damage to society. Research by Finke and Martin show that denial of FoRB and targeting individuals based on their religion or belief is closely correlated to high levels of social conflict. Eleven of the Pew Research Centre's top sixteen countries with 'very high' government restrictions on FoRB rank within the bottom 18% of countries in the Global Peace Index. Ten out of eleven of Pew's 'very high' social hostilities countries rank within the top 25% of the Global Terrorism index. Conversely, the Association of Religious Data Archives found that none of the countries with low government restrictions had widespread violence related to religion, whereas 45% of countries with high government restrictions had widespread religious-related violence across the country.

Violations of Article 18 can also be a barrier to education (Sustainable Development Goal 4), which is of course key to providing a prosperous future for the Commonwealth. Education

is a multiplier right and denial of education perpetuates cycles of exclusion and marginalisation. According to Minority Rights Group International, the majority of children who are out of school worldwide belong to minority and indigenous groups. Many minority religious groups face barriers to education. For example, according to the Movement for Solidarity and Peace, the Hindu America Foundation and the Aurat Foundation, around 1,000 young Christian and Hindu girls are kidnapped, raped and forcibly converted every year in Pakistan. This has led to many Christian and Hindu families being too afraid to send their young girls to school, as they fear that they will be kidnapped. In Punjab on 27 August 2017, with his teacher looking on, a Christian boy, Sharoon Masih, was beaten to death by his classmates on his third day of school. He had initially been bullied for being a Christian, and told not to drink out of the same glasses as Muslims. This story is a tragic example of how religious minorities can be brutally barred from accessing education.

The 2018 Commonwealth Summit is an unparalleled opportunity for the UK to take the lead in bringing the value and significance of FoRB to the top of the Commonwealth agenda. In her Christmas 2017 message, the UK Prime Minister called for a *"reaffirmation of our determination to stand up for freedom of people of all religions to speak about and practice their beliefs in peace and safety."*

As outlined above, the Commonwealth has many problems in FoRB but there are also shining examples within the Commonwealth from every corner of the globe. Jamaica, Mozambique, Malta and New Zealand all have extremely low levels of government restrictions and social hostility towards religions. The strength of the Commonwealth lies in its ability



to share best practice across borders to harness the role of governments, civil society and individuals. The Faith in the Commonwealth Initiative is an excellent example of how the institution of the Commonwealth can bring together young, grassroots leaders who can help build respect for cultural and religious diversity.

To be a member of the Commonwealth, governments have to commit to the Commonwealth Charter. Commitment to the Commonwealth Charter includes the pledge to promote human rights, including the right to Freedom of Religion and Belief. Parliamentarians have a key role to play in holding their respective executives to fulfil their pledges to protect the human right of their citizens to freedom of religion and belief.

Parliamentarians are the voice of the people that they represent and therefore should speak on behalf of the diverse range of religions within the Commonwealth. As leaders within their communities, they have an opportunity and a duty to promote religious tolerance and freedom within their respective

communities and legislators. It is heartening to see that Parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth are taking this duty seriously.

In Pakistan, Religious Freedom Caucuses were established in the National and two Provincial Assemblies (Punjab and Sindh) in 2015. These Caucuses aim to promote interfaith harmony and highlights issues afflicting minorities. These Caucuses helped the passing of the *Hindu Marriage Act (2017)* and supported the *Sindh Criminal Law (Protection of Minorities Bill)*, which was later rejected by the Governor after opposition from Islamist parties.

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Freedom of Religion and Belief in the UK has empowered Parliamentarians to consistently advocate for FoRB. For example, UK Parliamentarians succeeded in changing the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Schemes to allow non-Syrian nationals, including the persecuted Yazidis, to be resettled in the UK. Currently, the Australian Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade is inquiring and reporting on The Status of the human right to

Above: During the 62<sup>nd</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in December 2016 in London, the Commonwealth Initiative for Freedom of Religion and Belief (CIFoRB) held a workshop on *'Engaging Effectively with Freedom of Religion and Belief'* attended by around 35 Parliamentarians from five different continents.

freedom of religion or belief. The inquiry is also concerned with the status of FoRB within Australia.

The Commonwealth Initiative for Freedom of Religion and Belief (CIFoRB) facilitates Parliamentarians in this crucial role of promoting Freedom of Religion and Belief. CIFoRB does this by providing Parliamentarians with the best academic knowledge and analysis about the state of FoRB and how best to promote it, both domestically and internationally. Key to this has been providing research to Parliamentarians across the Commonwealth showing what rights are guaranteed under Article 18 of the UDHR and how vital FoRB is in promoting stable and successful societies.

For example, during the 62<sup>nd</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary







**“Shared networks and cultural ties are the arteries of the Commonwealth keeping it alive and full of purpose. This networked nature is vital for dealing with an international network like religion. CIfORB firmly believes that the shared values and democratic nature of the Commonwealth provides the perfect platform on which a true respect for FoRB can be built. The diversity of the Commonwealth provides the ability to learn and share best practice. Parliamentarians have a crucial role in strengthening these ties and learning from each other to hold their governments to account and creating tolerant and diverse societies that will enable all to prosper.”**

Conference in December 2016 in London, CIfORB held a workshop attended by around 35 Parliamentarians from 5 different continents. Parliamentarians who took part in the session highlighted how they wanted a greater understanding of FoRB and further training about how it could be implemented. CIfORB also conducted a workshop at the Commonwealth Parliamentarians Forum in February 2018 to explain the rights granted under Article 18 and the importance of preserving FoRB.

CIfORB has also provided research and analysis about some of the most pressing FoRB issues across the Commonwealth. For example, CIfORB has conducted research into the problem of forced conversions of religious minorities in Pakistan suggesting ways the problem can be alleviated and how both Pakistani and UK Parliamentarians can help. CIfORB has also contributed to UK parliamentary business by providing speeches and parliamentary questions concerned with FoRB, highlighting problems as they occur across the Commonwealth.

CIfORB has also facilitated the utilisation of the Commonwealth

network through sharing best practice by highlighting the benefits of Parliamentary Groups for Freedom of Religion and Belief. In January 2018, CIfORB hosted a delegation of South African Parliamentary Whips to highlight and discuss the benefits and importance of promoting FoRB.

CIfORB provided a position paper analysing Legislative Member Organisations around the world and how they can be utilised to promote FoRB.

To further the spread of best practice, CIfORB will be holding a seminar on FoRB in Ghana in May 2018. West Africa has significant issues with FoRB and Nigeria suffers from extensive violence related to religion. More than 32,000 people have died during the conflict with Boko Haram, and according to the Global Terrorism Index, 60,000 people have been killed in clashes between predominantly Muslim Fulani tribesmen and largely Christian farmers in West Africa since 2001. However, Ghana is a good example of how low government restrictions on FoRB can lead to low social hostility and conflict between religions and acceptance in diverse societies. By basing the conference in Ghana, CIfORB

hopes that a wide cross-section of Commonwealth countries will become champions of FoRB throughout the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth is a remarkable institution. Shared networks and cultural ties are the arteries of the Commonwealth keeping it alive and full of purpose. This networked nature is vital for dealing with an international network like religion. CIfORB firmly believes that the shared values and democratic nature of the Commonwealth provides the perfect platform on which a true respect for FoRB can be built. The diversity of the Commonwealth provides the ability to learn and share best practice. Parliamentarians have a crucial role in strengthening these ties and learning from each other to hold their governments to account and creating tolerant and diverse societies that will enable all to prosper. Through academic research and advice CIfORB stands ready to assist in turning the Commonwealth into a beacon for Freedom of Religion and Belief.

To find out more about CIfORB please visit [www.ciforb.org](http://www.ciforb.org).



## CIVIL SOCIETY AND PARLIAMENTARIANS: LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND



**Vijay Krishnarayan is the Director of the Commonwealth Foundation. He has supported civil society organisations in the UK, Caribbean and the wider Commonwealth over the last 25 years. A land-use planner by training, he has a special interest in the relationship between development and the environment. Before joining the Commonwealth Foundation in 2006, he spent over a decade in the Caribbean, most notably as Managing Partner for the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), one of the region's sustainable development think tanks.**

The Commonwealth calendar is defined by the regular rhythm of the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM). While attention focusses on the gathering of Heads, it's what happens in the wings that tells us as much about Commonwealth concerns and provides insights on the challenges ahead. The Forums that take place in the days leading up to CHOGM provide an opportunity for women, young people, businesses and civil society organisations to come together, making the point that the Commonwealth is much more than an association of governments. The Commonwealth provides both a frame and a forum for people to people exchange, which enables advocacy and learning.

Civil society organisations have been seeking to engage with CHOGM since 1991, when they convened in Harare with the intention of influencing Heads of Governments deliberations. Since then activists, writers, performers and other catalysts for social change have looked to the Commonwealth Foundation to support and coordinate

what has become the largest Commonwealth gathering of civil society. Now they come to learn from each other as much as to engage with Commonwealth leaders on global development issues at the Commonwealth People's Forum (CPF).

The CPF convenes in London on the eve of CHOGM and builds on the discussions that took place in Malta at the last People's Forum. At CHOGM 2015 in Malta, Heads noted the consonance of the Commonwealth Foundation's mission and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 with its emphasis on peaceful and inclusive societies and building effective, accountable institutions. CPF 2018 brings a civic perspective to the global dialogue on SDG 16, which holds the key to realising the potential of the whole SDG agenda.

This year the People's Forum's central theme is *'Inclusive Governance: The Challenge for a Contemporary Commonwealth'*. Over 350 delegates from 53 countries will participate in a programme that combines panel discussions, in-depth conversation, case studies and creative expression.

They will be making the connection between inclusion and Commonwealth renewal - a response to the perennial debate on the continuing relevance of the institution.

One can see why the Commonwealth Foundation has a direct interest in the CPF. Every country that hosts a CHOGM asks the Foundation to organise a People's Forum as part of the Summit programme. They recognise the Commonwealth Foundation's intergovernmental mandate to strengthen and mobilise civil society in support of Commonwealth principles and values (as stated in the CHOGM 2011 Communique). They also acknowledge the role of the People's Forum in animating the CHOGM agenda in any given year.

The Commonwealth Foundation is dedicated to strengthening people's participation in all aspects of public dialogue, enabling people to act together and learn from each other to build democratic societies. The Foundation's current strategy commits the organisation to strengthening civic voices so they can engage with policy processes, hold





institutions to account and shape public discourse on issues of concern to Commonwealth people. The Foundation advances this programme through: its partnerships for public dialogue; its cultural initiative (Commonwealth Writers); its grants; and its emphasis on knowledge and learning.

The Foundation supports civic voice at all levels - from the local to the global and in any sector where we can demonstrate that those voices are making a contribution to the public good. The CPF provides the Foundation with an opportunity to show how civic voices can add value to Commonwealth processes by broadening the understanding of the issues being considered by Heads of Government and Foreign Ministers. It is civil society that has kept issues such as gender equality, climate justice and non-communicable diseases on the Commonwealth agenda. It is civil society that is introducing new issues on to the Commonwealth's agenda such as LGBT+ equality, migrant rights and corporate accountability.

The relationship between civil

**Below: Dania Ali from the Stars Foundation and Aware Girls in Peshawar, Pakistan.**



society and Parliamentarians is symbiotic. Parliamentarians rely on civic voices to express issues of concern to constituents and help advance legislative objectives. At the same time, civil society organisations rely on Parliamentarians to table issues and champion policy and institutional reform. Where governments and civil society might view each other with mutual scepticism, Parliamentarians necessarily have an easier relationship with groups, networks and associations active in their constituencies or engaged with parliamentary ways and means such as the committee system.

There is an assumption that Parliamentarians will reflect the concerns of their constituents without fear or favour - that they will be tribunes for all the people that elected them. This implicit compact speaks strongly to one of the themes for this year's CHOGM - 'A Fairer Future', which underlines the need for democratic structures to serve all - not just those that enjoy access to resources or the inside track. The Commonwealth Foundation places emphasis on amplifying less heard voices and supports initiatives that deepen the Commonwealth's culture of democracy.

The following examples serve to illustrate our approach:

- Aware Girls is an organisation that encourages young women as they exercise their right to vote and participate in public life in North West Pakistan. In conjunction with Peace Direct, this collaborative project supported women as they became active citizens. In the first year of the project, 1,349 young women voted for the first time in local elections. By the end of the project, ten young women that had participated in training and networking contested and won seats in Swabi and Mardan local elections. These included women from less represented social classes and religious minorities.
- The Africa Working Group brings together more than 150 African civil society organisations that are committed to improving lives on the continent for example by engaging with the Sustainable Development Goals. In Tanzania, civil society organisations set up an SDG network, which feeds into a multi-stakeholder forum that was established by the government. The forum

includes a parliamentary caucus, which comprises MPs that are championing the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs. The relationship between the Parliamentarians and civil society is a close one, with monitoring providing a particular focus for dialogue.

- The Nigeria Network of NGOs is engaging with government on the regulatory environment for civil society. The project is holding consultations with civil society organisations to develop recommendations for a law that aims to enable Nigerian civil society to be effective and accountable. The project requires close collaboration with regulatory bodies, in order to review the current legislation and present draft amendments for discussion.

**“Parliament is a mechanism that enables people to hold those that are delivering public goods to account. Civil society and Parliamentarians work well together to construct regulatory regimes that can satisfy the public's demand for accountable institutions - whether those be public, private or not-for-profit.”**

It has also provided a catalyst for discussions with MPs on the value of an enabling regulatory environment as they prepare to deliberate on revisions to the Company and Allied Matters Act.

In the context of fairness, these three examples highlight some of the ways in which civil society can contribute to fairer decision-making.

Parliament is an essential part of any democratic infrastructure, but it also requires other mechanisms to function effectively. Local governance structures that encourage the active participation of the population at large are an essential complement to Parliament - not least because locally elected people may go on to have parliamentary careers. Civil society is clearly present at the local level, organising communities and delivering public services. It will inevitably introduce concepts like advocacy and civic duty and in doing so open up the possibilities for local people to participate in parliamentary processes.

Parliament is a mechanism that enables people to hold those that are delivering public goods to account. Civil society and Parliamentarians work well together to construct regulatory regimes that can satisfy the public's demand for accountable institutions - whether those be public, private or not-for-profit. Civil society also has a role to play in informing the public about the opportunities for accountability and these efforts are welcomed by Parliamentarians working through committees and commissions.

Parliament is the embodiment of representative democracy yet it often fails to represent the diversity of populations. More than 20 years ago, the international community committed to addressing the societal barriers that prevent women from equal participation in decision-



making processes. Progress has been uneven. As of June 2016 only 22.8% of all national Parliamentarians were women. The Commonwealth has more to do in addressing this matter - with member states lagging behind, for example, Nordic countries (where, as of June 2017, average participation by women in single, lower and upper houses combined ran at 41.7%).

The need for action on this

front is even more urgent for women that aren't middle class or that are disabled or from other minority communities. Perhaps civil society's most profound contribution to building a culture of democracy is its advocacy for Parliaments to better reflect the diversity of our populations. As CPF 2018 will assert, inclusive governance is central to a renewed Commonwealth - a Commonwealth that leaves no one behind.

**Above and below: The previous Commonwealth People's Forum which took place at the CHOGM 2015 in Malta.**

For further information about the work of the Commonwealth Foundation please visit: <https://commonwealthfoundation.com>.







# HOW THE COMMONWEALTH IS BECOMING ONE OF THE WORLD'S LEADING GLOBAL BUSINESS NETWORKS



**Rt Hon. Lord Jonathan Marland of Odstock** is the Chairman of the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council and Enterprise and Investment Company Ltd. He retired as the UK Prime Minister's Trade Envoy and Chairman of the Business Ambassador Network in 2014. He was Minister for the Department of Energy and Climate Change and then for Business, Innovation and Skills. He is Chairman of Tickets for Troops and the Churchill Centre, President of The Commonwealth Youth Orchestra and Choir and Trustee of Peggy Guggenheim (UK).

This year is a significant year for the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) will be convening for the 25<sup>th</sup> time, providing a prime opportunity for the Commonwealth to realise its potential. The rapidly changing global landscape is forcing global powers and big business to reconsider the status quo and consider new ways of doing business. The Commonwealth should be at the forefront of this debate as a '*great global good*' which promotes human rights, good governance and democracy as key components of good business practice.

The potential of the Commonwealth – its member states, business and civil society organisations, as well as its own Commonwealth institutions – should not be underestimated. It is a young, diverse and growing network, containing not only some of the most stable economies in the world such as Australia and Canada, but also some of the fastest growing, such as India, projected to be the second largest economy in the world by 2050.

Today the Commonwealth contains fifty-three countries,

covers a quarter of the globe's landmass and contains a quarter of the world's people. It boasts a combined Gross National Income of \$10.7 trillion. The Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC) is actively working to reposition the network as a powerful global trading platform fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.

At the CWEIC, we believe that the Commonwealth is the perfect network for business and the best way to support the Commonwealth in achieving its full potential and make sustainable change is to bring Government and private sector together. One without the other will never be as effective. By utilising the Commonwealth's historical and cultural links, businesses can gain access to emerging markets, enhance existing trading relationships and take advantage of this global partnership.

From the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> April 2018, the 11<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Business Forum (CBF) will bring together over 800 leaders in business and government to discuss trade and investment issues affecting the

Commonwealth's 53 countries. Organised by the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC), in partnership with the City of London, CBF will be a historic opportunity for the Commonwealth to assert itself as a driver of global trade and investment fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.

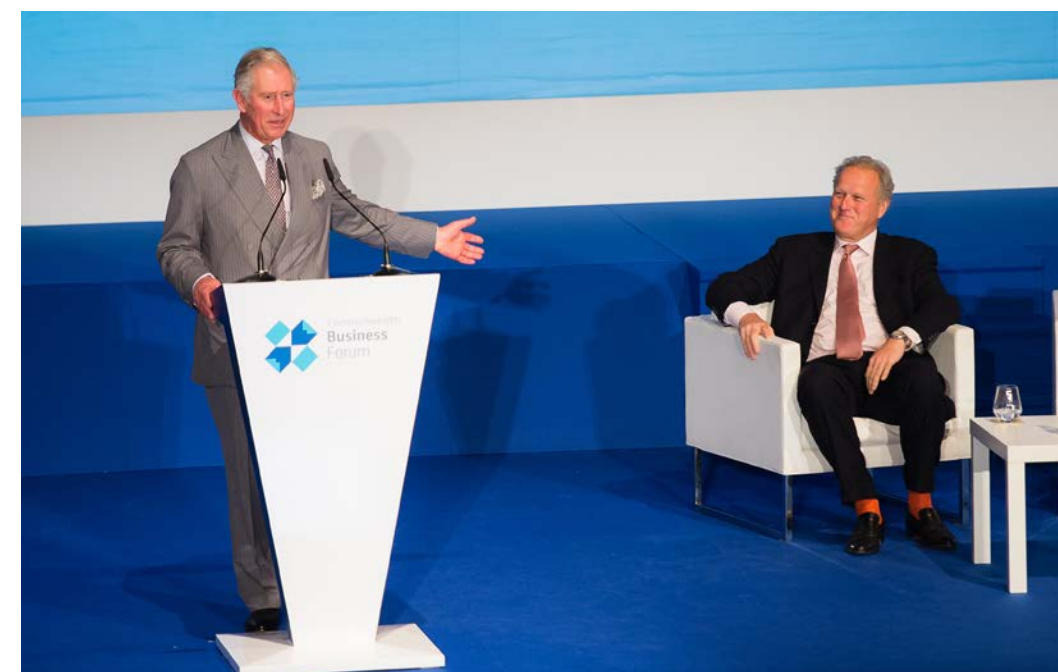
Following years of neglect, two decades of rapid growth in developing markets in Asia and Africa sparked a resurgence in interest in the trading potential of the Commonwealth. Stagnating global trade following the global financial crisis in 2009 and further global economic uncertainty stemming from Brexit has further accentuated the necessity for countries to seek new opportunities in global markets. The Commonwealth Business Forum will provide a platform to address many of these issues.

The viability of the Commonwealth network and its potential is supported by key data. The Commonwealth is a market of 2.4 billion citizens, 60% of whom are under the age of thirty. By 2020 this will account for 40% of the global workforce. The Commonwealth is adding to

its middle class faster than any grouping so that, also by 2020, it is expected to contain 1 billion middle-class consumers. Between 2013 and 2015 Commonwealth countries grew at a combined rate that was faster than that of both the US and the EU.

Spanning some of the world's largest, smallest, richest and poorest countries, the Commonwealth has an enormously diverse range of markets with a combined GDP of \$13 trillion expected by 2020. In addition to all this, owing to the shared use of the English language as well as

**“The 11<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Business Forum (CBF) will bring together over 800 leaders in business and government to discuss trade and investment issues affecting the Commonwealth's 53 countries. The CBF will be a historic opportunity for the Commonwealth to assert itself as a driver of global trade and investment fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.”**



**Above: The 10<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Business Forum in 2015 in Malta was addressed by HRH The Prince of Wales.**

shared cultures, values and similar legal and regulatory systems, we estimate that trade costs between Commonwealth member countries are on average 19% lower than with non-Commonwealth countries.

During 2003-2013, trade in goods and services between Commonwealth countries expanded from \$266 billion to \$592 billion, registering an average annual growth rate of about 10%. It is estimated that the intra-Commonwealth trade in goods and services in 2015 was \$687 billion and is projected to surpass \$1 trillion by 2020. In 2013, Commonwealth members' combined total exports of goods and services to all countries stood at \$3.4 trillion, estimated to be 15% of global exports.

These are notable figures, but they become particularly impressive when we consider that this growth, and the Commonwealth's cheaper business costs, have been achieved in the absence of any formal Commonwealth trade policy mechanisms. It has also been achieved with most Commonwealth members being active in their own formal regional trading arrangements.

This context provides a

platform for a whole range of additional strategic advantages to business. Firstly, the similarities which make up the Commonwealth Factor generate one of the most priceless commodities in business, trust. Businesses that work in multiple Commonwealth countries often speak about a familiarity in the way business is done, even when they are working in locations on opposite sides of the world to each other. This consistency in patterns of finance, of trade insurance, of common approaches on tax and interpreting a range of regulations as well as in language, standards, values and respect for the rule of law, aids mutual understanding even in countries as superficially diverse as say, Singapore and Nigeria.

The issue of values is also key. With political considerations always important for investors, the Commonwealth's focus on democracy, good governance and sustainable political systems lends many Commonwealth markets greater long-term viability.

Second, the diversity of the Commonwealth includes some of the world's most exciting emerging markets. India for example is due to grow by 7.4%

in 2018 and projected to have a middle class larger than China. Huge opportunities in banking and other sectors are opening up as disposable income grows.

The Commonwealth also includes 19 countries in Africa with its abundant natural resources, status as the continent with the world's fastest economic growth and a rapidly increasing population. These include Nigeria and South Africa, by far the continent's two largest economies as well as rapidly growing East African states. Nigeria averaged growth of 5.7% per year between 2006 and 2016, has one of the largest populations of youth in the world and has the largest natural gas reserves on the continent. Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda are projected to record consistent 6-7% GDP growth over the next ten years with opportunities in agriculture, tech, education, healthcare, real estate, consumer goods and entertainment all on the rise. Kenya has become a major communications and logistics hub whilst Tanzania and Rwanda





are amongst the top five fastest growing African nations.

Key to this growth is the ongoing transition from being low income, agriculture based economies to becoming knowledge-based, service-oriented economies. But this transition is also part of a wider trend in the global economy with services being the new growth area in international trade. They now make up one quarter of all trade receipts with McKinsey suggesting that more than half the wealth generated by international trade now comes from services and various forms of data transmission. With the service sector already over 70% of GDP in countries such as Canada, Singapore, Australia and the UK, the Commonwealth is perfectly primed to take advantage.

The Commonwealth is also blessed with a network of global cities that are agile and powerful enough to exploit this change. Tech hubs include Nairobi, London, Bangalore, Kingston and Vancouver whilst major International Financial Centre's (IFC's) include London, Singapore, Vancouver, Melbourne, Montreal, Sydney and Toronto. These centres represent significant levels of opportunity for both major corporates and SMEs.

There are signs that governments as well as businesses are starting to take note of the Commonwealth opportunity. CWEIC convened over 35 Trade Ministers and 100 business leaders in London in March 2017 for the inaugural Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting. Attendees discussed an Agenda for Growth focused on the six key pillars of Financial Services, Ease of Doing Business, Technology and Innovation, Business and Sustainability, Creating an Export Economy and Attracting Investment. At the meeting, Nigerian Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Hon. Dr Okechukwu Enelamah

noted that *"Nigeria believes that a carefully defined trade-based agenda for the Commonwealth is overdue."*

As the world's fastest growing major economy and surely the Commonwealth's key growth driver in years to come, India has a key role to play in the Commonwealth trade and investment agenda. Their growing engagement with the Commonwealth bodes well for any ambitious pan-Commonwealth Trade and Investment agenda.

At CWEIC, our Strategic Partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry continues to thrive and we recently hosted our first India-UK University Industry Roundtable, with the aim of exploring opportunities for innovation and technology collaboration across the Commonwealth. We are looking to establish an office in India in the near future.

Speaking at an event in London in January 2018, Commerce and Industry Minister, Suresh Prabhu stated that *"India is fully committed to promote the idea of the Commonwealth as a strong trading bloc and remove roadblocks. There is huge potential of investment within the Commonwealth and it*

*is the right time to reinvent it into a new entity altogether."* The Minister also said India was keen to inject *"new dynamism"* into the bloc.

This enthusiasm from government is matched in the private sector. Speaking at the CBF launch event in Mansion House in December 2017, top level executives from a number of major corporates spoke of the huge potential that they see in Commonwealth markets. The Commonwealth represents a *"unique opportunity to convene influential business leaders from key markets in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe"* commented Richard Pattle, Vice-Chairman of Standard Chartered Bank.

The SME (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) sector is a key focus for CWEIC, recognising that these companies represent the lifeblood of the global economy and are the real drivers of innovation and economic growth. Our CommonwealthFirst programme has selected 100 outstanding UK SMEs across a range of sectors to act as Commonwealth Export Champions. With the backing of the Royal Mail Group, the programme helps Export

Champions explore opportunities in Commonwealth markets through high level profiling, trade missions, training and mentoring and access to our networks. So far, CommonwealthFirst has taken companies on highly successful trade missions to India, Malaysia, Singapore and Canada, allowing Export Champions to see the value of the Commonwealth Factor first hand. I will personally be leading a trade mission to the Gold Coast in early April to participate in the Gold Coast's Commonwealth Games private sector programme. CWEIC is looking to establish CommonwealthFirst in a variety of other key Commonwealth markets.

Overall, the outlook for the Commonwealth looks extremely bright from a trade and investment perspective. Its flourishing and diverse markets, linked by common ties and interests are recognising the gains to be made by increasing cooperation on a vibrant multilateral trade agenda. By fulfilling our critical role of convening the Commonwealth's public and private sectors, CWEIC is ensuring that potential can become reality.

Visit [www.cweic.org](http://www.cweic.org) for more information.



# THE POWER AND POTENTIAL OF COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIPS



**Dr Joanna Newman, MBE** is Chief Executive and Secretary-General of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU). Established in 1913, the ACU is the world's first and oldest international university network, with more than 500 member institutions in over 50 countries. Prior to joining the ACU in 2017, she was Vice-Principal (International) at King's College London and she worked previously at the UK Higher Education International Unit and the British Library. She has also taught history at University College London and the University of Warwick.

In the long summer of 1959, education ministers from across the Commonwealth met in Oxford to launch a bold new plan – a plan to be built on cooperative action, the free flow and exchange of ideas, and a sense that happiness and prosperity could be achieved only *"through education in the deeper and wider sense."*

This was the genesis of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) – a programme that would go on to become one of the world's largest and most prestigious scholarships schemes in higher education. And while much has changed since its inception, its founding ambitions remain as relevant ever.

In 1959, the future must have seemed rife with uncertainty, with the storm clouds of political tensions never far from the horizon. Then, as now, boundaries were drawn and sabres were rattled. Yet here was a plan built on reciprocity, equity and optimism. *"Each [country] has something to learn from the others,"* notes a report of the proceedings, *"each has something to give."*

From the outset, the plan sought to be distinct from any

other. Open to men and women from the beginning, its guiding principles required that it be flexible enough to take account of the diverse and changing needs of individual countries, relevant and responsive to their differing needs, and offer mutual benefit and opportunities for all.

In the nearly 60 years since that auspicious meeting, the CSFP has enabled more than 35,000 individuals to experience international study. Many have gone on to transform their communities, societies and nations, helping to create a world that is fairer, safer, healthier and more democratic. Put simply, these scholarships change lives, far beyond the individual who undertakes them. And for that reason, it is vital that these opportunities are made available as widely as possible.

At the Association of Commonwealth Universities, international mobility is very much at the heart of our work. Through our management of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK, as well as the prestigious Chevening and Marshall Scholarships, we have gained a unique insight

into the transformational impact of these awards. So, why is it that international academic mobility has such far-reaching impact? And why is it so vital that governments across the Commonwealth reaffirm their commitment to the CSFP?

## **Building capacity**

First, international scholarships build human capacity across the Commonwealth. In other words, the skills and knowledge that a student gains during their studies are then applied, shared and multiplied in the country to which they return, yielding benefits far beyond the duration of the scholarship itself.

This power to build capacity make scholarships an important mechanism for international development. In fact, the importance of scholarships to sustainable development was arguably cemented by their inclusion in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, target 4B of which is to *"substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries"* by 2020.

Commonwealth Scholarships can open the door to cutting-







edge technology or expertise that might not be available in a student's home country. They enable individuals to access the many areas of specialism that the Commonwealth's richly diverse family of nations has to offer. And, in many cases, they offer a lifeline to those for whom further study would otherwise be impossible.

The contribution of scholarships to capacity building may be particularly significant in the context of higher education itself. In parts of the Commonwealth, enrolment in higher education has soared to such an extent that demand far outstretches supply. International scholarships can help universities and nations to bridge these gaps by creating more qualified academics and, in the process, a stronger and more sustainable higher education sector. Indeed, evaluation work undertaken by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK suggest that, while former scholars work across a spectrum of fields, education was the one in which they reported the greatest impact.

**Below: An Association of Commonwealth Universities residential programme.**



### **A wider world view**

Second is what the founding fathers of the CSFP described as education in *"the deeper and wider sense"* – that is, the power of international scholarships to broaden both the minds and horizons of those who undertake them – and at a critical and formative time in their lives.

This element of the scholarship experience is perhaps less tangible, but no less profound. International experiences in higher education have been shown to generate a more expansive worldview, greater intercultural awareness, and a sense of interconnectedness and solidarity. Meanwhile the academic and experiential challenges of life and study in another country build communication skills, confidence and an openness to the new and unknown.

In a world that often feels more divided than not, international experience arguably has the power to promote a more peaceful future, fostering understanding and tolerance across cultures and borders. Indeed, greater intercultural awareness was among the strongest findings of a study of international alumni published by the UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Large numbers reported greater cultural sensitivity and an

improved ability to understand and communicate with others from different national and social backgrounds. *"These", the report notes, "are characteristics of global citizenship, which will help them to work and operate anywhere."*

### **Enhanced employability**

This latter point reminds us, of course, that the benefits to being a 'global citizen' are about more than solidarity. Across the Commonwealth, employment prospects for young people present a gloomy picture – more than 71 million young people are unemployed worldwide. And this dour situation looks set only to worsen: between 2015 and 2030, 600–800 million more young people will enter the job market – nearly 1 million a month in both India and sub-Saharan Africa.

In this fiercely competitive environment, an international mind-set can offer a considerable advantage. Multinational companies increasingly seek 'global graduates', primed and ready with language skills, cultural understanding, and an international outlook. One study, undertaken by the Erasmus programme, found that more than two thirds of employers consider international experience to be an important asset.

A huge 92% of employers,

meanwhile, sought the so-called 'soft skills' that such experience is shown to impart – including problem solving abilities, and tolerance towards the values and behaviours of others.

Repeated studies, meanwhile, show a compelling correlation between international experience and improved employment outcomes. The same Erasmus study, for example, found that students who had studied abroad were half as likely to experience long-term unemployment as those who had not.

### **Networks, friendships and soft power**

Cooperation within higher education can be a powerful opportunity for universities to establish or strengthen their reputation on a global stage – and this is true of international scholarships. Studies tell us that international alumni return to their countries with a positive understanding of their host country's culture, people and values. They may recommend it – and its universities – to others. Moreover, the personal and professional connections they make during their award often endure long after their return.

For those with an eye on the 'soft power' potential of scholarships, a report by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills highlighted another striking outcome of international experience: trust. International students who had studied in the UK reported increased trust *"in the UK as a nation, society, and its enterprises and individuals."*

Last but by no means least, international academic mobility can lead to crucial collaborations in research and development, building ties between researchers and institutions. This matters because international collaborations are repeatedly shown to be more likely to lead to vital breakthroughs in innovation – breakthroughs that will be pivotal



to transforming and safeguarding our future.

In a Commonwealth context, academic mobility has particular potential to connect those countries most acutely affected by global challenges with relevant research and expertise across the world.

### **Widening opportunities through the CSFP**

The more we know about what an asset international experience can be – for individuals, their host nations and the countries to which they return – the more important it is to ensure that such opportunities are made available as widely as possible. While we

can be very proud of the countries already offering awards through the CSFP – in particular the work of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK, which has administered the majority of awards to date – there is great potential for growth, particularly to low and middle income countries.

The case for expanding the CSFP – in terms of numbers but also, crucially, its geographic reach – was one we were proud to make at the 20<sup>th</sup> Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) in Fiji in February. Ministers were urged to reaffirm the support of their national governments for this prestigious scheme, and to actively

support its growth through the CSFP endowment fund.

This special fund aims to ensure that this unique programme is genuinely Commonwealth-wide in its nature, and can continue to yield profound benefits. Crucially, this means ensuring that these prestigious scholarships are not only available to, but also tenable within, low and middle income countries, which might not otherwise be in a position to offer them.

In doing so, this vital fund recognises the quality of higher education on offer right across the Commonwealth and the rich diversity of knowledge and expertise available. It enables all Commonwealth countries to reap the benefits of outward and inward mobility – from collaborative research opportunities to diplomatic relations – and creates new and diverse pathways for student mobility.

The expansion and reinvigoration of this wonderful plan would be a fitting celebration of its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year.

**Above: The Association of Commonwealth Universities hold a number of programmes for young people and academics throughout the year.**

Increasing its reach would, I feel sure, have delighted its founders, whose words still inspire. "If the plan is to achieve its purpose" they wrote, *"we must bring the widest possible variety of cultural exchange between all parts of the Commonwealth and so facilitate the development of a multilateral trade in ideas."*

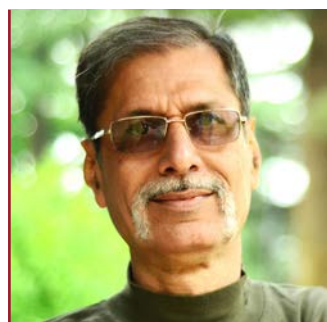
And whether rich or poor, large or small, this 'trade in ideas' is one to which all countries of the Commonwealth have a great deal to contribute.

For more information about the Association of Commonwealth Universities please visit [www.acu.ac.uk](http://www.acu.ac.uk).





# A JOURNALIST'S VIEW OF THE COMMONWEALTH



**Mahendra Ved** is the President of the Commonwealth Journalists Association (CJA) and Chair of its India Chapter. He is a multi-media journalist, writer and columnist based in New Delhi. He is currently columnist and India Correspondent of The New Straits Times published from Malaysia and for Lok Marg, a London-based news website. He conducts foreign policy-related programmes on the All India Radio (AIR). He has co-authored three books and he was a Commonwealth Observer for the presidential elections in Seychelles in 2015.

A snapshot of issues deliberated at the Malta CHOGM, the last one that took place in 2015, as listed in its concluding statement, would include battling/strongly countering radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism; promoting and strengthening human rights, rule of law and sustainable development; managing/tackling migration and climate change; encouraging/enhancing the role of civil society organisations, women and youth; fighting corruption and underscoring the need for transparency in governance and much else.

As we approach the UK CHOGM in April 2018, it is essential to take a serious note of the fact that not just the Commonwealth nations, but the world as a whole has witnessed regressive trends on almost all of these issues. We are living in a difficult world - and making it more difficult to live in - with our individual, collective, national and international actions and inactions.

We are talking at each other instead of talking to each other. We are combative and argumentative on a whole of lot of non-issues instead of engaging on the more

relevant, more urgent ones.

The world community today may be composed of more nations that swear by democracy than before. But we have governments that have sharpened their skills on how to thwart and subvert these democracies. We may have fewer dictators today, but we have more democrats engaged in exclusivist actions, promoting hatred and using power to suppress dissent and democratic expression. It is the same with human rights that they observe or ignore with expedience.

We live in a world that embraced the good and bad that globalisation brought, but is now regressing into self-created shells, creating walls of isolation, while getting combative with their own people and with neighbours around.

The Malta CHOGM met on the eve of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Understandably, it featured high on the agenda. Since then the climate issue is divided and disrupted with some even walking out of it.

Radicalisation of the young is higher today with the Internet and

social media becoming weapons of mass mental destruction. Violence by extremist groups and acts of terrorism, some of it state-sponsored, other by 'non-state actors', has increased since Malta. Paris, Nice, Brussels, Dhaka, Jakarta, Nairobi and London are among the new terror-spots.

Millions are migrating, fleeing more from man-made misery than those brought about by natural calamities. The desperate search of the migrants for safety ends with boat-wrecks, at the bottom of the sea, into prisons, or into societies where they are unwelcome.

The list is endless. It is being cited, not to belittle the little good that is done, but to underscore the huge amount of work that remains to be done. If this is true of the world as a whole, and the United Nations and other world bodies, it equally true of the Commonwealth.

It is no secret that the Commonwealth as a body is fighting to stay relevant in the present century. The old loyalty for the King or the Queen in whose name countries were colonized is fading with time and eclipsed by with new and more serious issues

**"There is an English proverb: *Money makes the mare go*. Solid economic content in the form of trade needs to be injected to revitalize the relations among the Commonwealth members. As of now, many of them engage in economic co-operation and in trade. They do so without the label of Commonwealth. Will the UK Summit discuss ways to create a mechanism and persuade its members to try it out, albeit on a voluntary basis?"**

all around that are craving for attention and redressal.

The colonial experience itself has come to be questioned by the former 'subjects' and a section of opinion-makers in Britain itself. This became sharply evident during the recent debate at Oxford wherein Dr Shashi Tharoor, Indian Parliamentarian-writer-diplomat, made a strong, but persuasive argument, full of logic but shorn of any acrimony,



about oppression and exploitation that India, the largest of the colonies, underwent.

And yet, Commonwealth nations, especially the smaller ones - 32 out of the total of 53 - the distant ones located on far-flung the high seas, are crying for help. For instance, Fiji and Seychelles face the increasing threat of being submerged under the sea. Is the Commonwealth ready to take the initiative to help them fight the growing danger of rising sea levels through measures such as the Netherlands have done, of building walls and fortifying themselves from the sea waters? Is the Commonwealth ready to address the challenges faced by these vulnerable nations?

Another perception, no longer a secret, is that the 'Big Guns' and the well-off ones among the Commonwealth members are losing interest in the body. They are too preoccupied with their domestic woes. The global recession has affected them all. *Can the London Conference revive their interest and commitment and revitalize their participation and contribution?*

The big ones among the members include those like India, South Africa and Nigeria who have over the years progressed economically. *Can they share the burden?* Since this is being proposed from New Delhi, it is to be hoped that India, who did not participate at the summit level during the last three CHOGMs, would 'return' with India Prime Minister Narendra Modi leading his team and, hopefully again, take initiatives the Commonwealth sorely needs.

Britain remains at the heart of the Commonwealth, a position it can neither shed, nor share. Old records say that when it joined the European Union in 1973, its ambit to assist the Commonwealth members got restricted and this had let down many a member. With the 'Brexit' taking place in the near future, will Britain reinforce its role as the natural leader?

There is an English proverb: *Money makes the mare go*. Solid economic content in the form of trade needs to be injected to revitalize the relations among the Commonwealth members. As of now, many of them engage in economic co-operation and in

trade. They do so without the label of Commonwealth. *Will the UK Summit discuss ways to create a mechanism and persuade its members to try it out, albeit on a voluntary basis?*

True, a study has pointed to legal and logistic hurdles. But think of even a portion of the four trillion trade - and this figure is a decade old - being conducted under the Commonwealth banner.

It is more than evident that the Commonwealth would gain traction only if it is backed by economic muscle. A contrarian example would be that of China which is using its economic strength to push its political agenda, especially in Africa. This is something that should have fallen to the lot of the Commonwealth which has 19 members from the Continent. If these countries and their people were fit to be colonized then, they deserve to be helped today.

This is for now and for the future. But to ensure the future safety and wellbeing of people living in all the Commonwealth nations, more needs done. The UK CHOGM needs to think out of the box.







# THE CHALLENGE OF A FAIRER FUTURE



**Dr Eva Namusoke** is a Ugandan historian and research consultant. She studied at the Universities of Exeter, Yale and Cambridge. Her PhD focused on church and state in post-colonial Uganda. She was a Postdoctoral Research Officer at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, where she worked with the Commonwealth Oral History Project. Her research interests include Ugandan post-colonial history and contemporary politics and the relationship between Brexit, the Commonwealth and British imperial nostalgia. Eva is an Associate Fellow of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies.

The period leading up to a Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) is always one of reflection on the role of the Commonwealth, its future and how best it can evolve with the modern world.

This year's CHOGM will take place in an international political climate that is defined by change, resistance and emerging movements across the Commonwealth and the wider world. Under the theme '*Towards a Common Future*', delegates at the CHOGM will discuss four sub-themes covering sustainability, security, prosperity and fairness.

This fourth sub-theme concerning '*a fairer future*' lies at the heart of the history of the Commonwealth, and is central to keeping the organisation relevant in a crowded modern international space. A fairer future is one where Commonwealth values of good governance, democracy, human rights and the rule of law are upheld.

Recent developments in two East African states reveal a number of challenges to this fairer future, and just how important it is for the Commonwealth to refine its activities. Further, it is important

to emphasise that the fairer future is for young Commonwealth citizens who themselves are already involved in problem-solving and agitating for change.

The early Commonwealth of the 1960s was primarily concerned with peaceful democratic transitions, particularly for African states following the end of empire. In this context, the movement towards a fairer future was one where Commonwealth citizens could have a say in their leadership and how their countries were governed. These struggles are still ongoing, albeit in different ways, in a number of Commonwealth nations.

East Africa in particular is the site of ongoing challenges to good governance, the rule of law and human rights. In 2017 both Kenya and Uganda faced moments of significant political conflict at the highest level. In Kenya's case, in September the Supreme Court nullified the August presidential election, in which Uhuru Kenyatta had claimed victory. The leading opposition candidate, Raila Odinga, had filed the petition, and the Supreme Court concluded that the elections were '*neither transparent or verifiable*'.<sup>1</sup> The

election nullification sent shockwaves across the continent, where a presidential election has only been overturned by courts once before.<sup>2</sup>

A rerun of the election was called, Odinga pulled out, and Kenyatta declared winner, with all legal challenges thrown out. Odinga continues to contest Kenyatta's victory and in a challenge to the legitimacy of President Kenyatta, on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018 Odinga held a symbolic inauguration ceremony.<sup>3</sup>

In response, the Kenyan government shut down three television stations that broadcast the event, in a move that followed wider restrictions on journalists in the country.<sup>4</sup> This was a clear challenge to freedom of the press in Kenya, and was condemned by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the EU and the Commonwealth.<sup>5</sup>

It is difficult to develop the conditions for a fairer future when freedom of the press is in jeopardy – citizens must have the freedom to critique those in power without intimidation, violence or imprisonment. The Commonwealth is in a unique position of having a strong

**"The early Commonwealth of the 1960s was primarily concerned with peaceful democratic transitions, particularly for African states following the end of empire. In this context, the movement towards a fairer future was one where Commonwealth citizens could have a say in their leadership and how their countries were governed. These struggles are still ongoing, albeit in different ways, in a number of Commonwealth nations."**

network of civil society and professional organisations that could develop more concrete responses to such events.

For example, through collaboration between the Commonwealth Journalists Association members in Kenya, and civil society organisations on the ground, Kenyan press could



find support and access expertise from other member states that have dealt with similar situations. In doing so, the Commonwealth could tap into the rich knowledge that comes from being such a diverse organisation, and build more grassroots connections that circumvent the complexity of high-level politics. While Kenya has found itself in a situation with one president and a symbolic second, Uganda similarly had its own recent moment of presidential political drama.

In 2017, the hashtag *#Togikwatako* trended on Ugandan and diaspora Twitter and Facebook. The Luganda word '*Togikwatako*' translates to 'don't touch it' and is a term often used by parents to warn their children. The term was used by those campaigning against the removal of the presidential age limit of 75 years in Uganda's constitution, which would allow then 73-year-old President Yoweri Museveni to run for re-election in 2021.<sup>6</sup>

At over 30 years in power, Museveni is the second-longest serving president in

the Commonwealth, and with the age limit lifted after months of opposition, violent scuffles in Parliament, suppression of protests, and challenges to freedom of the press, the road has been paved for this record to continue.<sup>7</sup> In a concession to opponents, Parliament also voted to return term limits and remove the lower age limit.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, a fairer future in which the rule of law is respected is a complicated one if the laws can be changed to benefit those in power.

Arguably the most visible proponent of the *Togikwatako* movement was then newly elected Member of Parliament, 35-year old Robert Kyagulanyi, commonly known by his stage name Bobi Wine.<sup>9</sup> Kyagulanyi, a member of the opposition Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) party is a popular musician-turned-politician who used his celebrity and status as the self-styled 'Ghetto President' to propel himself into a strong voice for Ugandan's poor and disenfranchised. Kyagulanyi continues to perform and has long used his music to

discuss political and social issues. During the campaign, Kyagulanyi used his heavily subscribed platforms on social media to involve ordinary Ugandans in discussion on the proposed constitutional amendment, share images and videos from his campaign, and – perhaps most importantly – document the actions of state police who clashed with his supporters on a number of occasions. This style of political engagement is a move towards a somewhat new kind of politician in Uganda – one who is younger, much more accessible and uses new forms of technology to communicate directly with the people.

It remains to be seen whether politicians like Robert Kyagulanyi can make a significant impact in a state with as powerful a machine as Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM), but this is certainly an interesting if precarious time in Ugandan politics. The Commonwealth has long presented itself as an organisation invested in peaceful democratic transitions. As such,





it is important for the organisation to find innovative ways of creating space for individuals to develop their skills in political organising, communication and documentation.

Doing so would not necessarily mean interfering with the politics of member states, but rather equipping Commonwealth citizens with the tools they would need to affect change themselves. If successful, the Commonwealth could contribute to the political development of people – particularly young people – across member states who are eager to make a difference in their country, but who may be lacking the skills. The Commonwealth has already demonstrated its support for young leaders with initiatives such as the Queen's Young Leaders, the Commonwealth Youth Parliament, and the biannual Commonwealth Youth Forum, and there is still more that could be done to develop leadership skills amongst young

Commonwealth leaders.

More importantly, these initiatives need to be initiated in countries that are more accessible to Commonwealth citizens who often have difficulties obtaining visas to travel to the UK for example, and using digital means that allow for instant global communication. In doing so the Commonwealth can enable citizens to build their own fairer future, creating spaces where information can be shared from across member states and where – crucially – leadership can be interrogated and moulded to fit the particular needs of different countries and communities.

The contemporary history of the Commonwealth is one of an organisation determined to reinvent itself, to find a niche in a world of powerful international organisations with less controversial origins. Much has been made of the fact that more than 60% of the population is under 29 years old.

A Commonwealth dominated by the ideas and opinions of elder Commonwealth statesmen – and it is important to note that much of the elder generation of Commonwealth practitioners are men – is one that risks losing the opportunity to tap into the energies and drive of some of the most passionate, creative people. As such, any discussion of the future of the Commonwealth is one concerning the future of an organisation made up of young people who have grown up in a new millennium with challenges and opportunities unforeseeable by the architects of the Commonwealth.

Young Commonwealth citizens in earlier decades communicated with one another through letters that often took weeks to arrive but nevertheless built relationships between those involved. Today, young people from Accra to Waikato are more connected to one another than ever before, with social media meaning instant

conversations are now possible between people who may still never meet in person. In these spaces, with potentially global audiences, we see conversations about many ideas of fairness; the development of movements for social justice; and resistance to anti-democratic regimes.

In Kenya and Uganda, we've seen young people calling out those in power, using memes and 240 characters to make political statements, and holding their elders to account. Further, online discussions about feminism and LGBT rights in traditionally conservative nations

offer some critical approaches to engaging with what remain the most contentious social issues in the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth as a whole can learn from how young people are organising and communicating online, and how they are building virtual networks that are far removed from the channels of the past. The Commonwealth youth are already speaking and it is imperative that Commonwealth leadership – from the Secretariat to Presidents, Prime Ministers and Parliamentarians – pay attention. The fairer future will be for these Commonwealth citizens so their voices must be heard and their ideas incorporated.

The 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting is a unique opportunity for the Commonwealth to state its purpose and areas of focus at a time when the international system has been shaken by political developments in Europe and the United States. A Commonwealth and Commonwealth leaders invested in 'a fairer future' have to engage and empower those working towards that goal. That support will not look the same as it has in the past, with high-level meetings, and phone calls between world leaders.

Support for a fairer future will also mean strengthening grassroots Commonwealth activities in civil society and professional organisations, greater engagement on social media and other digital innovations, and paving the way for young people to take the lead.

If a fairer future means one where democracy, good governance, the rule of law, and human rights are upheld as values across the Commonwealth, then all three other sub-themes are contingent on this one. It is impossible to consider 'a more sustainable future' without understanding the unequal impact of climate change on poorer and small island nations who bear the

**“Support for a fairer future will also mean strengthening grassroots Commonwealth activities in civil society and professional organisations, greater engagement on social media and other digital innovations, and paving the way for young people to take the lead. If a fairer future means one where democracy, good governance, the rule of law, and human rights are upheld as values across the Commonwealth, then all three other sub-themes are contingent on this one.”**



brunt of the effects but produce a negligible fraction of carbon emissions. Any initiatives towards countering violent extremism and building 'a more secure future' must also be committed to protecting the civil liberties of communities that are often victims of the same crimes that small factions perpetrate.

Finally, 'a prosperous future' is simply unattainable without interrogating the international system and historical inequalities that hamper economic development in many Commonwealth nations.

For Kenya and Uganda, with ongoing challenges to democratic government and peaceful power transitions, efforts towards sustainability and prosperity become secondary while environmental degradation and income inequalities grow. Security on the other hand is interpreted in potentially harmful ways by powerful state police forces and government institutions. If we are to move towards a common future then, fairness must always be a priority for any and every Commonwealth citizen.

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# THE MODERN COMMONWEALTH'S GAMES



**David Grevemberg, CBE** is the Chief Executive Officer, Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), responsible for the Commonwealth Games, Commonwealth Youth Games and many other initiatives that inspire Commonwealth athletes to drive the ambition and power of all Commonwealth citizens through sport. David joined the CGF after the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games where he was Chief Executive of the Organising Committee. A former competitive wrestler, he was also a coach, athlete agent, team administrator and consultant.

Everyone across the Commonwealth Sports Movement believes in the exceptional power of sport as a force for good. A force that brings us together, reconciles our differences and has the inspiring potential to change lives for the better. A force that drives our commitment to humanity, equality and destiny. A force that encapsulates our passion for and belief in the triumphant, generous spirit of humanity.

We are seeing this every day, in action, as the Gold Coast 2018 Queen's Baton Relay visits every terrain and time zone of the Commonwealth. The Baton is a powerful, celebratory and tangible symbol of today's Commonwealth Games – carrying Her Majesty's message of peace and unity – and celebrating and showcasing today's Modern Commonwealth as it is passed from athletes to citizens, community leaders to school children.

Indeed, this message and this vision brings to life the Commonwealth itself - a voluntary association of 53 countries (or, as per our definition, 71 nations and territories, given the Commonwealth Games offers the unique and thrilling

opportunity for home nations, territories and dependencies, such as Scotland, Jersey, Norfolk Island and St Helena, to compete under their own flag). Among this membership are some of the world's largest and smallest countries, from India, with over 1.2 billion people to Nauru with a population of just 10,000. Our combined population of 2.4 billion represents a third of the world's total population. More than 60% of Commonwealth citizens are under the age of 30.

As we all know, the Commonwealth Charter brings together the values and aspirations which unite our diverse membership, outlining our joint commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law, to promote peace and prosperity and to improve the lives of all peoples of the Commonwealth. No matter the person's race or religion, sexual orientation or gender identification, all people of the Modern Commonwealth should be treated equally. Through our growing and inter-connected projects and collaborations, I know that these principles are shared across Commonwealth organisations – and we have much in common with

the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association through our shared commitments to good governance, democracy and human rights.

In recent times, our Federation has done a lot of soul-searching to look at our impact and meaning. It is no accident that we built upon the very foundations of the Commonwealth, as enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter, to define what sets us apart as a thriving and relevant sporting movement today. In fact, I would argue that today, in 2018, the Commonwealth is more relevant than ever before.

In 2010, the Commonwealth Sports Movement reached a challenging chapter in its existence – when the very word and purpose of the 'Commonwealth' was questioned and the negative impacts of a Games on a host community were highlighted.

On the back of an extensive strategic review, and through a collaborative approach of cross sector partnerships at the local, national and global level - we all sought to change the script for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games and beyond – reflecting on who and what the Commonwealth Family is and why a Mega Sporting

Event of the Commonwealth Games' stature was so important in the modern world.

This led us to being very explicit about the value we place on host communities and citizens, and the positive impact we seek to achieve in all that we do.

- From protecting, promoting and safeguarding clean athletes.
- From publishing pre-Games and post-Games Human Rights reports
- To embracing the fair living wage.
- To procuring ethically and sustainably, and implementing community benefit clauses in our tenders and contracts.
- To changing the face of accessibility standards and services for events and tourism.
- To actively promoting LGBT rights and embracing diversity every single step of the way.
- To promoting and fundraising for children's rights through a global partnership with UNICEF – where £6m was raised for children during our opening ceremony in Glasgow.

These are just some examples of how one city, in one nation with the power of one Games made a difference. And we have capitalised on this momentum and formalised this ambition into our own strategic plan Transformation 2022.

Today, the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) is far more than the curator of a great Games. Our strategic blueprint marks a historic change in the movement's focus from the four-year cycle of overseeing Commonwealth Games to a wider, ambitious role of delivering sports leadership within the Commonwealth, based on partnership, engagement and value generation.

Just like our competing national teams at a Games, our own success relies on teamwork – our network of strategic partners. Deeper engagement with host governments and local and civic authorities across the



Image: ChameleonEye / Shutterstock.com

Commonwealth has never been more important – as we continue to develop the Commonwealth Games as an event that truly engages, supports and transforms society. This is why our impact framework, for example, explicitly maps and measures the ambitions and contributions of the Games to support peace, sustainability and prosperity across the Commonwealth. It is also why we have transformed our Games delivery model and host city selection processes, to maximise efficiency and effectiveness in our delivery of an event that is world-class but also community-relevant.

Our collaborations with Commonwealth partner, civil society and third sector organisations are equally vital – as the CGF contributes to and relies on joint projects that broaden the action, awareness and advocacy of today's Commonwealth; whilst also providing a major platform for Commonwealth discussions, activities and collaboration at Games-Time.

Indeed, the Commonwealth Games on Australia's Gold Coast,

opening on 4 April 2018, will demonstrate just how far we have come, and how committed we are to ensure that the benefits of the Games stretch beyond the thrilling impact of 11 days of sport. All our efforts are focused on delivering worldwide recognition and respect for the Gold Coast and Queensland, jobs and economic growth, community engagement right across Australia and, above all, the promise of greater reconciliation and social justice. It's why Gold Coast 2018 will be the first Mega Sporting Event in Australia with a Reconciliation Action Plan, why Festival 2018 will celebrate the diverse and dynamic cultures of the Commonwealth, and why we're proud to become the first multi-sport event in the world to create a truly level playing-field of gender equality – with an exactly equal number of medal opportunities for men and women. These very clear examples of progress are the reason the resurgent Commonwealth Sport Movement is alive, and is thriving, today. These societal-driven causes are the Commonwealth

**Above: The countdown to the Commonwealth Games Gold Coast 2018.**

Sport Movement's raison d'être in the twenty-first century, and why we stand apart from any other sporting movement or institution worldwide.

With 6,500 athletes and officials from every corner of the Commonwealth, Gold Coast 2018 will be an inspiring and inclusive festival of community, culture and sport. It will be a loud and proud celebration of today's Modern Commonwealth, and for that we can all be excited.

About the CGF: The Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) is the organisation that is responsible for the direction and control of the Commonwealth Games, and for delivering on the vision of the Commonwealth Sports Movement: to build peaceful, sustainable and prosperous communities globally by inspiring Commonwealth Athletes to drive the impact and ambition of all Commonwealth Citizens through Sport. [www.thecgf.com](http://www.thecgf.com)









The Welsh Government is also using procurement as a tool to combat slavery and working closely with Trade Unions and the Workforce Partnership Council. These organisations and groups have helped draft key documentation on policies that are now being implemented. This includes the Welsh Government's Code of Practice on Ethical Employment in Supply Chains, published in March 2017. Tackling modern slavery is at the heart of this code.

The Code builds on the requirement of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 that all commercial organisations based in the UK with a turnover of more than £36 million, should publish an annual Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement, explaining the actions they have taken in the previous year to combat slavery. In Wales, the Welsh Government is asking all organisations - public, private and third sector, large and small, to publish anti-slavery statements.

All organisations in receipt of Welsh public funds, either

directly or through grants and contracts, will be expected to sign up to the Code. The commitments include training staff, putting ethical employment policies in place and carrying out risk assessments on areas of expenditure. One of the commitments in the Code is that organisations signing up should encourage their own suppliers to sign up as well. This means that commitment to the Code can be enforced through supply chains. Those organisations that sign up to the Code are committing to regular reviews of expenditure to identify supply chains where the risk of slavery and trafficking is high.

#### **Keeping up the pressure – CPA UK's Modern Slavery Project**

I welcome the CPA UK Branch's Modern Slavery Project: a two year multilateral project providing practical advice and support to Commonwealth legislatures in the pursuit of combatting modern slavery. The project aims to encourage and facilitate a greater understanding of

the national and international benefits of introducing modern slavery legislation through highlighting the value and subsequent lessons learnt from the passing of the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Modern slavery is a global phenomenon with The Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index 2016 estimating there are 45.8 million people living in modern slavery worldwide. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that the global modern slavery trade is worth \$150 billion USD.

The project will be led by Commonwealth Parliamentarians and senior officials, sharing good practice to support colleagues in harnessing their heightened understanding to develop and strengthen modern slavery legislation across their jurisdictions. CPA UK proposes to work closely with six Commonwealth countries, each partnership unique in its goals and objectives, whilst also supporting partnerships across the CPA Regions to share good practice in tackling this heinous crime.

During the first year of the Modern Slavery Project, CPA UK delivered two regional workshops. One workshop was delivered in April 2017 that focused on the Asia-Pacific Region and a second workshop was delivered in Uganda in July 2017 that focused on the Africa Region.

Thankfully, there is a growing awareness of and determination to end the invidious crime of modern day slavery on an international scale. By uniting as a single force to that end, the CPA and other international organisations can change the future. It is only by working together that change will happen. Small and big nations can and are acting in their own right. Nations acting as part of a collective can help to ensure that all that can be done should be done to help eradicate slavery.

For further information about the CPA UK Modern Slavery Project please visit [www.uk-cpa.org/modernslavery](http://www.uk-cpa.org/modernslavery).

**Below: The Welsh Assembly in Cardiff.**



# CPA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME BOOSTS FIJIAN PARLIAMENT'S CAPACITY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS



**Hon. Dr Jiko Luveni is the first woman Speaker of the Fijian Parliament. She graduated as the first woman dentist from the Fiji School of Medicine, serving as a dentist and tutor. She worked with the UN Population Fund serving various Pacific Islands before working as HIV/AIDS Project Officer for the Ministry of Health, where she helped set up the Fiji Network for People Living with HIV/AIDS, which played an effective role in reducing fear and discrimination. She was then Minister for Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation before being elected as Speaker.**

#### **Fijian Parliament**

The Fijian Parliament has come so far in terms of the development of MPs, staff and its systems and processes since Parliament was reconvened in 2014 after a General Election. Fiji was without a Parliament since 2006 due to a government takeover and the abrogation of Fiji's Constitution in 2009. These long years (8 years) has dissipated Fijians interest and understanding about Parliament and how it works.

In 2015, the Fijian Parliament developed a three year Community Engagement Strategy to ensure that Fijians understanding of the roles and functions of Parliament is revived and understood well. It is equally critical that they understand how they can be involved in the process.

In response to this need, the Speaker of the Fijian Parliament, Hon. Dr Jiko Luveni believes that reaching out to all Fijians wherever they are is a mission to be undertaken vigorously and therefore it is necessary to ensure that Fijians participate in their Parliament.

*"It is imperative that we reach*

*out to all Fijians using innovative methods of engagement and to ensure that we take Parliament information right down to their communities no matter how far they are from Parliament – recognizing that the people are an important aspect of the whole democratic process"* says Dr Luveni.

With more than 800,000 people dispersed over more than 300 isolated islands and remote highlands, the Fijian Parliament continues with its extensive programme of reaching out to the people every year.

This is done through the 'Meet the Speaker' and 'Parliament Bus' outreach programmes where the Speaker and Parliamentary staff travel to schools and communities creating more awareness on the roles and works of Parliament and most importantly how they can engage.

Equally important is the use of modern technology to assist outreach.

The Fijian Parliament with the assistance and funding from the CPA Headquarters Secretariat's Technical Assistance Programme, embarked on a large scale televised airing of Parliament Educational videos on Fiji's two

major television stations (Fiji One TV and FBC TV) in 2017, which was proven to be impactful and a huge success.

#### **CPA Technical Assistance Programme (TAP)**

The Fijian Parliament has been continuously assisted by key stakeholders, donors and inter-parliamentary bodies like the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) in building the capacity of the Parliamentary staff and Members of Parliament.

Fueled by the Speaker's passion and resolve to reach out to all Fijian, it was agreed that Parliament need to initiate and use innovative methods to reach out to the people of Fiji. The development of Parliament education videos and the use of television was identified as an enabler to this cause.

In April 2016, the CPA Executive Committee approved funding for a parliamentary capacity building programme for the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, which would support institutional strengthening and involve professional capacity building for parliamentary staff.





### Objectives of the CPA TAP

The funding had two important objectives: 1) Enhance greater awareness and appreciation of Parliamentary functions and its legislative and oversight role on the activities of the Executive; and to 2) promote the roles and functions of Parliament and its stakeholders and partners; and generate more interest in the Parliamentary system, procedures and protocol amongst all members of society.

### Components of the project

After further negotiation and discussion between the CPA Headquarters Secretariat and the Fijian Parliament, it was agreed that the funding would be utilised for three projects.

Two separate training needs were identified and organised for parliamentary staff and the airing of Parliament Education videos on Fiji's two major television stations.

The two training programmes identified - Training for Speech Writing and Project Proposal Training for Parliamentary Staff - served as capacity building for parliamentary staff to ensure that they meet the demands and services required by the Members of Parliament.

### Staff capacity building training

The training included a Speech Writing Workshop and a Project Proposal writing course which was attended by senior parliamentary staff. More than forty members of the parliamentary staff benefitted from the training which will assist them to serve the Members of Parliament more effectively.

Manager Library Services and Research in the Fijian Parliament, Josua Namoce commented that the Speech Writing Training was an excellent and practical training. *"This training is one that has further enhanced my speech writing skills. It is excellent and practical and I would prefer that it is an ongoing training for the staff"*, Mr Namoce said.



Images: Fiji Parliament

The two training workshops have also developed staff knowledge, skills and confidence and will assist them in undertaking their role effectively. These were common sentiments shared by the participants after the training.

Another staff from Parliament, Mateo Lagimiri was overwhelmed with the new skills he has learned. *"Following the training, I am now confident in writing speeches. Before, I only provide data, do research but not really write a speech. Now, it's all possible, thanks to the training and thanks to CPA"*, said Mr Lagimiri.

### Development of parliament education videos

A unit in the Fijian Parliament (Civic Education and Media Unit) organised the filming, development and creation of ten educational videos.

The different stages of the project included: hiring of a new staff, storyboarding, script writing, filming and interviews, editing and voice over recordings, airing of the ten videos on TV and uploading of the videos to the Parliament website and other social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube.

The Fijian Parliament also organised a special training to equip

relevant Parliamentary staff on script writing for the development of the educational and documentary videos. The training has enabled staff to develop ten Parliament education videos that were aired on television with the funding from the CPA-TAP.

With the acquired and necessary skills, the Parliamentary staff that have been trained are now primed to write scripts for future video productions like education videos, short documentaries, news, creative stories and other education initiatives which will augur well for Parliamentary outreach targeting youths, students in schools and the general public as well.

### Cost arrangements

The utilization of the CPA TAP funding was based on the prices determined by the two major television stations in Fiji. The two stations boast more than 70% coverage of the whole of Fiji and the airing of these videos has taken Parliament's outreach to an exciting new level. All of the videos (3-4 minutes duration) provide basic explanation and contain real time footage (interviews, illustrations, narration with scrolling on screen texts) and snapshots of Fiji's current Parliament and cut-

**Above: Training for staff at the Parliament of Fiji as part of the CPA Technical Assistance Programme.**

away shots from the past based on relevancy.

Members of the Fijian Parliamentary staff held continued discussions with the two TV stations and this resulted in the reduced cost of TV air time that was offered and agreed upon by both parties. The duration of the videos produced was also determined by consideration of airing times offered by the two television stations and the amount of relevant information that needed to be condensed to ensure the information is complete, transparent, straightforward and uncomplicated.

The average cost of airing a 3-4 minute video on TV in Fiji is FJD\$1,500 (equivalent to US\$740.00) during prime time slots. All the videos were aired during TV prime times when most Fijian viewers are tuned in and watching television.

### Parliament videos on television

It took more than a year to complete this project and the Fijian Parliament is most thankful to the CPA Executive Committee for extending the duration of the

project, to be completed before the end of 2017. This gave ample time for the Fijian Parliament to process and hire a technical person with filming, video editing qualifications and experience to be recruited to work in Parliament. The extension also allowed the training on script writing to be organised and has assisted staff in the video productions.

It was key that the actual schedule for the airing of the videos is known by the general public in advance. As such, the Fijian Parliament ran promotional advertisements on the same TV stations for two weeks before the actual TV airing. Promotional materials were also posted online on the Parliament's website and social media platforms which received a lot of positive and welcoming comments and feedback.

### Amazing feedback

The Parliament video titles include: 1) The Mace; 2) Role of the Speaker; 3) Committees of Parliament; 4) Role of the Leader of the Government and Government; 5) Role of the Opposition and Leader of the Opposition; 6) About Parliament; 7) Role of Party Whips; 8) How Laws are Made; 9) The Role of Parliament; and 10) How to Participate in Parliament.

The videos received overwhelming feedback on Facebook with the total reach for the ten videos reaching 435,259 impressions with 50,364 views, 2,822 reactions and 536 shares. Most of the comments received were positive urging Parliament to produce more similar videos.

The CPA TAP funding for this project has been crucial in reaching many people who previously had little information about the Fijian Parliament. The CPA TAP funding for the airing of these videos has enabled the Fijian Parliament to reach out to viewers using cutting edge technology. The project has

No	Title
1	The Mace of Parliament
2	The Role of the Speaker
3	Committees of Parliament
4	How to be Involved in Parliament
5	How Laws are Made
6	Roles of Parliament
7	The roles of Party Whips in Parliament
8	The Role of Government and the Leader of Government in Parliament
9	The Role of Opposition and the Leader of Opposition in Parliament
10	About Parliament



successfully met its objectives and has also motivated staff in the Fijian Parliament to continue producing videos to enhance outreach to the public.

*"The assistance has created greater awareness and appreciation of Parliamentary functions and more interest in the Parliamentary system, procedures and protocol amongst all members of society. We have received overwhelming feedback and that has given us more motivation to continue with this wonderful work. We are so thankful to the CPA,"* said Speaker Dr Jiko Luveni

### CPA funding ensures sustainability

There is more commitment and drive to introduce innovative ways to do outreach in the Fijian Parliament, and as such a technical post is created to undertake filming and video editing. Consequently, more up to date and interesting video productions will be undertaken to assist Parliamentary outreach and increasing the publicity of Parliament's core work. The training on script writing will ensure that video production work will develop further.

The Fijian Parliament is also working on sending DVDs of the videos to all remote schools around Fiji and this will help to reach those students living in

areas that do not have access to live television coverage. Modern pedagogy requires innovative ways of learning to suit students' needs and the Fijian Parliament is exploring new ways to enhance students' learning.

The CPA Technical Assistance Programme has immensely assisted the Fijian Parliament. Parliamentary staff are now more equipped to serve MPs and carry out Parliamentary work in more dynamic, improved and innovative ways that will help sustain and develop the Fijian Parliament in the future.

*Vinaka vakalevu (Thank you) CPA.*

The Fiji Parliament educational videos can be accessed on the Fijian Parliament website education page: [www.parliament.gov.fj/education](http://www.parliament.gov.fj/education).

For further information about the range of CPA Technical Assistance Programmes available please contact the CPA Headquarters Secretariat via [hq.sec@cpahq.org](mailto:hq.sec@cpahq.org).

**"The assistance has created greater awareness and appreciation of Parliamentary functions and more interest in the Parliamentary system, procedures and protocol amongst all members of society. We have received overwhelming feedback and that has given us more motivation to continue with this wonderful work. We are so thankful to the CPA," said Speaker Dr Jiko Luveni.**





# CLIMATE CHANGE: AFTER PARIS: WHERE ARE WE NOW? WHERE DO WE NEED TO BE? HOW DO WE GET THERE? *THE TALANOA DIALOGUE*



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## Background and Introduction

The adoption of the Paris Agreement in December 2015 marked a red-letter event for global climate diplomacy. World governments agreed to a treaty that saw every country contributing to an effort to address global climate change. The Paris Agreement has as its primary objective to limit the increase of global average temperature attributable to man-made climate change to well below 2 degrees Celsius, while pursuing efforts to restricting that increase to below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Countries have therefore submitted to the United Nations what they commit to do to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, which are the gases responsible for global climate change. These commitments are referred to as Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs. Governments also agreed to achieve net zero emissions in the second half of this century.

In order to get to this point, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – a consortium of climate scientists nominated by Governments to advise the UN on climate issues – estimates that global emissions will have to peak by 2020 and substantially be reduced thereafter. However, when the submitted NDCs are summed, they fall short of what is required to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement. In other words,

more needs to be done on the part of world governments to reduce their emissions, or put more simply, a greater amount of ambition is required. Governments are also required to submit new NDCs periodically with each new NDC representing an increase in emission reductions compared to the previous NDC.

The Paris Agreement provides for 'global stock takes' to be convened every five years for governments to collectively track the progress towards the achievement of the objectives of the Agreement as well as be used to inform new NDCs. When the Paris Agreement was adopted, Parties decided to have a first such conversation in 2018 called the 'Facilitative Dialogue' to take stock of collective progress and to inform the next round of NDC submission due in 2020, which was also part of the decision adopting the Paris Agreement.

2018 also marks the deadline that governments have agreed to for the finalization of the rules and modalities that would govern the implementation of the Paris Agreement. 2018 is therefore looking to be politically significant for driving greater ambition.

During the preparations for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP 23) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) or the pre-COP, as it is commonly referred to, held in Nadi, Fiji in October 2017, the Facilitative Dialogue was rechristened the 'Talanoa

Dialogue', reflecting the Fijian/Pacific concept of 'Talanoa' which describes a process of sharing stories, building empathy and making wise decisions for the collective good, and perhaps more importantly, also one that is participatory and transparent.

## Structure of the Talanoa Dialogue

At COP 23 in Bonn, Germany, the Presidencies of Fiji (COP 23) and Morocco (COP 22) conducted consultations with Parties on the structure of the Talanoa Dialogue, with the following main outcomes<sup>1</sup>, which were confirmed by the Conference of the Parties:

- The dialogue will be structured around three general questions:
  - o Where are we?
  - o Where do we want to go?
  - o How do we get there?
- The dialogue should be constructive, facilitative and solutions oriented, and conducted in a manner that promotes cooperation;
- The dialogue should not lead to discussions of a confrontational nature in which individual Parties or groups of Parties are singled out;
- The dialogue will be conducted in a manner that promotes enhanced ambition, and will consider, as one of its elements, the efforts of Parties on action and support, as appropriate, in the pre-2020 period;
- The dialogue will fulfil its mandate, in a



comprehensive and non-restrictive manner;

- The dialogue will consist of a preparatory and a political phase, and the Presidencies of COP 23 (Fiji) and COP 24 (Poland) will jointly lead both phases of the dialogue and co-chair the political phase at COP 24.

The Talanoa Dialogue was officially launched at COP 23 with the preparatory phase running from January to November 2018 and the political phase at COP 24 in December 2018 in Poland.

While the mandate is clear as to the issues that need to be considered, being the tracking of progress and preparation of the next round of NDCs, issues regarding the scope of the Dialogue may inevitably arise as part of the discussions, and it may be instructive to take into consideration other auxiliary issues that directly and indirectly impact on the discussions.

During the negotiations on the Paris Agreement, the original conceptual aspect of NDCs was generally accepted as one regarding mitigation or reducing, avoiding or sequestering greenhouse gas emissions, in keeping with the long term goal of restricting

global temperature increase. However, as negotiations progressed, issues relating to adaptation, or measures to cope with the adverse impacts of climate change crept into the NDC discussions and gained prominence to the extent that adaptation components of NDCs were included in some countries' NDCs. Some countries' NDCs therefore include an adaptation component.

Additionally, and perhaps critically, the provision of financial support to developing countries in order for them (developing countries) to implement their commitments in their NDCs is an obligation of developed countries. Technology transfer and capacity building are also forms of support that would be required by developing countries of developed countries to effectively and efficiently implement their commitments under their NDCs. As a result, the Dialogue may inevitably have to include aspects of support and adaptation in the context of tracking progress as well as determining the level of ambition for developing countries in preparation for the next round of NDC submission. In a nutshell, the issue of finance is likely to

be a central issue on the table in the context of determining future ambition.

## The Preparatory Phase

The preparatory phase is expected to benefit from, and be informed by various inputs from various sources. These inputs are expected to include the Special Report by the IPCC on global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius requested by the COP for which dedicated space will be allocated to fully understand the implications of the report.

Since the adoption of the Paris Agreement, Parties have increasingly recognised the roles of non-State actors in contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the Agreement. Such actors include cities, states, the private sector, business and industry, and civil society organisations. In keeping with the spirit of Talanoa, it is expected that these players would also provide important inputs in the Dialogue. Inputs would also be drawn from Parties, stakeholders and expert institutions. To facilitate these inputs, the UNFCCC Secretariat has created an online platform to receive such inputs. Throughout 2018 therefore inputs are

expected to be received and which will be collated into a synthesis report, which would then further inform the political phase to be held at COP 24 in Poland.

## The Political Phase

The political phase will bring together high-level representatives of Parties to:

- (i) take stock of the collective efforts of Parties in meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement, and
  - (ii) inform the preparation of the NDCs. Political discussions will include roundtables to ensure focused and interactive discussions among Ministers.
- The political phase is therefore designed to build momentum toward, and at, COP 24 in a space where political leaders can agree on where we need to go and how we can get there in the global fight against climate change.

Political leaders, Ministers and other high-level country representatives will be able to discuss in the spirit of Talanoa, whether countries are collectively achieving what they agreed to in the Paris Agreement and whether they







are on track, and what needs to be done next.

### Outcomes of the Talanoa Dialogue?

While Article 14 of the Paris Agreement on the global stock takes speaks to an outcome and its use, the COP Decision establishing the Dialogue is silent on what the outcome should be. This then would be left for Parties to determine, including the form that any such outcome(s) should take. This would therefore be an issue that would need consideration by Parties at COP 24 as to how the political discussions, which would take into account the inputs of the preparatory phase, should be captured. There are various ways in which such outcomes could be captured including a COP decision, political declarations with key political messaging, technical summaries and guidelines for next steps and actions, or a combination of these.

What is reasonably clear though, is that the three main questions around which the Dialogue are centred ought to be addressed in clear, unambiguous and understandable terms so that the way forward is fairly well defined.

The Talanoa Dialogue is clear on the inputs required to inform its discussions, including the content and scope of the political conversation outlined above, and therefore answers to the three questions should benefit from the preparatory phase as well as the discussions in the political phase taken as a whole. Any outcome from the Talanoa Dialogue must in any event at a minimum, include political guidance and commitment to increasing ambition, which can then be reduced to meaningful action on the ground, so that achieving the long term objectives of the Paris Agreement are kept within reach.



### Conclusion

It is submitted that the true potency of the Talanoa Dialogue lies in the spirit of Talanoa that ought to allow an opportunity for politicians to look themselves squarely in the mirror and ask the hard and candid questions of themselves, but more importantly to provide the political guidance to the rest of the world. The Talanoa Dialogue should therefore be the opportunity to reinforce political faith and certainty in the battle against climate change. Indeed, it should set the tone for the upcoming global stocktakes in terms of the political ambition that would be needed in the future.

While the Talanoa Dialogue can probably be distinguished from the periodic global stock takes provided for in the Paris Agreement in terms of its genesis and its one-off nature, what cannot be disputed is that the Dialogue is intended to maintain and build on the political momentum created in Paris in 2015. This political momentum has inspired action by non-state actors in an unprecedented manner, and has accrued political currency which ought not to be squandered.

The political signalling

to inspire action outside of the UNFCCC process, and particularly to facilitate action by non-state actors therefore cannot be over-emphasised, as action on the ground, facilitated by political ambition and enabling environment is where the trajectory to the Paris goals invariably lies.

The Commonwealth includes among its membership large developed countries, large developing countries, emerging economies, low-lying developing coastal states, and small island developing states - a veritable representative mix of the countries of the wider world. Most, if not all, of the Commonwealth countries have played critical roles, including leadership roles in the shaping and final form of the Paris Agreement, thereby underlying the significant influence of this grouping of countries. The imminent 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Heads of Government of the Commonwealth in April 2018 therefore presents a unique opportunity for this diverse mixture of countries to set the tone and provide the political leadership for shaping the answers to the questions being asked after Paris, and by

**Above: Kishan Kumarsingh speaks at the first Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Lecture for the CPA Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic (CAA) Region in August 2017 in Trinidad and Tobago on the subject of 'The Geo-political response to Climate Change'.**

extension the success of the Talanoa Dialogue, and in the ongoing battle against climate change.

The author, Kishan Kumarsingh, gave the first Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Lecture for the CPA Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic (CAA) Region in August 2017 in Trinidad and Tobago on the subject of 'The Geo-political response to Climate Change'. To view the CPA Lecture please visit the following link: <https://youtu.be/1vSKKnLXyJE> or go to the CPA YouTube channel at [www.cpahq.org/cpahq/youtube](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/youtube).

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- <sup>1</sup> [http://unfccc.int/files/na/application/pdf/approach\\_to\\_the\\_talanoa\\_dialogue.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/na/application/pdf/approach_to_the_talanoa_dialogue.pdf)
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# WHIPS IN THE INDIA PARLIAMENT



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Political parties have a significant role in the working of a democratic polity. Whips in turn have role cut out for them in smooth conduct of party affairs particularly in matters pertaining to House proceedings. The outcome of their endeavours and the efficacy of whips is manifest in the effective conduct of the passage of legislation and from a larger perspective, the House proceedings.

*Whips* as an expression in its parliamentary context has its origins in hunting terminology. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term 'Whipper-in' as "a huntsman's assistant who keeps the hounds from straying by driving them back with the whip into the main body of the pack." According to this dictionary, the first recorded use of the term 'whipper-in' in the parliamentary sense occurs in 1772.<sup>1</sup> However P.D.G. Thomas in House of Commons in the Eighteenth Century cites examples of the use of the term that pre-date 1772.

It was within the context of such summons to Members out of town that the first known Parliamentary instance of the use of the term 'whip' occurred in a debate on 8 May 1769 on petitions from some Middlesex freeholders against the seating of Henry Luttrell instead of John Wilkes. Edmund Burke who, in a debate in the House of Commons described how the King's Ministers had made efforts to bring their followers together, how they had sent for their friends to the north and to Paris, whipping them in. The phrase adopted by Burke caught the public fancy and soon became popular.<sup>2</sup>

Coming to the very basic question, what are whips? A whip is a person, a crucial office bearer as also directives or directions issued by the whips.

Simply put, whips are office bearers of political or legislative party offices with assigned tasks. Whips

are also the directives or voting instructions issued to Members by the party through their whips (here designated as the office bearer of the party). The operation and functionality of whips can be better appreciated through an illustration. It is a kind of triangle, where at the top we have the institution of Parliament or the Legislature and at the other two ends, we have the parliamentary party (which includes the party whips) and the Members of Parliament respectively. It is within this triangular space that the action takes place.

Before Parliament, there is a question that a Bill be taken into consideration, clauses be adopted, the Bill be passed etc, or a motion be adopted. The party takes a position or a stand on which their Members need to vote. The party, therefore, enjoins their whips (the office holders) to ensure that their Members vote as per the party's position on the Bill or motion. Accordingly, the whips (voting instructions) are issued by the whips (the office holders) for compliance, upon the Members who are at the other end of the triangle.

It is through this relatively simple illustration I proceed to discuss the role of whips, their functions, responsibilities, consequences of violation of party whips, implications under the Anti-Defection Law and attendant legal issues.

### Political Parties

Coming to define parties, it would be worthwhile to note the following observations and analysis by Stephen Ingle in his book 'The British Party System: An Introduction' - "In the newly established United States of America, Madison was not well disposed to parties, seeing them, as did Rousseau, as factions"

*actuated by some common impulse of passion or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community...*<sup>13</sup>

Although each of these definitions adds something to our understanding of what political parties are, none captures the compelling simplicity of Burke's classical, encompassing definition. "A party is a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed."<sup>14</sup>

For Burke, unlike Madison, there is no contradiction between the interests of the party and the state. Yet even Burke does not achieve the economy of Epstein's disingenuous but realistic definition: "Almost everything that is called a party in any Western democratic nation can be so regarded."<sup>15</sup>

A working definition culled (from aforementioned) might be as follows. "Parties are principally groups of people organized to seek to wield or influence political power through agreed constitutional means in the name of some organized opinion or ideology which binds them together and which distinguishes them from other groups..."<sup>16</sup>

### Position of whips in the United Kingdom

As per 'Parliamentary Practice' by Erskine May (24<sup>th</sup> edn): "Inside the House of Commons each party organisation is presided over by Members of the House and staffed by subordinate officials who are not Members. The officer or whips of the party in office consist of the Chief Whip who holds the official position of Parliamentary or patronage secretary to the Treasury, three officers of the Household and five lords of the





treasury with the addition of up to seven Members who act as assistant whips; all these whips receive salaries.<sup>7</sup> All government whips rank as Ministers of the Crown. The Treasurer of Her Majesty's Household is usually appointed Deputy Chief Whip..."

As for duties of whips, May states: "The efficient and smooth running of the Parliamentary machine depends largely upon the whips. By far the most important duties devolve upon the Government Chief Whip. He is concerned with mapping out the time of the session. For applying in detail the government's programme of business; for estimating the time likely to be required for each item, and for arranging the business of the individual sitting... In drawing up the programme he is limited to a certain extent by the Standing Orders, which allot a certain number of days to the Opposition and to the Backbench Business Committee; and by statute law or Standing Orders, which require, or may require, certain business to be completed by specified dates; as well as by certain conventions which make it obligatory upon him to consult the whips of Opposition parties and even to put and even to put down items of their selection. In carrying out his duties, he is directly responsible to the Prime Minister and Leader of the House. It is also part of his duties to advise the government on parliamentary business and procedures, and to maintain a close liaison with Ministers in regard to parliamentary business which affects their departments. He and the Chief Whip of the largest opposition party constitute the usual channels, through which consultations are held with other parties and Members about business arrangements and other matters of concern to the House."<sup>8</sup>

As regards the duties of whips in general, May states: "Certain duties are common to whips of all parties. They keep their Members supplied with information about the business of the House, secure the attendance of Members, arrange for their Members who are unable to attend divisions to 'pair' with

Members of the opposite side of the House so that their votes may be neutralized and not lost, and suggest Members to serve on general and certain Select Committees. They also act as intermediaries between the leaders and the parliamentary membership of their parties in order to keep each informed of the views of the other."<sup>9</sup>

### Whips in the Indian Parliament's Context

The role of the whips are clearly delineated in the Report of the Committee of Presiding Officers under the Chairmanship of Shri V.S Page the then Chairman of the Maharashtra Legislative Council, in a report popularly known as the PAGE Committee Report. In pursuance of a decision taken at the Conference of Presiding Officers held in New Delhi in October 1967, the Chairman of the Conference, Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy, Speaker of the Fourth Lok Sabha, appointed a Committee of Presiding Officers to examine three matters and submit their Report to him before the next annual conference to be held in Kerala in October 1968. One of the matter for examination was – "What conventions, traditions and other procedural devices are required to be adopted or evolved to enable the Parliament/Legislatures to function effectively and meet the new challenging situations witnessed in the country."

On the issue of whips, the PAGE Committee in their report observed that whips, both of the ruling party as well as those of the opposition, play a very significant role in the smooth and efficient functioning of our parliamentary democracy. Apart from their normal duties of making and keeping the House, they are required to establish and maintain through a tactful handling of situations, good and amicable relations between the Government and the opposition benches, a pre-requisite for the smooth running of the parliamentary business. The Committee also felt that "It is, therefore, necessary that there should be full cooperation among the

whips and the leaders of their parties and the Speakers. In order to achieve this, one of the essentials factors is that none of them should encroach on the activities of the other."

### Whips as office bearers of a party

In the parliamentary form of government, a party has its own internal organisation inside Parliament and is served by a number of officials known as whips, chosen from Members of the party itself. In fact, the efficient and smooth working of parliamentary democracy depends to a very large extent on the whips of the party in power and the party or parties in opposition.<sup>10</sup>

In the Indian parliamentary context, the whip of a parliamentary group is the one who has been designated to ensure that Members of the party are present in adequate numbers and vote according to the line decided by the party on important questions.

The whip of the Government party in Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha is the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, who is also called the Chief Whip. The Chief Whip was given Ministerial status in 1949. Until 1962, his rank was that of a Minister of State when he was made a Minister of Cabinet rank. Consequently on the appointment of the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs as the Leader of the House in February 1966, the new Government Chief Whip was again raised to status of Cabinet rank in 1967, when the then Prime Minister became the Leader of the House. The Chief Whip is directly responsible to the Leader of the Government on parliamentary business. The Chief Whip acts as the eyes and ears of the Leader of the Party so far as the Members are concerned. During a parliamentary session, in his capacity as adviser to the Leader of the House, he has to be in constant touch with the Prime Minister.

It has been aptly said that the whips are not only shock-absorbers, but also indicators of the party. They are not only advisors to the Leader, but also the binding force in the party; they are not only barometers of the

different regions and opinions but also the counselors of Members.<sup>11</sup>

### Whips as directives

During sessions of the House, whips of different parties send to their Members periodic notices and directives informing them of the important, probable hour of voting and demanding their presence at that time. Such notices and/or directives are also called 'whips'. Whips in this sense, have, however, not been defined either in the Constitution, Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha or any other statute.

In their connotation as party directives, whips are said to be of three types - one line, two line and three line whips. These are so called by the number of lines by which their text is underlined. The number of lines is indicative of the importance and urgency attached to a particular measure before the House.<sup>12</sup>

A *one line whip* is considered to be the simplest directive that merely requires the attendance of the Members in the House on a particular date and time. Also, one line is indicative of no division being expected.

*Two line whips* are supposed to be somewhat more obligatory and a stronger party directive. It is issued in case of fairly important business and when division is expected.

*Three line whips* indicate the most important business and a division or vote will be held. A Member must obey this directive and attend the House. It is entirely mandatory and one can disobey it only at one's peril. Disregard of a three line whip by a Member is almost certainly likely to invite serious disciplinary action from the party. In keeping with modern times, an informal practice has also evolved to the effect that after the issuance of whips as conventionally laid down through communications via hard copies then text messages (SMS) are also issued to Members informing them that whips have been issued and that Members should be present on such and such

dates for participation and voting in the House as per the directions issued through said whips.

### Provisions under Anti-Defection Law

In the context of the issuance of whips, the provisions under Anti Defection Law as contained in the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution of India are very relevant.

Paragraph 2(1) (b) of the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution of India, which provides that a Member of a House belonging to any political party shall be disqualified for being a Member of the House if he votes or abstains from voting in such House contrary to any direction issued by the political party to which he belongs or by any person or authority authorized by it in this behalf, without obtaining, in either case, the prior permission of such political party, person or authority and such voting or abstention has not been condoned by such political party, person or authority within fifteen days from the date of such voting or abstention.

As may be seen from the above constitutional provisions, a 'whip' has been referred to as direction. It is in this manner, therefore, that 'whip' has been taken cognizance of insofar as provisions of Tenth Schedule are concerned. Hence, violation of whip by a Member which is referred to as a direction in the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution without prior permission of concerned political party - if not condoned - would make the concerned Member liable for disqualification.

### Judicial interpretation on applicability of provisions of para 2 (1) (b)

It would be of interest to note interpretations given by Courts of Law on the vires and applicability of provisions of para 2 (1) (b) of the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution.

In the early days itself, of coming into force of the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution one of the contentions before the *Punjab & Haryana High Court* in *Prakash Singh Badal and Others Vs. Union*

*of India and Others* (AIR 1987 Punjab & Haryana 263) was that the provisions of para 2 (1) (b) of the Tenth Schedule were violative of article 105 which under its provisions of clause (1) confers upon Members the privilege of freedom of speech in Parliament and under clause (2), immunity to Members from any proceedings in any court of law for anything said or any vote given in Parliament or any Committee thereof. [Corresponding provisions in regard to privileges and immunities to Members of State Legislatures are laid down under Article 194 of the Constitution].

As regards the vires of the provision of para 2 (1) (b), the Punjab and Haryana High Court in the aforementioned case have *inter-alia* held as follows: ".....So far as the right of a Member under article 105 is concerned, it is not an absolute one and has been made subject to the provisions of the Constitution and the rules and Standing Orders regulating the procedure of Parliament. The framers of the Constitution, therefore, never intended to confer any absolute right of freedom of speech on a Member of the Parliament and the same can be regulated or curtailed by making any constitutional provision, such as the Fifty-second Amendment. The provisions of para 2(b) cannot, therefore, be termed as violative of the provisions of article 105 of the Constitution....."

Subsequently, in 1993 the Supreme Court of India in *Kihota Hollohan Vs. Zachilhu & Others* (AIR 1993, SC, 412) had the occasion to dwell at length on the constitutionality of the provisions of paragraph 2(1)(b) of the Tenth Schedule. The Supreme Court, in their majority opinion, concluded: ".....(E) That the paragraph 2 of the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution is valid. Its provisions do not suffer from the vice of subverting democratic rights of elected Members of Parliament and the Legislatures of the States. It does not violate their freedom of speech, freedom of vote and conscience as contended."

The provisions under 2(1)

(b) of the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution have been invoked for seeking disqualification of Members on several occasions and there are many examples.

### Facilities open to Chief Whips

Realising the vital role played by the Chief Whips and the Leaders of parties and groups in Parliament as important functionaries, an Act namely '*The Leaders and Chief Whips of Recognized Parties and Group in Parliament (Facilities) Act*' (Act 5 of 1999) was enacted during the period of the Twelfth Lok Sabha, which came into force in January 1999.

In the definition clause '*recognized group*' has been defined to mean (i) in relation to the Council of States, every party which has a strength of not less than fifteen Members and not more than twenty four Members in the Council; (ii) in relation to the House of the People, every party which has a strength of not less than thirty Members and not more than fifty four Members in the House.

The '*recognized party*' - has been defined to mean (i) in relation to the Council of States, every party which has a strength of not less than twenty five Members in the Council; (ii) in relation to the House of the People, every party which has a strength of not less than fifty five Members in the House.

Section 3 of the Act provides that each Leader, Deputy Leader and each Chief Whip of a recognized group and a recognized party shall be entitled to telephone and secretarial facilities.

As per provision to this Section, such facilities shall not be provided to such Leader, Deputy Leader or Chief Whip, as case may be, who: (i) holds an office of Minister as defined in section 2 of the Salaries and Allowances of Ministers Act, 1952; or (ii) holds an office of the Leader of the Opposition as defined in section 2 of the Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977; or (iii) is entitled to similar telephone and secretarial facilities by virtue of holding any office of, or

representation in, a Parliamentary Committee or other Committee, Council, Board, Commission or other body set up by the Government; or (iv) is entitled to similar telephone and secretarial facilities provided to him in any other capacity by the government or a local authority or corporation owned or controlled by the government or any local authority.

### Conclusion

In a parliamentary democracy, effective floor management, party discipline and the ways and means for effecting party discipline to ensure compliance of party directives assumes importance. It is in that context that party whips and directives, are necessary. There are checks and balances to ensure that on one side the party whips and directives do not abuse the Members' rights to freely express their views and at the same time, there is effective party floor managements. The endeavours of all parties have been to judiciously balance these two.

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- <sup>2</sup> Ilbert: *Parliament – Its History, Constitutional and Practice*, London, 1948, p135.
- <sup>3</sup> *The British Party System – An Introduction*, by Stephen Ingle (4<sup>th</sup> Edn) – In the chapter '*Parties and the party system in Britain*', p5
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid: p5, Edmund Burke, *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents* (first published in 1770).
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid: p5, Epstein 1967:5
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid: p5
- <sup>7</sup> Erskine May's, pp50-51 (24<sup>th</sup> Edn) – *Ministerial and other Salaries Act, 1975* (c27), s1(1)(a) and Sch I.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid, p51-52
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid, p52
- <sup>10</sup> Practice and Procedure of Parliament by M.N. Kaul & S.L. Shakdher, p158, (7<sup>th</sup> edn).
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- <sup>12</sup> Party Whips, Parliamentary Privilege and Anti-Defection Law, by Dr. Subhash C. Kashyap, JPI, 1988.







## Vote 100: UK Parliament celebrates a century of women's voices

In the Commonwealth, women's suffrage – the right of women to vote – has been achieved at various times. In some jurisdictions, women's suffrage was granted before universal suffrage and therefore many women and men from certain classes or ethnic backgrounds were still unable to vote. Some jurisdictions granted the vote to both sexes at the same time.

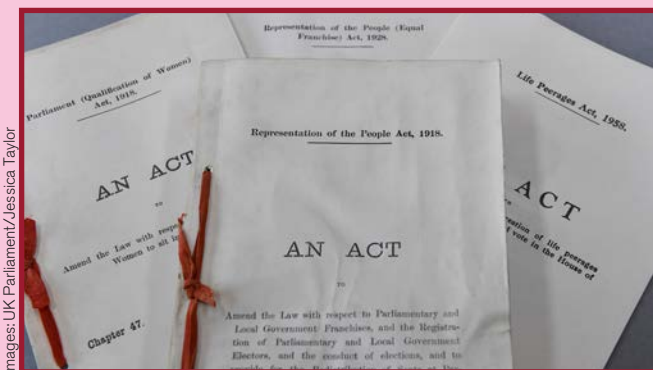
The Tynwald, the legislature of the Isle of Man, is recognised as the world's oldest Parliament in continuous operation, and some women in the Isle of Man (part of the geographic British Isles but not part of the United Kingdom) gained the right to vote in 1881 (see *The Parliamentarian* 2015: Issue Three for an article on this subject).

However New Zealand was the first country in the world (and in the Commonwealth) in 1893 where women had the right to vote in parliamentary elections, and this was closely followed by South Australia in 1894, where women were also able to be candidates in elections for the first time. The world's first female Members of Parliament were elected in Finland in 1907, following the implementation of universal suffrage the previous year, the first country in Europe to do so.

Throughout the Commonwealth and the CPA, many jurisdictions are marking anniversaries since the introduction of the first women's and universal suffrage and Parliaments are holding exhibitions to celebrate the occasion. For example, the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia in Canada held an exhibition in 2017 titled '100 Years of Women and the Vote', highlighting significant 'firsts' for women elected to the Legislative Assembly (see *The Parliamentarian* 2017: Issue Two for details).

In the United Kingdom, on 6 February 2018, to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Representation of the People Act 1918* and the first women to gain the right to vote, the UK Prime Minister, Rt

*Below: The Representation of the People Act, 1918 and other representation and voting legislation from the United Kingdom Parliament which forms part of the Vote 100 exhibition in Westminster Hall.*



Images: UK Parliament/Jessica Taylor



*Above: The UK Prime Minister and women Members from both Houses of the United Kingdom Parliament gather in Central Lobby to celebrate the centenary of the Representation of the People Act, 1918.*

Hon. Theresa May, MP officially launched the UK Parliament's Vote 100 programme at a reception in Westminster Hall with all female Members of Parliament past and present being invited. The UK Parliament's Vote 100 project is a year-long programme of events celebrating a century of women's voices in the UK Parliament, the journey towards universal suffrage and the first women MPs.

Immersive and interactive technologies will be used to tell the story of women and Parliament. Lost historic spaces which were used to segregate women from the business of Parliament will be recreated and the story of those crucial campaigners and trailblazers retold. Throughout 2018, Vote 100 will celebrate milestones in women's suffrage and the contribution of women to politics in the UK, with a series of events, exhibitions and educational programmes including its main exhibition 'Voice & Vote'.

The 'Voice & Vote: Women's Place in Parliament' exhibition will be staged in Westminster Hall and will cover the campaign for votes for women through to the representation of women in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Throughout the exhibition, rare and previously unseen historic objects, pictures and archives from the Parliamentary collections and elsewhere will be on show. Together with immersive and interactive technologies, the exhibition will tell the story of women in Parliament, the campaigning, the protests and the achievements.

Women have now occupied the highest positions in the UK Parliament, including Rt Hon. Baroness Betty Boothroyd, the first woman Speaker of the House of Commons and Rt Hon. Baroness Hayman, the first Lord Speaker in the House of Lords.

*'Voice & Vote: Women's Place in Parliament' will be held in the UK Parliament's Westminster Hall from 27 June to 6 October 2018. Visit [www.parliament.uk/vote100](http://www.parliament.uk/vote100) for more information.*

## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Africa Regional Workshop presents opportunity to share experiences in KwaZulu-Natal

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians representing over fifty national and provincial Parliaments from across the Africa Region gathered in January 2018 at Zimbali Conference Centre in Ballito, outside Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, to discuss the issues of gender equality, women empowerment and the emancipation of women.

The two-day workshop, organised by the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Africa Region and hosted by the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature, was held under the theme of: 'Mechanisms to Strengthen Gender Equality'.

Opening the Regional Gender Sensitisation Workshop, the Chairperson of the CWP Africa Region, Hon. Thoko Didiza, MP (South Africa) said that the gathering was an opportunity for women Parliamentarians to share practices and experiences on women's empowerment and emancipation as well as ideas on what can be done to increase women's representation in Parliament and in government. "The discussions in this workshop will motivate and inspire us to achieve the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment," said Hon. Thoko Didiza.

The CWP Members who attended the workshop included Speakers, Deputy Speakers, Committee Chairpersons as well as Members of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures. The CPA Africa Region Chairperson, Hon. Lindiwe Maseko, MP (South Africa) who was one of the guest speakers said public policy was another mechanism for change and gender equality. She said that Parliamentarians should heed a call to ensure that the legislative process was open and transparent for women to participate.

Hon. Lydia Johnson, MPL, Speaker of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature told her colleagues to focus on what the different Parliaments were doing to increase women participation in development matters and ensuring gender equity. "Today, as we are meeting here under the theme: 'Mechanisms to Strengthen Gender Equality' we need to focus on what we as Parliamentarians are doing to strengthen mechanisms for gender equity. The CWP was founded to enable women Parliamentarians with an opportunity to discuss strategies to increase representation in Parliament and work towards mainstreaming of gender considerations in all CPA activities and programmes. Many countries including South Africa



*have also made strides towards improving women's representation in Parliaments but we are not yet there."*

She also said that the establishment of the CWP was in response to the call of increasing women's representation in political institutions. "CWP international encourages us as women Parliamentarians to work and focus on equipping women Parliamentarians with the skills or tools to lobby for the better representation of women for women's issues; share experiences and information and learn about obstacles affecting women Parliamentarians and women's representation in politics."

South Africa's Communications Minister, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane also spoke at the workshop and said that women's participation in the Information Communications Technology (ICT) sector was woefully low, more especially in the countries of the South. "It is important to encourage young women to consider careers in areas such as the science and ICT sectors. Studies show that women still have limited access to education and therefore fewer women are able to enter the ICT sector."

Emphasising the importance of ICT in accelerating women's empowerment, Kubayi-Ngubane said the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) called for speedy transformation in the ICT sector. "With the dawn of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, women's empowerment is no longer an option. We need to enact policies that will ensure that there is an increased and affordable access to internet connectivity. The Fourth Industrial Revolution can provide women with broader access to online services such as health care and education. It can eliminate the gender digital divide which remains most severe in poorer countries. Lack of awareness about the ICT benefits for women is a huge barrier to entry for women's empowerment."

*Text sources: Sakhile Mokoena/Parliament of South Africa; African News Agency/ANA. Images: KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature.*







## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Pacific Regional Mentoring Programme held in New Zealand

The New Zealand Parliament and CPA New Zealand Branch hosted Members from the CWP Pacific Region at a regional mentoring programme for women Parliamentarians, involving Members from Fiji, Niue and Tonga which took place from 5 to 6 December 2017.

The mentoring programme was designed to build technical capacity and social capital in the Pacific Region by establishing long-term meaningful relationships between participants and New Zealand's women Parliamentarians, while giving the participants practical strategies and skills they can take back to their own Parliaments.

Participants were given an opportunity to connect with others in the same position, establish a mentor relationship, and undertake workshops aimed at strengthening their confidence and abilities in their new representative roles.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Pacific Region Chairperson, Hon. Poto Williams, MP said: "Sadly, the Pacific (excluding New Zealand) remains one of the lowest regions in the world for women's political representation. However, the past few years have seen momentum and commitment deliver great gains, including a woman Deputy Prime Minister (Samoa), and two women Speakers (Fiji, Cook Islands). In the 2017 elections, women's representation in the Tongan Parliament and Niue Legislative Assembly doubled and I hope to see similar success in the 2018 Fijian Election."

The overarching goal for the programme was to provide the attending women Parliamentarians with a safe space to ask questions, share concerns, and build up the confidence and skills to effectively advocate for women in an often male-dominated environment.

The programme schedule included the opportunity for conference delegates to meet with the newly elected Prime Minister



Above: Newly elected Prime Minister of New Zealand, Rt Hon. Jacinda Ardern, MP meets with a group of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians from the Pacific Region.

of New Zealand, Rt Hon. Jacinda Ardern, MP; the Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives, Rt Hon. Trevor Mallard, MP; and Minister for Pacific Peoples, Hon Aupito William Sio.

A series of workshops were also held on a number of topics, including how to manage an office budget, how to use the media in a strategic manner, and how to handle abuse, criticism and setbacks.

The Programme was held as part of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Regional activities and was part-funded by the CWP Regional Strengthening Funds from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Headquarters Secretariat.



Left: The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians from Fiji, Niue and Tonga met with the Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives, Rt Hon. Trevor Mallard, MP during the programme.

Images: New Zealand Parliament

# Parliamentary Report

NEWS AND LEGISLATION FROM COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTS



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With thanks to our Parliamentary Report and Third Reading contributors: Stephen Boyd (Federal Parliament of Australia); Ravindra Garimella (Parliament of India); Dr Jayadev Sahu (Parliament of India); Erin Virgint (Federal Parliament of Canada); Luke Harris (Parliament of New Zealand); Ayeesha Waller (Parliament of the United Kingdom); Lisa Hill (British Columbia Legislative Assembly); André Grenier (National Assembly of Québec); Neil Iddawala (Parliament of Sri Lanka).



THIRD READING: BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament, three legislative initiatives were adopted which will have a significant impact on British Columbia's electoral landscape.

Election Amendment Act, 2017

Introduced on 18 September 2017, the *Election Amendment Act 2017* makes changes to provincial electoral financing rules, as well as the provisions governing third party advertisers during electoral campaigns.

During his introductory remarks, **Hon. David Eby, QC**, Attorney General, stated that the legislation will fulfill a key commitment made during the May 2017 provincial general election to ban union and corporate political contributions, and will restrict individual contributions to \$1,200 annually.

The legislation will establish a transitional annual allowance for political parties receiving over two percent of the provincial vote, or at least five percent of the total number of votes in electoral districts where they ran candidates in the previous provincial general election. The per vote allowance for 2018 will be set at \$2.50 per vote and will decrease to \$1.75 per vote by 2022. Provisions in the Act require a Special Committee of the Legislative Assembly to conduct a review of the allowance and within six months of being appointed, submit a report to the Legislative Assembly with recommendations regarding whether or not the allowance should be continued after 2022, and if so, at what rate and for how long.

The legislation will also institute a separate individual limit of \$1,200 for contestants in party leadership races, and will restrict contributions to third party election advertisers in a manner similar to the restrictions on political contributions.

**Andrew Wilkinson, MLA**, Opposition Critic for Attorney General at the time, voiced his party's support for the provisions of the legislation banning union and corporate political contributions, and for reforming campaign financing rules. However, he expressed concerns that the public financing of electoral campaigns could place a new burden on taxpayers who had not been consulted about this initiative. He noted that the proposed allowance could constrain the entry of new political parties, and indicated that third party advertising limits should be broadened to include direct mail, public polling, and the dissemination of poll results. Mr. Wilkinson argued that reducing the threshold to "untenable levels" would serve to "encourage a proliferation of marginal parties at the taxpayer's expense."

During Committee of the Whole consideration, **Adam Olsen, MLA**, representing the Third Party, proposed an amendment to lower the threshold that parties must meet in order to qualify to receive a reimbursement of allowable election expenses for individual candidates - from 10 percent to 5 percent of the total number of valid votes cast in the most recent provincial general election. The amendment was ruled out of order in the hands of a private Member as, if adopted, it would impose an additional charge on the public revenues as more political parties could qualify for reimbursement of election expenses. The Chair noted that the same amendment moved by a Minister of the Crown would be in order.

The Attorney General immediately re-introduced the amendment as proposed by Mr Olsen, which was adopted on division. The Election Amendment Act 2017 received Third Reading on 22 November 2017.

Electoral Reform Referendum 2018 Act

The *Electoral Reform Referendum 2018 Act* was introduced on 4 October 2017 and provides a framework for a provincial referendum on the provincial electoral voting system and potential changes to the current 'first-past-the-post' voting system to some form of proportional representation. The legislation fulfills a promise made by the BC NDP Party during the 2017 provincial election campaign regarding electoral reform and establishes a threshold of fifty percent plus one in order for the result to be binding on government. Section 2 of the Act requires that a referendum must be held before 30 November 2018, and Section 5 stipulates that the referendum will be held by mail-in ballot.

In his introductory comments, **Hon. David Eby, QC**, Attorney General, advised that if a new voting system is approved, government would be required to take steps to implement the new system in time for the 2021 provincial general election.

During the Second Reading debate, **John Martin, MLA**, representing the Official Opposition, raised concerns about the government's power to determine the wording of the referendum question(s) though Cabinet deliberations, based on information collected through a public consultation process. He also indicated that the proposed use of mail-in votes for the referendum could restrict participation compared with processes involving the use of more modern technologies. Mr Martin and many of the Official Opposition Members also

noted that the proposed threshold of fifty percent plus one was significantly lower than the sixty percent threshold level in previous referendums.

Speaking to concerns raised by the Official Opposition that the process might proceed too quickly for British Columbians to make an informed decision, **John Rustad, MLA** moved an amendment to the Bill during the Second Reading debate that the Bill be delayed for six months. The amendment was negated on division.

**Dr Andrew Weaver, MLA**, Leader of the Third Party, supported the legislation, stating that "the whole purpose of proportional representation is to not create artificial coalitions but to allow society to be reflected in terms of the makeup of the people who represent them in government."

The Electoral Reform Referendum 2018 Act received Third Reading on 30 November 2017.

Local Elections Campaign Financing Amendment Act, 2017

**Hon. Selina Robinson**, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, introduced the *Local Elections Campaign Financing Amendment Act, 2017* on 30 October 2017. The legislation follows provisions in the above-noted Election Amendment Act 2017 by proposing a ban on corporate and union local election donations, limits on individual contributions, and restrictions on third party advertising. In her introductory comments, the Minister noted that the Bill will serve to level the playing field for local candidates in BC and follows up on resolutions endorsed by the Union of BC Municipalities to ban union and corporate local election donations, and establish campaign contribution limits. The government's objective was to have such reforms to local election campaign financing in place for the fall 2018 general local elections.

During debate proceedings, **Todd Stone, MLA**, Opposition Critic for Municipal Affairs, noted that the Official Opposition supported the goal of a ban on union and corporate contributions. However, he raised concerns in relation to the lack of retroactivity within the legislation, as well as potential loopholes for third party organisations. The Member also expressed his caucus concerns regarding the \$1,200 maximum individual contribution limit, which could result in local candidates having to provide campaign financing from their own personal contributions.

The Local Elections Campaign Financing Amendment Act, 2017 received Third Reading on 23 November 2017.

Between September and December 2017, the National Assembly of Québec passed 17 government public Bills (9 unanimously).

Higher Education (sexual violence)

On 8 December 2017, the National Assembly passed *Bill 151, An Act to prevent and fight sexual violence in higher education institutions*. Before the Bill was passed, five days of reflection had been held on the subject in early 2017 and a government strategy had been tabled in August.

The Act applies to universities, colleges (general and vocational) and the other institutions specified therein, such as the Conservatoire de musique et d'art dramatique and École nationale de police. The institutions subject to the Act must adopt a policy to prevent and fight sexual violence before 1 January 2019.

Section 1 of the Act defines sexual violence as follows: "In this Act, the concept of sexual violence refers to any form of violence committed through sexual practices or by targeting sexuality, including sexual assault. It also refers to any other misconduct, including that relating to sexual and gender diversity, in such forms as unwanted direct or indirect gestures, comments, behaviours or attitudes with sexual connotations, including by a technological means."

The institutions' policies must set out rules for students' social activities and activities for welcoming new students (commonly known as 'initiation'); include a code of conduct specifying the rules that a person who is in a teaching relationship with or a relationship of authority over a student must comply with if the person has an intimate relationship with the student; provide for a complaint procedure and procedure for reporting incidents; and offer support services.

Consumer Protection

The National Assembly passed *Bill 134, An Act mainly to modernize rules relating to consumer credit and to regulate debt settlement service contracts, high-cost credit contracts and loyalty programs*, which amends consumer protection legislation, particularly with regard to credit.

The first version of the Consumer Protection Act dates back to 1971. *Bill 134* incorporates certain guidelines from *Bill 24*, which was tabled in 2011 but lapsed in 2012 when the House was dissolved.

**Lise Thériault**, Minister responsible for

THIRD READING: QUÉBEC, CANADA

Consumer Protection and for Housing, through Bill 134, said that the Government wishes to address commercial practices that contribute to many consumers' financial distress. Statistics mentioned by **Catherine Fournier**, Member for Marie-Victorin and Official Opposition critic, show that household debt in Québec grew 129% between 1999 and 2012. Other data reveal that cases of personal insolvency increased from 10,579 in 1987 to 43,701 in 2015.

The Act includes some 50 different measures addressing, among other things, 'high-cost credit', a new category of contract whose terms and conditions will be determined by government regulation.

The Act also introduces a protection regime relating to debt settlement service contracts, which prohibits debt settlement merchants from claiming charges before having obtained from a creditor a debt settlement offer that has been accepted by the consumer and before a payment has been made for the benefit of a creditor.

The Act requires certain merchants to assess the consumer's capacity to repay the credit requested or to perform the obligations arising from a long-term contract of lease of goods. Further, the rules applicable to open credit contracts (credit cards, lines of credit and accounts with merchants)<sup>1</sup> have been modernized. With regard to credit card use, the Act stipulates that 2% of the amount owing must be paid on a monthly basis for one year. This rate will then be increased by half a point every year until it reaches 5%.

Other rules seek to regulate advertising practices. Among other things, they prohibit using pictures that are not accurate depictions of the goods or services actually offered. Finally, the Act prohibits companies that offer consumer loyalty programs from providing that exchange units, points or other benefits granted to a consumer expire on a set date or after a certain lapse of time.

Health and Social Services (prescription drug prices)

On 23 November 2017, the National Assembly passed Bill 148, An Act to regulate generic medication procurement by owner pharmacists and to amend various legislative provisions.

During debate on the Bill's principle, the Minister of Health and Social Services, **Gaétan Barrette**, recalled the importance of the public debates that took place within Québec

society regarding the prices consumers pay for prescription drugs. Many felt that prices in Québec and throughout Canada are far too high, particularly compared to European countries. Numerous experts shared this opinion.

The Minister pointed out that the new measure aims to give small generic drug manufacturers reasonable market access and to prevent the development of monopolies. More specifically, the legislation will prohibit the owners of one or more pharmacies from buying more than 50% of the monetary value of all the generic drugs they purchase in a given year from a same manufacturer.

The Act complements two other pieces of legislation passed in 2016.<sup>2</sup> The first allows the Minister of Health and Social Services to issue calls for tenders to enter into exclusive supply contracts with generic drug manufacturers for the purposes of the Public Prescription Drug Insurance Plan.<sup>3</sup>

The second grants the *Régie de l'assurance-maladie du Québec* (RAMQ) the power to appoint inspectors authorized to investigate and inspect premises where health professionals, drug manufacturers and wholesalers carry out their activities. These different pieces of health field-related legislation had been unanimously passed by the National Assembly.

Legalisation of recreational cannabis

In April 2017, two Bills to legalize the recreational use of cannabis were tabled in the Canadian Federal Parliament. This action at the federal level impacted provincial jurisdictions. Among





other things, the provinces will be responsible for regulating and supervising cannabis distribution and marketing. This led to the Minister for Rehabilitation, Youth Protection, Public Health and Healthy Living, Lucie Charlebois, to introduce Bill 157, An Act to constitute the Société québécoise du cannabis, to enact the Cannabis Regulation Act and to amend various highway safety-related provisions, in the National Assembly on 16 November 2017.

The Committee on Health and Social Services then held special consultations and public hearings on the Bill in December 2017 and again in early January 2018. Examination of Bill 157 will continue during the winter/spring session of parliamentary proceedings. In principle, the legalization of cannabis under federal legislation is scheduled for 1 July 2018.

References

<sup>1</sup> In an open credit contract, a merchant may increase the membership or renewal fees or the credit rate without entering into a new contract. He or she must, however, send the consumer a notice to that effect at least 30 days before the date the increase becomes effective.

<sup>2</sup> The Act to reduce the cost of certain medications covered by the basic prescription drug insurance plan by allowing calls for tender, S.Q. 2016, c. 16 and the Act to extend the powers of the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec, regulate commercial practices relating to prescription drugs and protect access to voluntary termination of pregnancy services (modified title) S.Q. 2016, c. 28.

<sup>3</sup> This program offers coverage to persons who are not eligible for a private prescription drug insurance plan, persons aged 65 and over and last-resort financial assistance recipients.

Apology in the House of Commons

On 28 November 2017, Prime Minister, **Rt Hon. Justin Trudeau, MP** apologised in the House of Commons to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) members of Canada's military, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the public service who had suffered discrimination. Between the 1950s and the 1990s, the Canadian government fired or demoted thousands of federal employees due to their sexual orientation.

Conservative Party Leader, **Hon. Andrew Scheer, MP**, and the New Democratic Party's (NDP) Parliamentary Leader in the House of Commons, **Guy Caron, MP**, also condemned these discriminatory practices.

Along with the apology, the government introduced *Bill C-66, the Expungement of Historically Unjust Convictions Act*, which would allow people convicted of historical same-sex offences to have their criminal records expunged. The Bill would also permit spouses, parents, siblings, children or legal representatives to apply for record expungement on behalf of deceased persons.

Historic secret ballot vote in the House of Commons

On 30 November 2017, for the first time in the Parliament of Canada's history, MPs voted in a secret ballot to overturn or uphold a Committee ruling. Until this vote, secret balloting had only been used in the House of Commons to elect a Speaker.

Earlier in November, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs deemed that a Private Member's Bill on shipwrecked vessels that was introduced by NDP Member, **Sheila Malcolmson, MP**, was '*non-votable*' because the government had introduced

similar legislation. Ms Malcolmson appealed the Committee's decision to the House of Commons Speaker, **Hon. Geoff Regan, MP**. The Speaker invoked the never-before-used rule allowing MPs to appeal to the entire House of Commons in a secret ballot. The vote ran over two days and MPs voted in private, as opposed to the typical standing votes in the House. Ultimately, the House of Commons sided with the Committee, deeming Ms Malcolmson's Bill '*non-votable*'.

Legislation

Recently, a number of Bills have received royal assent, including:

- Private Member's Bill, *Bill C-210, An Act to amend the National Anthem Act (gender)*, alters Canada's national anthem '*O Canada*' by replacing the verse '*in all thy sons command*' with '*in all of us command*', to achieve gender-neutral language. The Bill was introduced in January 2016 by the late Liberal, **Hon. Mauril Bélanger, MP**, who died in September 2016. The Bill received Royal Assent on 7 February 2018.

- *Bill C-36, An Act to amend the Statistics Act*, which strengthens the independence and powers of the Chief Statistician, establishes the Canadian Statistics Advisory Council, and removes imprisonment as a penalty for individuals who do not respond to Statistics Canada's requests or who provide false information.

- *Bill C-17, An Act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* repeals a number of provisions established by the previous government regarding the Yukon's environmental assessment process.

- *Bill C-61, An Act to give effect to the Anishinabek Nation*

*Education Agreement*, which gives effect to an agreement made between the Government of Canada and 23 Anishinabek Nation First Nations on education.

Furthermore, a number of Bills have also recently been introduced by the government, including:

- On 7 November 2017, the government introduced *Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (harassment and violence)*, the *Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act* and the *Budget Implementation Act, 2017*. This Bill would implement new rules and processes for dealing with harassment, sexual harassment and bullying in federally regulated workplaces. If passed, these rules will apply to Parliamentarians and their staff. On 29 January 2018, newly appointed NDP House Leader, **Ruth Ellen Brosseau, MP**, sought and received unanimous consent to have the Bill fast-tracked from Second Reading debate to Committee.

- On 8 February 2018, the government introduced *Bill C-69, An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act*, to amend the *Navigation Protection Act* and to make consequential amendments to other Acts. This Bill would make major changes to the approval process for major natural resources projects, replace the National Energy Board with the Canadian Energy Regulator (a body that would regulate pipelines) and empower a new body, the Impact Assessment Agency, to conduct more extensive consultation with groups affected by development.

- On 2 February 2018, the government introduced *Bill C-68*, which would make significant amendments to federal fisheries legislation, including a ban the

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capture of cetaceans (marine mammals such as whales, dolphins and porpoises).

House Committee Hearings and Reports

Prior to the return of the House in late January, the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics held a meeting to study the report of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner entitled '*The Trudeau Report*'. During this meeting, **former Ethics Commissioner, Mary Dawson** discussed her finding that Prime Minister Trudeau breached four sections of the Conflict of Interest Act when he accepted a free family vacation to the Aga Khan's private island in the Bahamas in December 2016.

During December 2017 and early February 2018, a number of reports were tabled by House Committees, including:

- Taking action against systemic racism and religious discrimination including Islamophobia (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage)
- Moving the Relationship Forward: NAFTA Modernization and North American Trilateral

- Cooperation (Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development)
  - Comparative Study of Services to Veterans in Other Jurisdictions (Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs)
  - Building an Inclusive Canada: Bringing the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in Step with Modern Values (Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration)
  - Preserving Canada's Heritage : the Foundation for Tomorrow (Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development)

The Senate

On 4 December 2017, Prime Minister, **Rt Hon. Justin Trudeau, MP** announced the appointment of two Senators based on the advice of the Independent Advisory Board on Senate Appointments to fill vacancies in Manitoba and Nova Scotia. The new Senators are:

- **Hon. Mary Coyle**, a long-serving advocate for women's leadership, gender equality and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- **Hon. Mary Jane McCallum**, a long-time provider of dental and health services to northern,

First Nations and Indigenous communities.

On 2 February, Liberal Senator **Hon. Colin Kenny**, who served for 34 years, Liberal Senator **Hon. Joan Fraser**, who served for 19 years, and Liberal Senator **Hon. Claudette Tardiff**, who served for 12 years, all retired from the upper chamber.

As of 8 February 2018, the standings in the Senate were: Independent Senators Group 41; Conservative Party 33; Liberal Party 12; non-affiliated 5; vacancies 14. Currently, 45% of Senators are women.

Changes to the Ministry

On 25 January 2018, **Hon. Kent Hehr, MP**, the Minister for Sports and Persons with Disabilities, resigned from the Cabinet pending an investigation into allegations that he made sexually inappropriate comments to women during his time as a Member of the Alberta Legislature. During his leave of absence, his ministerial duties will be performed by **Hon. Kirsty Duncan, MP**, who will serve as Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, in addition to being Minister of Science.

Other changes to the House of Commons

On 11 December 2017, four federal by-elections were held. Liberal **Churence Rogers, MP**, won the Newfoundland riding of Bonavista-Burin-Trinity; Liberal **Jean Yip, MP**, won the Ontario riding of Scarborough-Agincourt, a riding left vacant by her husband, the late **Arnold Chan**, who died in September 2017; Conservative **Rosemary Falk, MP**, won the Saskatchewan riding of Battlefords-Lloydminster, and Liberal **Gordie Hogg, MP**, won the British Columbia riding of South Surrey-White Rock.

As of 8 February 2018, the standings in the House of Commons were: 183 Liberal, 97 Conservative, 44 New Democratic, 10 Bloc Québécois, 1 Green, 2 Independent and 1 vacant. Currently, 91 or 26.9% of MPs are women.

Supreme Court Appointments

On 18 December 2017, **Hon. Sheilah L. Martin** was appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada. This appointment is the second under the Government of Canada's new Supreme Court selection process, in which an independent and non-partisan Advisory Board identifies suitable candidates for Supreme Court Justices. This nomination fills the vacancy left by the retirement of Chief Justice **Beverley McLachlin** on 15 December 2017. To replace her, **Rt Hon. Richard Wagner**, who has served on the Supreme Court since 2012, was appointed Chief Justice.



52<sup>ND</sup> NEW ZEALAND PARLIAMENT OPENS

New Zealand's general election was held on 23 September 2017, with the official results published on 7 October. Although the previously governing National Party won the most seats (56), it was unable to find support from another party to obtain the confidence of the 120-seat House of Representatives. This was the first occasion, since New Zealand adopted its MMP (Mixed Member Proportional) electoral system in 1996, that the party with the most support at the election did not form the government. Instead, after approximately two weeks of negotiations, the Labour Party (46 seats) and New Zealand First (9) signed a coalition agreement and provided the Cabinet, with the support of the Green Party (8) on confidence and supply.

The appointment of three Green Party members as Ministers outside Cabinet was a first for that party, as none of its Members had previously joined the Executive. Only one other party, ACT New Zealand (1 seat), returned to the House – the total of five parties being the smallest number of parties in the House since 1994.

The 52<sup>nd</sup> Parliament met on Tuesday 7 November for Members to be sworn in and to elect the Speaker. **Hon. Trevor Mallard, MP** (Labour), Assistant Speaker in the 51<sup>st</sup> Parliament, was declared elected unopposed as Speaker of the House of Representatives. The following day, the Governor-General, **Her Excellency Dame Patsy Reddy, DNZM**, delivered the Speech from the Throne at the State Opening in the Legislative Council Chamber, outlining the government's policy commitments and legislative intentions for the



52<sup>nd</sup> Parliament. On resuming, the House appointed **Hon. Anne Tolley, MP** (National) as Deputy Speaker, and **Ms Poto Williams, MP** (Labour) and **Mr Adrian Rurawhe, MP** (Labour) as Assistant Speakers.

As is usual, two new government Members moved and seconded the motion that a respectful address be presented to the Governor-General in reply to her speech. **Mr Tamati Coffey, MP** (Labour), who unseated former Māori Party Co-Leader, **Hon. Te Ururoa Flavell** from the Māori electorate of Waiariki, moved the motion, which was then seconded by **Ms Jo Luxton, MP** (Labour).

Former Prime Minister, now Leader of the Opposition, **Rt Hon. Bill English, MP** (National) congratulated the new Prime Minister, **Rt Hon. Jacinda Ardern, MP** (Labour), and the new Deputy Prime Minister, **Rt Hon. Winston Peters, MP** (NZ First), on “forming a unique MMP Government with the consequence of a unique MMP Opposition.” He told the new Government that “good intentions aren’t enough” and that the Opposition would hold

it to account on “maintaining the strength and vigour and resilience of the New Zealand economy.” He moved an amendment to the Address in Reply motion that included the statement that the government would be “held to account for its progress based on improvements it delivers for New Zealanders beyond the impressive achievements of New Zealand in the last decade.”

In reply, the new Prime Minister, **Rt Hon. Jacinda Ardern, MP** signalled a fresh start for the country: “It’s a new beginning for everyone who hopes to own a home of their own. It’s a new beginning for our children. It’s a new beginning for our education system and for our health system and for our environment. And on this side of the House, it’s a new beginning for a coalition Government.”

She proposed that “New Zealand needs to measure success differently. We need to move beyond narrow measures and the views of value, and broaden the scope and definition of progress. Our economic strategy will focus on how we improve the well-being

and living standards of all New Zealanders. This Government will develop a comprehensive set of environmental, social, and economic sustainability indicators to better show how we are going as a country. It will be world leading, and it will make us a Government of transformation.”

**Hon. Ron Mark, MP** (Deputy Leader, New Zealand First) explained his party’s reason for choosing to enter into coalition with the Labour Party: “New Zealand First voters signalled that they had had enough. We here in New Zealand First heard their message. It informed our subsequent negotiations, and then our decision to enter into a coalition with the New Zealand Labour Party.”

**Hon. James Shaw, MP** (Co-Leader, Green Party) stressed his party’s goals as part of the new Government: “We are here to support families and to lift children out of poverty. We are here to save our rivers and our endangered species. We are here to solve problems that the market cannot, and the first and the greatest of those is climate change.”

Christ Church Cathedral Reinstatement Bill

The *Christ Church Cathedral Reinstatement Bill* passed into law on 21 December 2017 after receiving unanimous support in Parliament. The Bill seeks to facilitate a fast-tracked reinstatement of the Christ Church Cathedral, which was badly damaged in an earthquake in February 2011, and includes an instruction to the Minister to appoint a Christ Church Cathedral Reinstatement Review Panel to oversee the reinstatement project.

The Minister in charge of the Bill, **Dr Megan Woods, MP** (Labour), stated in her Third Reading speech that “We are recognising the cathedral’s contribution to the cultural, social, and economic well-being of our city. It’s important to Christchurch’s regeneration and, importantly, its heritage value.” Dr Woods also mentioned that, alongside the Bill, she was in the process of setting up a trust that will raise funds for, and help to deliver, the reinstatement project.

**Hon. Nicky Wagner, MP** (National) noted that “even though there’s been so much debate over the future of this building, even though lots of people had different ideas and not everybody supported a reinstatement, everybody has got to the stage that we need a decision, we need to go forward, and we now have a decision in place.” Ms Wagner also commented on the building’s wider significance, noting that “it’s not only a church, but also a community facility, and also a very important part of our tourism industry.”

**Mr Mark Patterson, MP** (NZ First) echoed this sentiment when speaking of submitters’ concerns about the commitment of Government funding to the rebuilding of a privately owned religious institution, stating that “This is not just a church. This is a significant and historic building that is intrinsically linked to the city of Christchurch, and anything less than a reinstatement would not have done.”

**Hon. Eugenie Sage, MP** (Green) mentioned that “This Bill, as others have mentioned, does override other legislation with these powers that the Minister has to recommend Orders in Council, but the Green Party is satisfied that there are sufficient checks and balances on that power.”

However, **Hon. Dr Nick Smith, MP** (National) pointed out that “I sat in this Parliament and heard my colleague Gerry Brownlee accused

of being a Henry VIII, accused of all sorts of sins for identical law, actually, under far more pressing circumstances in the immediate recovery of Christchurch and Canterbury.”

Mr Patterson, meanwhile, commented on the Bill’s bipartisan success, noting that “I think what we have seen is the House working at its best, with a degree of purpose and solidarity around this, and it was this signal that we needed to send to the people of Christchurch from this House.”

**Ms Deborah Russell, MP** (Labour) reminisced about her first visit to the cathedral, noting that “there was a plaque on the wall there with those words that we all know now: he tangata, he tangata, he tangata. [It is people, it is people, it is people.] ... I hope that in years to come, when I visit that cathedral again as it is reinstated, I hope to see that plaque again with those words about the people – the people that it is all about.”

**Families Package (Income Tax and Benefits) Bill**

The *Families Package (Income Tax and Benefits) Bill*, a core piece of legislation arising from the new coalition Government’s 100-day plan to bring New Zealand children out of poverty, passed into law following an urgent sitting of Parliament on 14 December 2017. The new Act forms a Families Package that contains measures to boost the incomes of low- and middle-income families by increasing the Family Tax Credit, by introducing a Best Start payment to help families with the costs incurred during a child’s early years of life, by introducing a Winter Energy Payment to help both older New Zealanders and many of our poorest families to heat their homes, and by increasing paid parental leave to 26 weeks.

In describing the Families Package, the Minister of Finance, **Hon. Grant Robertson, MP** (Labour) said, “it will make the lives of children and families in New Zealand better” and that “this Bill is ... about making sure that New Zealanders get a fair share of prosperity.” He said that the Treasury had looked at the package in detail and had forecast that the Bill would see “88,000 children lifted out of poverty, and ... 354,000 families benefiting by an average of \$75 per week.”

The Minister for Children, **Hon. Tracey Martin, MP** (NZ First) quoted comments



made by the Children’s Commissioner when expressing her parties support of the Bill: “Raising family incomes, enabling warmer homes, and providing additional assistance for the first year of a child’s life (targeted thereafter), will do a great deal to improve outcomes for our children. Income is fundamental to better outcomes for families ... ensuring all children have the opportunity to develop and thrive ... in New Zealand.”

However, Opposition Members of Parliament were critical of the Government’s decision to pass the Bill under urgency, with former Minister of Finance, **Hon. Steven Joyce, MP** (National) calling the Bill “messy, poorly designed, confused, rushed, and that’s the quality of this new Government’s law-making.” Mr Joyce said most New Zealanders “would not have been able to even make head or tail of it” and that the Opposition had “been able to show what a shonky piece of legislation it is.”

The Opposition also raised the issue that it had presented numerous amendments to the Bill, with former Speaker of the House, **Rt Hon. David Carter, MP** (National) stating, “There are many, many useful amendments that we offered in good faith to the Government” and that “they’ve all been voted down – not even considered by the Government for their merit in tidying up some very messy legislation.”

The Bill passed its Third Reading with 63 votes in favour and 43 votes against.



# DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER RESIGNS

## Deputy Prime Minister Joyce resigns following office affair with staffer

The Deputy Prime Minister, **Hon. Barnaby Joyce, MP**, has been involved in a sex scandal which has created a crisis for himself and the Liberal/ National Coalition Government. In February, it was reported that Mr Joyce had left his wife of 24 years and his four daughters for his former staffer, Ms Vikki Campion, who is expecting his baby. The Opposition was initially reluctant to scrutinise this noting that it was a personal matter. Parliamentarians are often cautious about these issues for fear of tit-for-tat reprisals.

Media scrutiny of Mr Joyce, however, raised questions about his use of public resources and his capacity to perform his role as Deputy Prime Minister. For example, Ms Campion was moved from Mr Joyce's office and found a job in the office of National Party Minister, **Senator Hon. Matt Canavan**. When Senator Canavan stood down because there were concerns that he might be a dual citizen, Ms Campion was transferred to the office of another Nationals Member, **Mr Damian Drum, MP**. When the Treasurer, **Hon. Scott Morrison, MP**, was interviewed about the validity of these staff placements within the National Party he was asked who was authorised to check these movements. Mr Morrison, a Liberal Member, confirmed that it was Mr Joyce as Leader of the National Party who was responsible.

Further questions were raised about Mr Joyce's unusual high claim of 50 nights travel allowance in Canberra when Parliament was not sitting. The figure reported was well

in excess of other Ministers. But of more concern for Mr Joyce was confirmation that after his separation from his wife he received more than six months free accommodation from a local businessman, Mr Greg Maguire. The Opposition scrutinised this matter heavily during Question Time.

The Shadow Attorney-General, **Hon. Mark Dreyfus, QC, MP**, in a question to Mr Joyce stated, "four times the Deputy Prime Minister told the Parliament that he did not approach Mr Greg Maguire to ask him for a place to stay. Since then, the Daily Telegraph and The Australian have both publicly confirmed that Mr Maguire told them it was the Deputy Prime Minister who phoned Mr Maguire. Has the Deputy Prime Minister already misled the Parliament four times today, in breach of the Ministerial Standards?"

Mr Joyce responded that "Mr Maguire approached me. He made an offer. I offered to pay for it. He said that I didn't have to worry about it, because I was a mate." In a subsequent question, Mr Dreyfus asked Mr Joyce, "answers to questions on notice from Senate estimates make clear that an agency under the Deputy Prime Minister's administration made a payment of more than \$5,000 of taxpayers' money to a business owned by the Deputy Prime Minister's close friend, Mr Greg Maguire. Is it the position of the Deputy Prime Minister that he was unaware of this payment?" Mr Joyce admitted that he was unaware of the payment.

The Leader of the Opposition, **Hon. Bill Shorten, MP**, asked the Prime Minister, **Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, MP**, a question stating that "all

this week the Prime Minister has expressed confidence in the Deputy Prime Minister. Given it's been confirmed this week that the Deputy Prime Minister personally oversaw the reallocation of staff where he had a conflict of interest, breached the Ministerial Standards by asking for rent-free accommodation, repeatedly misled the House and allowed agencies to use taxpayers' money to pay his close business mate, when will the Prime Minister do as is required under his own Ministerial Standards and sack the Deputy Prime Minister."

Mr Turnbull responded that "Honourable Members have heard the comments of the Leader of the House. In terms of the Ministerial Standards, I have received absolutely unequivocal assurances from the Deputy Prime Minister that he has fully complied with all parliamentary disclosure requirements and with the Statement of Ministerial Standards. He has given me unequivocal assurances that he has been scrupulous in ensuring the legitimacy and accuracy of any claim for entitlement to ministerial, parliamentary or travel allowance. If the Honourable Members opposite wish to assert that he has breached a clause in the Ministerial Standards then they should identify the clause."

The crisis caused tension between the Liberal and National Party Members. The Leader of the Opposition had challenged Mr Turnbull to sack Mr Joyce but under the Coalition arrangement this was not possible. The National Party elects its leader and that person becomes Deputy Prime Minister so only the parliamentary National Party can remove Mr Joyce.

More questions about Mr Joyce's suitability to perform his role were raised about his suitability as Acting Prime Minister when Mr Turnbull was scheduled to leave the country during the week commencing 19 February. During Parliament on 15 February Mr Turnbull advised that "the Deputy Prime Minister will be taking leave from Monday 19 February to Sunday 25 February. Accordingly, he will not be able to be Acting Prime Minister while I'm overseas on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday of next week."

Tension between the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister reached a tipping point when Mr Turnbull was scathing in his criticism of Mr Joyce and stated that his actions were the result of a "shocking error of judgement." While Mr Joyce had not breached the Ministerial Standards as they were drafted at that time, Mr Turnbull stated that "I think we know that the real issue is the terrible hurt and humiliation that Barnaby by his conduct, has visited on his wife, Natalie and their daughters and indeed, his new partner. Barnaby made a shocking error of judgement in having an affair with a young woman working in his office. In doing so, he has set off a world of woe for those women and appalled all of us. Our hearts go out to them. It has been a dreadful thing for them to go through in the glare of publicity. Marriage break-ups are dreadful, but to do it, to have to experience it in the full glare of the spotlight, is a dreadful business. Now, Barnaby knows he made that shocking error of judgement. He knows that he let down his wife and daughters and he has apologised for that and to them. He is taking leave next week and I have encouraged him to

take that leave. I think that he needs that leave. He needs that time to reflect. He needs that time to seek forgiveness and understanding from his wife and girls. He needs to make a new home for his partner and their baby, who is coming in April."

Mr Joyce was not amused. He criticised the Prime Minister for being "inept" and making matters worse with his comments. Members of the Nationals were incensed because they interpreted Mr Turnbull's condemnation as an attempt to remove the Deputy Prime Minister. The Leader of the Opposition claimed that it was "open warfare" between the Prime Minister and his Deputy. The next day, Mr Turnbull and Mr Joyce met privately and indicated that they could work together but the Prime Minister did not apologise for his comments.

Mr Joyce was under growing pressure to resign as Deputy Prime Minister. He initially took a defiant position and refused to do so. On 22 February, it was reported that a sexual harassment complaint had been lodged against Mr Joyce by a West Australian woman. Mr Joyce responded that it was "spurious and defamatory." The Western Australian branch of the National Party called on Mr Joyce to resign. A backbench National Party Member, Mr Andrew Broad, MP, made a public statement that Mr Joyce should quit. The pressure was mounting.

On 23 February, Mr Joyce fronted the media and indicated that he would step down as Leader of the National Party and consequently Deputy Prime Minister. He noted that the mounting pressure, constant media attention on his family and new partner, and the recent complaint against him made it impractical for him to continue. Mr Joyce concluded that he would go to the backbenches

and continue as the Member for New England.

## McCormack becomes new Deputy Prime Minister

On 26 February, **Hon. Michael McCormack, MP**, was elected as the new Leader of the National Party and was consequently appointed as the Deputy Prime Minister replacing the failed Barnaby Joyce. In a surprise leadership election the outspoken backbencher, **Mr George Christensen, MP**, was also nominated.

Mr McCormack is 53 and holds the regional seat of Riverina in southern New South Wales. Some of the towns in the electorate include Cootamundra, Cowra, Forbes, Wagga Wagga, and Young.

The Prime Minister, **Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, MP**, commented that "I'm delighted to welcome the appointment of Michael McCormack as the new Leader of the National Party and Deputy Prime Minister. Michael McCormack is a strong advocate for rural Australia. He will continue his party's long tradition of standing up for farmers and all those living in regional Australia. The Liberal Party has been in coalition with the Nationals for more than seventy years and our enduring and successful political partnership will continue under Michael's leadership of the National Party. I congratulate Michael McCormack on his appointment and I look forward to working closely with him and the entire Coalition team in the interests of all Australians."

## Prime Minister bans sex between Ministers and their staff

As a result of the Barnaby Joyce scandal, the Prime Minister, **Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, MP**, changed the Ministerial Code of Conduct to rule out sex between Ministers and their



staff. Mr Turnbull emphasised the massive support that partners and children give and the sacrifices they make in supporting the political careers of Ministers. Mr Turnbull advised that the following words would be included: 'Ministers should be very conscious that their spouses and children sacrifice a great deal so they can carry on their political career. Their families deserve honour and respect. Ministers should also recognise that they must lead by example. Values should be lived.' In particular, Mr Turnbull indicated that the following requirement would be included: 'Ministers, regardless of whether they are married or single, must not engage in sexual relations with their staff. Doing so will constitute a breach of the standards.'

Mr Turnbull concluded that "I am not here to moralise, but we must recognise that whatever may have been acceptable, or to which a blind eye was turned in the past, today in 2018, it is not acceptable for a Minister to have a sexual relationship with somebody who works for them. It is a very bad workplace practice. Everybody knows that no good comes of it. Of course,

you know what attitudes in the corporate world and elsewhere are, to this kind of thing. So, it is about time that this change was made. Probably should have been made a long time ago. While I have inherited this ministerial code from other authors and other Prime Ministers, ultimately, it is my signature on it and mine alone. This is the standard that I will hold, from this day forth, all of my Ministers to."

Mr Turnbull's announcement caught many people by surprise. About a week earlier, Independent MP **Ms Cathy McGowan** also proposed that there be a ban on sex between Ministers and their staff but this was met with derision most notably by the Deputy Leader of the Liberals and Minister for Foreign Affairs, **Hon. Julie Bishop, MP**. Ms Bishop in response to Ms McGowan's proposal stated that "the Government has no business interfering into people's personal lives and we wouldn't want to cross the line, so moral police were able to dictate what happens between consenting adults."

At this stage it is not clear how the new sex ban in the code of conduct will be monitored and enforced.



**Australian Border Force Amendment  
(Protected Information) Act 2017**

The Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, **Hon. Peter Dutton, MP**, commented that the “Australian Border Force, supports a broad range of activities that are vital for the prosperity and security of our nation. Facilitation of international trade, the supply of skilled labour for our domestic economy, business relationships, revenue collection, law enforcement and national security outcomes, travel and tourism and community protection are all important elements in building a strong and cohesive society.”

Mr Dutton stated that “to carry out these functions, my department obtains information from individuals, industry, other sectors of government and foreign partners. Some of this information is highly sensitive and must be carefully managed. We must ensure that it is only used and disclosed for legitimate purposes.” The Minister advised that the amending legislation “clarifies the secrecy and disclosure provisions in the Australian Border Force Act 2015 (the ABF Act) to reflect the policy intent of those provisions.”

The Minister explained that “Part 6 of the ABF Act establishes these important secrecy and disclosure provisions, similar to provisions that were in place within the former Australian Customs and Border Protection Service and a range of other Commonwealth agencies. These protections prohibited the unauthorised making of a record or disclosure of information. Breach of these requirements is punishable by imprisonment for two years.” Mr Dutton noted that the Australian Border Force Amendment (Protected Information) Bill “will clarify part 6 and related provisions to reflect the original intent of the legislation, which is to prevent the unauthorised disclosure of information that could cause harm to the national or public interest.”

The Minister explained that “the aim of the measures in this Bill, therefore, is to ensure that Immigration and Border Protection information is provided with the necessary level of protection, in a targeted manner, but is also able to be disclosed when it is appropriate to do so.” The Minister noted that “as not all information obtained by my department requires protection, the definition of the information to be protected has been refined to include only certain kinds of information, such as that relating to: the security, defence and international relations of Australia; prevention, detection and investigation of offences; protection of public health and safety; or sensitive personal and commercial matters.”

During debate in the Senate, the Shadow Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, **Senator Hon. Kim Carr** indicated that Labor supported the legislation “because, in principle, we support transparency in the operations of the Department of Immigration and Border

*Protection and the Australian Border Force, and of course that should also extend to the contractors who provide services to them.” Senator Carr commented that the legislation “now before the Senate gives the Minister, not the Secretary, the power to prescribe additional protected information by legislative instrument. The instrument is subject to disallowance, as it was in the original form of the Bill. The amended Bill is a great improvement on the original because the power to prescribe protected information should not rest with an unelected public servant; it is properly exercised by the Minister, who can be held accountable by Parliament.”*

**Treasury Laws Amendment (Reducing  
Pressure on Housing Affordability  
Measures No. 1) Act 2017**

In Australia, home ownership is becoming more difficult particularly in Sydney and Melbourne. First homeowners are under increasing pressure as house prices, in some markets, are increasing at over 10% a year. The Assistant Minister to the Treasurer, **Hon. Michael Sukkar, MP**, commented that “Australians are entering the housing market later in life than previous generations and home ownership is falling out of reach for many younger Australians. With house prices high, difficulty saving a deposit is a key barrier to getting into the market.” Mr Sukkar noted that the measures in the Bill “will help Australians boost their savings for their first home by allowing them to build a deposit inside superannuation.”

In addition, Mr Sukkar advised that “older Australians will also be given greater flexibility to contribute the proceeds of the sale of their home into superannuation. This will help free up housing stock, in particular larger homes, for younger families by reducing barriers to older Australians downsizing form homes that no longer meet their needs.” From 1 July 2018, people aged 65 and older will be able to make an exempt non-concessional contribution of up to \$300,000 to their superannuation after selling their main residential home. The measure will apply to homes held for a minimum of 10 years, and both members of a couple may take advantage of it. That is, up to \$600,000 of contributions may be made by a couple upon downsizing.

The First Home Super Saver Scheme provides that from 1 July 2017, individuals can make voluntary contributions of up to \$15,000 per year and \$30,000 in total, to their superannuation account to purchase a first home. Mr Sukkar explained that “these contributions, along with generous deemed earnings, can be withdrawn for a deposit. Withdrawals will be taxed at marginal tax rates less a 30% offset and are allowed from 1 July 2018.”

Mr Sukkar commented that “for most people,

*the First Home Super Saver Scheme could boost the savings they can put towards a deposit by at least 30% compared with saving through a standard deposit account. This is due to the concessional tax treatment - the very generous concessional tax treatment - and the higher rate of earnings often realised within superannuation.”*

During debate in the Senate, **Senator Katy Gallagher** indicated that Labor would not oppose the legislation. However, Senator Gallagher commented that “whilst I’ve said we won’t oppose these Bills through the Parliament, we certainly don’t believe that these measures, in isolation of a broader housing response, will reduce the pressure on housing affordability that is needed, particularly in certain markets.” Senator Gallagher noted that “this government, which has now been in power for five years, has failed to have a Minister responsible for housing, has failed to have a housing strategy, has failed to renegotiate a national housing agreement and has failed in any way to respond to the genuine pressures that are affecting particularly those on lower incomes, those who are renting and those who are struggling to enter the housing market to deal with some of the distortions that we have seen in recent years.” Senator Gallagher noted that Labor’s approach to fixing housing affordability was to reform negative gearing and the capital gains tax discount. In Australia, investors can claim deductions against losses on their investments, such as real estate, against their other taxable income. In addition, if they sell an investment after holding it for more than 12 months they can claim a 50% capital gains tax concession.

**Senator Cory Bernardi**, Australian Conservatives, commented that “the Australian Conservatives can and will support schedule 2 in this Bill - that is, the downsizer super scheme for those aged 65 and over - but it cannot support schedule 1, the First Home Super Saver Scheme. The downsizer scheme will likely achieve its goals to some extent. It will likely reduce the barrier to downsizing for those aged 65 and over with a type of lock-in effect and free up family homes for younger people and growing families to buy, enabling better use of our housing stock. The First Home Super Scheme will achieve little, if anything at all. Its take-up will likely be small and by those quite sophisticated or savvy in finance, tax, super and fine print and who can probably afford a deposit anyway. Extra complexity is great for the elites. It’s great for financial advisers and their children but tends to ensure inequity. Complexity is often inequitable in the areas of finance, tax, super and regulation. Keeping rules simple and the number of schemes minimal is often the most equitable path to take.”

THIRD READING: AUSTRALIA

INCREASE IN WOMEN’S LOCAL REPRESENTATION IN SRI LANKA

**Hon. Faiszer Musthapha, MP**, Minister of Provincial Councils and Local Government presented this Bill to Parliament on 20 June 2017, the Second Reading in the Sri Lanka Parliament took place on 24 August 2017 and consideration of the Bill at the Committee of the Whole Parliament was held on 25 August 2017.

The purpose of the Bill was to bring amendments to rectify the technical issues that had arisen when the New Electoral System was introduced in 2012 by the *Local Authorities Elections (Amendment) Act No. 22, 2012* and to make provisions for the compulsory 30% youth representation in Local Authorities.

Through the Committee Stage Amendment, provisions were made for a 25% mandatory requirement of women’s representation for the constitution of local authority bodies and to prohibit public officers who engaged in field-based activities seeking nomination if they had not ceased to serve in the particular local authority, one year prior to the election.

The Minister of Provincial Councils and Local Government, at the Second Reading introduced the Bill and stated that the pith and substance of this Bill is to facilitate and conduct the Local Authorities Election in the New Electoral system, which was approved by the *Local Authorities Election (Amendment) Act, No. 22, 2012*. The New Electoral system was introduced to abolish the preferential voting system and to elect Members through a proportional representation and ward system.

He further stated that the present Government introduced female representation through the *Local Authorities Elections (Amendment) Act, No. 1, 2016* which was a very progressive move in the history of the

country, where women were given a quota of 25%. He also mentioned that the requests of Political Party Leaders were taken into consideration to increase the quota of proportional representation to 40% in order to facilitate the representation of all parties.

**Hon. Anura Kumara Disسانayake, MP**, Chief Opposition Whip stated that the main feature of the Bill was to change the preferential votes electoral system while safeguarding proportional representation. He also stated that unlike the previous preferential voting system, the new electoral system fulfills the aspirations of the people to have a Member for their constituency. He also pointed out the difficulties for the small parties in nominating women representatives, that the small parties are entitled to send one or two members to the local authorities and also suggested not to make it compulsory for small parties to nominate women Members.

**Hon. Ajith Perera, MP**, Deputy Minister of Power and Renewable Energy stated that there are various techniques used universally to increase women representation in legislatures. In Sri Lanka, women’s contributions in the legal, health, education and all other areas are commendable other than in the political field. Therefore, the proposal was to have minimum 25% women representation in local authorities. She said that due consideration would be given to the grievances of all small parties and minority communities and an increase in the ratio of proportional representation up to 40% would guarantee the representation of small parties in the local authorities.

**Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena, MP** stated that the new electoral system that gave priority to the ward system was introduced on the recommendation of the Special Committee on the Electoral System that was appointed by Parliament in 2002, subsequent to a Private Members’ Motion moved by him in 2002 to introduce a mixed electoral system. He pointed out the adverse side of the preferential voting system and requested that the government hold the elections for the local authorities very soon.

**Hon. Douglas Devananda, MP** appreciated the decision to make provisions for mandatory women’s representation in the local authorities and requested that the Minister to take appropriate steps to address the grievances of minority communities and to introduce multi member wards to maintain democracy.

**Hon. Rauff Hakeem, MP**, Minister of City Planning and Water Supply pointed out the major issues of the delimitation report and requested that the Minister give assurances and take action to rectify the anomalous situation by creating sufficient number of multi member wards to address the grievances of the minority parties.

**Hon. Lasantha Alagiyawanna, MP**, Deputy Minister of Finance and Mass Media stated that the Government wanted to rectify the shortcomings of the proportional representation system by way of introducing both a ward system and a proportional representation system together, which would help each constituency to elect their Members as per the choice of the people of the particular area. He further stated that the Amendment brought to the Local Government Elections Act

in 2012 had lot of issues that have been addressed in this new legislation by making provisions to elect 60% Members through the ward system and 40% through the proportional representation system.

**Hon. V.S. Radhakrishnan, MP**, State Minister of Education while appreciating the move to elect members by ward system and proportional representation system pointed out the shortcomings of not considering the issues of minority parties and minority communities. He also requested that the grievances of minority communities be addressed properly and make arrangements to increase their representation through the ward system.

**Hon. Dr Sudarshini Fernandopulle, MP**, State Minister of City Planning and Water Supply expressed her pleasure in the decision to making 25% women’s representation mandatory in the local authorities and stated that the women’s 30% representation in Parliament also need to be safeguarded. She also stated that the Women’s Caucus recommended that women’s representation need to be increased not only in local authorities but in all sectors including statutory bodies and provisions should be made in the Constitution in this regard.

Most of the Members spoke favourably for the new electoral system and for making provisions for women’s representation. Members also pointed out that the elections should not be delayed.

The Bill was passed by majority vote by conducting electronic voting as per the request made by Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena for a division. The Bill was endorsed by the Hon. Speaker on 31 August 2017 and came into effect on the same day.



# RESTORATION AND REFURBISHMENT AT THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER

In 1834 it was the tally sticks. Relics of a long defunct accounting method, they were deemed obsolete and ordered to be burnt in the furnaces beneath the Palace of Westminster. The intense heat set House of Lords chamber alight. Fire spread rapidly destroying almost all the ancient Palace of Westminster. The ‘new’ Palace created by Pugin and Barry rose in its place over the next thirty years. In the 50 years preceding the fire, MPs and experts had warned of the risks posed by the building’s design and the danger of a catastrophic fire spreading.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it will be the mechanical and electrical services – gas, steam pipes, drainage, sewage, electricity – that underlay, in many cases literally, the Palace. Crammed into the basements, Victorian steam pipes compete for space with 21<sup>st</sup> century data cables. The congestion of systems built on top of one another since the 1860s which have not been renewed since the 1940s and are at least forty years past their anticipated lifespan.

In 2016, a Joint Committee of seven MP and six Peers tasked with looking at the issue concluded that a “complete and sudden failure of [these

systems] – the kind that would require the Palace to be abandoned immediately - is a real possibility.”

They concluded that: “there is a clear and pressing need to tackle the work required to the Palace of Westminster and to do so in a comprehensive and strategic manner to prevent catastrophic failure in the next decade. We have also concluded that, in principle, a full decant of the Palace of Westminster presents the best option under which to deliver this work.”

In summary, in the mid-2020s, MPs and Peers would leave the Palace of Westminster and relocate to other buildings in the immediate vicinity of Parliament whilst the work to repair the Palace took place. The Committee set out a series of steps for how the full relocation, restoration, and renewal of Parliament should be set in motion. The first stage was the formal approval of both Houses to its recommendations and the setting up of a body to manage the project. The Committee set out a draft motion for both Houses to approve.

2016 and 2017 passed without the Government bringing forward the necessary motion. In January 2018, it put two alternative proposals to MPs. Neither implemented the Committee’s recommendations in full; both sought – in different ways – to delay the moment when Parliamentarians would need to make the decision on whether to relocate. In response to this the Chair of the influential Public Accounts Committee, Hon. Meg Hillier,

MP (Labour) put forward an amendment. The effect of this would be the full endorsement and implementation of the Joint Committee’s recommendations immediately: including agreement to the proposal that MPs and Peers move out of the Palace of Westminster for the duration of the work.

On 31 January 2018, the House of Commons debated the issue. Introducing the debate for the Government, the Leader of the House, Rt Hon. Andrea Leadsom, MP, stated that “this debate should have taken place about 40 years ago.” She emphasised “the need to be sure that we are acting in the right way, with the right planning and design capabilities in place. ... we have to be able to justify to our constituents and to taxpayers that we are doing what is necessary to safeguard the Palace of Westminster and that we have thoroughly examined the costs.”

The “eye watering” cost of the work also concerned Hon. Pete Wishart, MP (SNP): “Of all the things this House can do to endear itself to our constituents, spending billions of pounds on renovating our place of work is not one of them. In these days of austerity and tightening of belts, and with the impending economic disaster of Brexit coming our way, I would bet this would be near the bottom or at the very bottom of the public’s concerns.” The Scottish Nationalists demanded included that further consideration be given to the relocation of Parliament outside London for the duration of the works.



Images: copyright UK Parliament

Speaking against the Government, Hon. Chris Bryant, MP (Labour), a Member of the Joint Committee, accused the Government of wanting to kick the issues into the “very, very long grass” which would be an “utter dereliction of our duty” and be “degrading and national asset.” He was among many MPs who highlighted the risks to MPs, visitors and staff from the state of the building.

Meg Hillier, who proposed the amended motion endorsing immediate action argued: “We need to make a decision tonight about this building. ... This building is at risk unless we make a decision. Let us move forward and get the full costings and the full programme of works so that we can get on with the job.”

The Northern Ireland MP, Hon. Ian Paisley, MP (Democratic Unionist Party) admitted that he started a sceptic about the urgency of the work, but “the evidence led to one undoubtable and unalterable conclusion: in order for us to preserve a building that we love, a heritage that we cherish and a history that we are in charge of, we have to decant from this building,

refurbish it, restore it, renew it and revive it, and on that basis allow ourselves to have a new building for future generations.”

He concluded: “As Members of this House, when we enter each day we walk over stones that were laid by William the Conqueror’s descendants. We walk where Cromwell marched his army. We hear echoes around this building, the place where Wilberforce chanted the call for freedom. We pass through corridors where the smoke of Winston Churchill would have passed by. ... If we really love this building, as many say they do, we should be brave and urge... that we get on with this process expeditiously.”

The Government’s arguments did not succeed and MPs voted in favour of the proposal to press ahead with the full decant.

The following week the House of Lords debated the MPs’ decision. In the Upper House, the Leader of the House of Lords, Rt Hon. Baroness Evans of Bowes Park had “no hesitation in commending” MPs’ conclusions. She urged peers not to divert from the MPs’ decision. “This would mean

it was likely that no progress could be made until time was found for the [MPs] to debate this matter again and, in effect, reconsider the position that it agreed last week only after lengthy delays and a series of votes, and I am afraid that we would be no closer to making progress.”

Rt Hon. Lord Naseby sought to challenge the Commons conclusions “on the grounds of cost, timing and particularly the impact internally and externally.” However, Lord Naseby’s view was not the majority in the debate and eventually he withdrew his opposition.

A former Clerk of the House, Rt Hon. Lord Lisvane told of his “sleepless hours” when he was the legally responsible officer for parts of the estate. He painted a graphic picture of the risks: “A highly plausible scene might be on a hot summer’s evening, with both Houses sitting late to finish business before the Recess. One of the too many minor fires, which we are told occur each year, swiftly becomes a major fire and spreads rapidly because of the lack of completed fire compartmentation.

The electricity supply goes down completely. A huge demonstration which happens to be taking place in Parliament Square means that the emergency services cannot get to us quickly. There are hundreds of casualties and possibly fatalities. How do we feel about continuing to carry that risk for seven years or more?”

Rt Hon. Baroness Stowell of Beeston, Co-Chairman of the Joint Committee, emphasised “We are the custodians of something precious that belongs to everyone. We owe it to the public, whose building this is, to follow the route that is quickest, with the lowest cost and the lowest risk.” The House of Lords agreed to the motion without dividing.

These votes mean that the next phase of the restoration and renewal project begins. The project’s website suggests that is “thought to be the biggest and most complex renovation programme of any single building this country has known.”

For further information visit <https://restorationandrenewal.parliament.uk>.





On 29 January 2018, the first day of the first session of the year, the President of India, **Shri Ram Nath Kovind** addressed the Members of both Houses of Parliament assembled together in the Central Hall of Parliament House.

The endeavour of the government towards strengthening economic and social democracy is helping redefine our national life. These efforts are establishing a new social order in the country which provides equal opportunity to the poor to march ahead. The President said the government is committed to doubling the income of farmers by the year 2022, removing their difficulties and raising the living standard. He mentioned the *Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana* which provides farmers affordable and simple crop insurance services. Shri Kovind said more than 82% of villages have been connected by roads as compared to 56% in 2014 and the target is to provide road connectivity to every village by 2019. The government has a target of providing a house to every poor and homeless household by the year 2022. Broadband connectivity will be provided to 250,000 village Panchayats which will play a major role in taking e-health, e-education, e-governance and e-commerce to each village of the country.

The National Health Policy seeks to provide better and affordable healthcare facilities to the poor and middle class, besides promoting traditional methods of treatment, such as Yoga and Ayurveda. The government is committed to strengthening and modernising school and higher education systems. Members were informed about the government's efforts for the economic, social and educational empowerment of the minorities and the welfare of the backward communities. The President expressed the government's resolve to protect

the rights of Muslim women and expressed hope that the *Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2017* criminalizing triple talaq will be passed by Parliament soon. The Bill proposes to declare pronouncement of *talaq-e-biddat* by Muslim husbands void and illegal and a punishable offence. Shri Kovind said a sustained debate is required on the subject of simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies and all political parties need to arrive at a consensus on the issue. He said the government's fight against corruption is continuing and digital transactions are being promoted. *Aadhaar* (unique identity number) has helped secure the rights of the poor by eliminating middlemen and digital payments are being carried out in more than 400 schemes of the government. He said India is the youngest nation and the government has started Start-Up India, Stand-Up India, Skill India and *Pradhanmantri Mudra Yojana* to help the youth to realize their dreams and encourage self-employment. Shri Kovind congratulated the paramilitary, military and the police forces for the improvement in the internal security of the country.

Moving the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address on 6 February 2018, **Shri Rakesh Singh** (BJP) said common people have started debating the development and achievements of the government instead of scandals and corruption. He narrated the government's achievements in areas like sanitation, housing, power, insurance cover, medical facility and banking.

Seconding the motion, **Shri Pralhad Venkatesh Joshi** (BJP) said the government is working towards strengthening of economic democracy and social justice. Lauding the achievements of the government, he said India has become one of

the fastest growing economies in the world and the world is eager to hear its voice.

The leader of the INC in Lok Sabha, **Shri Mallikarjun Kharge** enumerated the various developments that took place during the Congress rule period in areas like agriculture, industry, space and atomic energy. He alleged that communal forces have raised their heads, while weaker sections are being harassed and freedom of speech curtailed. The non-performing assets of banks (NPAs) have increased and Aadhaar is being misused during the BJP rule. He asked the government to decriminalize triple talaq in the proposed law.

**Dr P. Venugopal** (AIADMK) supporting the motion said farmers are desperate, youths are not getting employment and the common man is in difficulty due to the rise in the prices of essential commodities. He requested the government to consider waiver of farmers' loans. **Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav** (SP) observed the protection and safety of minorities and women is more important than slogans like Swachh Bharat. The Bill on triple talaq presented in the House should be enacted but the haste shown suggests the motive to draw political mileage in the ensuing elections.

**Shri Kalyan Banerjee** (AITC) said the rosy picture shown in the President's Address is only for publicity. Demonetization failed to eradicate black money but led to loss of millions of jobs in the

informal sector of the economy. **Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab** (BJD) lamented that democracy is getting converted into a show of numerical strength. He objected to the central government decision unilaterally declaring 115 districts as most backward districts and sending central representatives to those districts to monitor development works.

**Shri Anandrao Adsul** (Shiv Sena) said demonetization has a negative effect on everyone's trade, be it small traders, industrialists, farmer or labourers. GST is good for the future but initially it has put negative effect on the economic conditions. **Shri B. Vinod Kumar** (TRS) enumerated the various developmental schemes started by the State government of Telengana.

**Shri Mohammad Salim** (CPI-M) said merely participating in the electoral process and the casting of votes does not make a democracy and economic and political freedom is a must. So many promises have been made by the government that people are beginning to doubt whether they will ever be fulfilled.

**Shri Thota Narasimham** (TDP) regretted that the President's Address does not mention the implementation of provisions of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014 which bifurcated Andhra Pradesh into two States. He requested the central government give a special economic package to Andhra Pradesh. **Shri Tariq Anwar** (NCP) said the ruling party has lost its



# PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO INDIA PARLIAMENT

credibility as the promises made in 2014 are yet to be fulfilled.

**Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia** (INC) said internal security, foreign policy and the economy are in shambles, government is unable to generate employment and an atmosphere of intolerance is prevailing all over the country.

**Dr Sanjay Jaiswal** (BJP), describing the 2018-19 Budget presented on 1 February 2018 as pro-growth said there has been a constant decrease in inflation, balance of payments, fiscal deficit and current account deficit since 2014. **Shri C. Mahendran** (AIADMK) believed inter-linking of rivers will solve inter-state water sharing disputes and the problem of drought. In the time of natural calamities, agriculture loans should be waived and farmers be compensated for the loss of crops.

**Kumari Sushmita Dev** (INC) asked the government to pass the Bill providing for one third reservation of seats in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. Ensuring ease of doing politics for women and having more women in Parliament is the answer to fight gender inequality.

**Shri Prem Singh Chandumajra** (SAD) felt happy that millions of homeless people have been provided houses. He welcomed the government's decision to fix the minimum support price (MSP) at one and a half times of the cost of production.

**Shri Bhagwant Mann** (AAP) said youths of Punjab are bearing the brunt of unemployment and the government has failed to provide employment to them.

**Shri Jai Prakash Narayan Yadav** (RJD) said the President's Address shows no concern towards middle class, young women, farmers, retailers and prescribes no formula for providing employment to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled

Tribes and Muslims. He refuted the charge that nothing has been done in the Congress-rule period.

**Shri Om Birla** (BJP) felt happy that the fate of villages, the poor and farmers is changing under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Modi. **Shri Radheshyam Biswas** (AIUDF) pointed out that rises in the prices of essential commodities is causing difficulties to the common people and there is an increase in the number of jobless youths and crime against women.

**Shri P. K. Kunhalikutty** (IUML) asserted that the government has no major achievement to its credit. Referring to the government's claim to double the income of the farmers by 2022, Shri Dushyant Chautala (INLD) said the government has no formula to achieve this.

**Shri Kaushalendra Kumar** (JD-U) said the confidence of foreign investors has increased due to the economic progress made by India and thanked the Prime Minister for showing concern for the farmers and labour class.

**Shri T. Radhakrishnan** (AIADMK) was happy that the government aims to create an educated, healthy and clean India. **Dr Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar** (AITC) said the weak, women and children have become more vulnerable under the BJP rule. **Shri Jagdambika Pal** (BJP) believed that by 2022 every one will get a home and every home will have a gas cylinder, gas stoves and toilets. The government has done commendable work in the health and education sectors.

**Shri Asaduddin Owaisi** (AIMIM) said the Bill on triple talaq once made into law will destroy Muslim marriages forever. He asked the government to give seven percent reservation to Muslim women in education and land ownership rights to women

in general. **Smt. Rama Devi** (BJP) lauded the efforts of the government to eradicate poverty. **Shri N.K. Premchandran** (RSP) said poverty, unemployment and inequality have become glaring and intolerance is threatening the secular fabric of India. He asked the government to explain what its vision of a new India is. **Shri Ramesh Bidhuri** (BJP), drawing attention to the benefits of the Skill India programme, said when a poor person becomes a skilled labourer, nobody can exploit him and he can draw a good salary by showing his skill training certificate.

**Shri Rajesh Ranjan** (RJD) observed that along with one GST, one country, there should be one health, one education. **Shri K.H. Muniyappa** (INC) lamented that there is no proper scheme to provide irrigation facilities to drought prone areas on a permanent basis. There should be adequate funding to help the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to achieve social, educational and economic equality. **Smt. Jayshreeben Patel** (BJP) said GST will benefit the consumers as it will lead to reduction in prices of various commodities. **Shri Ram Kumar Sharma** (RLSP) said India will achieve development and prosperity under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi.

Replying to the debate on 7 February 2017, the Prime Minister, **Shri Narendra Modi** narrated the various efforts made by his government to augment job opportunities in the country. He criticized the manner in which the previous Congress-led central government handled the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh and the misuse of article 356 of the Constitution by the Congress party to oust the governments of the opposition parties in the States. The Prime Minister

blamed the previous government for the increase in the non-performing assets of banks. The money belonging to the poor people of the country was plundered and those responsible have to provide answers to the country. He said his government has not granted any loans which might result in the NPA. Listing the various achievements of his government, he said, "*When we compare the work done in three years of the NDA government to that done by the Congress overall...When we compare the facts, figures and numbers...well, what comparison are we even talking about? There is none. The Congress has failed the people miserably.*"

The Prime Minister held the Congress responsible for partitioning the country for electoral and petty gains and accused it of devoting its energies to the interests of one family, while neglecting the interests of the nation. Rejecting the contention that the Congress Party and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, gave democracy to the country, Shri Narendra Modi said India had thriving democracy even in ancient periods. The Congress has no respect for democracy as it did not allow Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who became the Deputy Prime Minister, to lead the country even though of 12 out of 15 Congress committees supported him while 3 chose not to take sides. The Prime Minister asserted that had Sardar Patel become the Prime Minister of India, a part of Kashmir would not have been under the Pakistani occupation.

After a long 10 hours 43 minutes debate, all the amendments moved were negated and the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address was adopted in Lok Sabha.



**The Footwear Design and Development Institute Bill, 2017**

The Footwear Design and Development Institute was established in India in 1986 with the objective of providing skilled human resource to the leather sector. The footwear, leather and retail sector in India had been growing both in terms of value and volume. India is the third biggest market of footwear and prominent exporter of the footwear and leather goods. Being a highly labour intensive industry, the requirement for trained human resources for leather and footwear sector is immense. There is a strong need for upgradation of the Institution enabling it to deal with international standards and markets.

The global footwear market is expected to reach US\$ 220.2 billion by 2020 from the current level of US\$ 198.7 billion. The opportunity cost of not investing in human resources required for this sector in India at this juncture would result in increased imports thereby, impacting the domestic and exports sector of footwear and leather products. It had, therefore, been proposed to empower the Institute to improve its capacity and performance with a view to address the shortage of the trained human resource.

The Government, accordingly proposed to declare the Footwear Design and Development Institute as an institution of national importance and enable it to emerge as centre of excellence with the objective of meeting the national and international standards for the promotion and development of quality and excellence in education, research and training in all disciplines relating to footwear and leather products design and development.

The Government, therefore, brought forward the *Footwear Design and Development Institute Bill, 2017* which *inter alia*, proposed to:

- (i) declare the Footwear Design and Development Institute as an institution of National Importance;
- (ii) establish a Governing Council and other authorities of the Institute; and
- (iii) empower the Institute to grant degrees, diplomas, certificates, or any other qualification to students of the Institute.

**Key features of the Bill:** The Footwear Design and Development Institute would be established with a Governing Council. The Institute would provide for instructions, research and training in the areas or disciplines relating to footwear and leather products design and development; to develop courses leading to graduate and post-graduate degrees, doctoral

and post-doctoral distinctions and research in all areas or disciplines relating to footwear and leather products design and development and to frame Statutes and Ordinances and to alter, modify or rescind the same. The Institute would be open to all races, creeds, and classes. Provision would be made for the maintenance of a Fund by the Institute which shall be applied towards meeting the expenses of the Institute.

**Debate:** The Bill broadly found favour with Members during the discussion on the Bill in both Houses of Parliament. Members commented that the Footwear Design and Development industry is a large scale industry and the footwear and leather marketing sector has gone through transformative change. Through this Bill an effort was being made to set up national level institute for this sector and this would facilitate the exchange of extant global technology with India.

The footwear and leather sector had been existing since many years in India and it has been evolving over the years. India ranks third globally after China and Vietnam with regard to export of leather products including footwear, but still, there is dearth of institutes for the development of leather industry in India.

The Minister in-charge of the Bill while replying to the debate *inter-alia* observed at the foremost there is a need for giving the stature of institute of national importance. The proposed institution has an all-India presence and has strived hard to provide very good quality content of curricula. Since the nature of the course has been such and the job opportunities have been so very well knit, the cost of the course has never deterred students from coming and joining. It was imperative to this kind of modern skill, a skill which is very much linked with tastes and fashion, to have better manpower. International shoemakers or international leather product makers had always wanted Indian raw materials. The Minister assured the Members that the Government would try as much as possible to factor in inputs from Members while designing the contents or the recruitment or the campus activities.

The Bill was passed by Lok Sabha on 5 April 2017 and by Rajya Sabha on 24 July 2017. The Bill as passed by both Houses of Parliament was assented to by the President of India on 4 August 2017.

**The Indian Institutes of Information Technology (Public Private Partnership) Bill, 2017**

Education is a key element for developing

human resources and contributing to the growth of society. From relatively small beginnings, the Indian information technology industry has emerged as a strong and credible force and is now recognised as a major constituent of the global information technology services industry. In order to develop manpower for different areas of the knowledge economy, education and training in information technology is a prerequisite.

Presently, four Indian Institutes of Information Technology have been established at Jabalpur, Kancheepuram, Gwalior and Allahabad which are public funded and governed by the *Indian Institutes of Information Technology Act, 2014*, to provide undergraduate as well as postgraduate education with specialisation in allied areas.

In order to address the challenges faced by the Indian information technology industry and growth of the domestic information technology market, which, *inter alia*, include developing new knowledge in information technology, providing manpower of global standards and ensuring autonomy in governance, the Government had decided to set-up twenty Indian Institutes of Information Technology in public-private partnership mode. At present, there are fifteen functional Indian Institutes of Information Technology in public-private partnership mode, which are proposed to be declared as Institutes of national importance. The Indian Institutes of Information Technology set-up in public-private partnership mode are required to be given statutory status and to enable the Institutes to grant degrees to the students.

The power of Indian Institutes of Information Technology to grant degrees shall enhance the acceptability of degrees being awarded by the Institutes. It also empowers the Institutes to provide manpower of global standards in the information technology and allied sectors, thereby affording them the desired flexibility in operations, autonomy, access to liberal industry funds, freedom to choose faculty, researchers and ignite them to rapidly move up the value chain.

At that point of time a view was taken that as the students of five existing Indian Institutes of Information Technology would be completing their graduation in July and August 2017, there was an urgent need to confer statutory status upon such Institutes.

In view of this position the Government brought forward the *Indian Institutes of Information Technology (Public-Private Partnership) Bill, 2017*.

**Debate:** During the discussion on the Bill in both Houses of Parliament it was broadly

received as a welcome legislation. The Minister in-charge of the Bill in his reply to the debates thanked the Members for their support for the legislation. The Minister in his speech allayed the fears that public-private-partnership for further expansion of IITs would lead to exorbitant hike in fees and this was unfounded. The Minister *inter alia* stressed that there is lot to do in the field of hardware. He observed that despite India being recognised the world over as an IT soft power, India had made neither *Google* nor *Facebook* nor *Twitter* nor *Windows*. The country's talent is working for others. Hence, there is a need to attract back the best of the best talents and that was the reason a call for '*Make-in-India*' had been given. The world is changing fast and, therefore, the need for modern education and institutes of national importance were required. The Bill had been brought forward to achieve this objective. Everybody's participation is needed and hence the underlying importance of private partnership. Finally, the Minister observed students should get a good education so that they can make progress. Good education and good institutes will help to increase employability. The government is making all out efforts to fill up the vacancies in all the institutes.

The Bill was passed by Lok Sabha on 19 July 2017 and by Rajya Sabha on 27 July 2017. The Bill as passed by both Houses of Parliament was assented to by the President of India in August 2017.

**The National Institutes of Technology, Science Education and Research (Second Amendment) Bill, 2017**

The *National Institutes of Technology, Science Education and Research Act, 2007* (the Act) provides for declaration of certain institutions of technology, science education and research as institutions of national importance and to provide for instructions and research in branches of engineering, technology, management, education, sciences and arts and for the advancement of learning and dissemination of knowledge in such branches and for certain other matters connected with such institutions. Initially, twenty societies of Institutes of Technology spread across the country were incorporated in the Act as the National Institutes of Technology and the same were included in the first Schedule to the Act.

The Act was first amended in the year 2012 incorporating ten more National Institutes of

Technology in the First Schedule and inserted a Second Schedule incorporating therein five new Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research. The Act was further amended in 2014 incorporating the Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology, Shibpur in the Third Schedule to the Act.

Consequent upon the bifurcation of the State of Andhra Pradesh and as provided in section 93 of the *Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014* read with Thirteenth Schedule thereof, the Central Government was required to establish a National Institute of Technology and an Indian Institute of Science Education and Research in Andhra Pradesh. The National Institute of Technology, Andhra Pradesh was established by enactment of the *National Institutes of Technology, Science Education and Research (Amendment) Act, 2016* and included in the First Schedule thereof.

The Central Government thereafter decided to incorporate an Indian Institute of Science Education and Research at Tirupati in the State of Andhra Pradesh and an Indian Institute of Science Education and Research at Berhampur in the State of Odisha under the Second Schedule to the Act. Accordingly, the Government brought forward the *National Institutes of Technology, Science Education and Research (Second Amendment) Bill, 2016* which sought to amend the Act so as to incorporate the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research at Tirupati and the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research at Berhampur in the Second Schedule to the Act.

The Amending Bill accordingly inserted in the Second Schedule to the parent Act (*The National Institutes of Technology, Science Education and Research Act, 2007*) the said two new proposed institutions viz. (1) The Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Tirupati; and (2) The Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Berhampur.

**Debate:** During the discussion on the Amending Bill, the Minister in-charge of the Bill while piloting the legislation *inter alia* observed that the need of the hour was to have the best of the best institutes more and more in number in the country for facilitating the essential research. With the passage of the Amending Bill, the country would have seven Institutes of

Technology Science Education and Research for research and innovations in the field of basic sciences like Chemistry, Biology, Earth Sciences, etc. These would be all-India institutes in which the best of the best students come from all over India to join research and innovation. The Minister also emphasised that the purpose of the education system is to bring out a good human being out of them. Hence, it becomes imperative to have humanities and social science awareness in all kinds of students that the nation produces.

The measure was welcomed by all sections of both Houses of Parliament. While supporting the Bill, the Members *inter alia* stated that education is the backbone of the country and technology and technological capabilities would strengthen this backbone; the education, science and technology contribute immensely to the development of any nation and that the Bill would usher in opportunities for the youth of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh to scale the pinnacle of progress in the fields of engineering, technology, management, education, science and arts; the motto behind the National Institutes of Technology Act was to give national importance to them so that these could provide or carry out quality education, both in the undergraduate and postgraduate levels of engineering.

The Minister while replying to the debate, thanked the Members for their unanimous support and observed that the main issue is the quality of education and bringing qualitative improvement in education. He briefly dwelt on four initiatives for achieving this purpose. The first one being establishment of Higher Education Finance Agency. The second initiative was GYAN under which the renowned teachers from abroad come to the country and complete a three week long course. Exchange of academicians would help in improving India's ranking all over the world. The Government had also taken a new initiative in the form of Global Research Interactive Network. Finally, the fourth initiative has been the decision of the Government to put an end to the no detention policy in regard to the students from class 1 to 8.

The Amending Bill was passed by Lok Sabha on 28 March 2017 and by Rajya Sabha on 26 July 2017. The Bill as passed by both Houses of Parliament was assented to by the President of India on 4 August 2017.

THIRD READING: INDIA



## CPA Patron, Officers, Executive Committee, Regional Representatives, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Steering Committee and CPA Secretariat

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#### PATRON:

**Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II**  
Head of the Commonwealth

#### VICE-PATRON:

*Vacant*



Portrait of The Queen © John Swannell/Camera Press

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Executive Committee Members' dates of membership are indicated below each name. Correct at time of printing.

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Speaker of Parliament, Uganda

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*Also Regional Representative for  
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#### TREASURER (2016-2019):

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Deputy Speaker, Australian  
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#### CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMONWEALTH WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS (CWP)

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Representatives, Malta

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**Hon. Senator Eno Lafon  
Emma Veryelle, MP**  
Cameroon  
(2015-2018)

**Rt Hon. Umar Buba Jibril, MP**  
Deputy House Leader, Nigeria  
(2015-2018)

**Hon. Bernard Songa  
Sibalatani, MP**  
Vice-Chairperson of the National  
Council, Namibia  
(2016-2019)

**Hon. Lazarous C. Chungu, MP**  
Zambia  
(2016-2019)

**Hon. Dr Makali Mulu, MP**  
Kenya  
(2017-2020)

**Rt Hon. Sephiri Enoch  
Motanyane, MP**  
Speaker of the National  
Assembly, Lesotho  
(2017-2020)

#### ASIA

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Bangladesh  
(2015-2018)

**Hon. Dr Fehmida Mirza, MP**  
Pakistan  
(2016-2019)

**Hon. Dr Lal Chand Ukrani, MPA**  
Sindh  
(2017-2020)

#### AUSTRALIA

**Hon. Russell Paul Wortley, MLC**  
President of the Legislative  
Council, South Australia  
(2015-2018)

**Hon. John Ajaka, MLC**  
President of the Legislative  
Council, New South Wales  
(2016-2019)

**Hon. Bruce Atkinson, MLC**  
President of the Legislative  
Council, Victoria  
(2017-2020)

#### BRITISH ISLANDS AND MEDITERRANEAN

**Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods, MP**  
United Kingdom  
(2015-2018)

**Hon. Stuart McMillan MSP**  
Scotland (stand in for  
Northern Ireland)  
(2016-2019)

**Hon. Leona Roberts MLA**  
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(2017-2020)

#### CANADA

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Canada  
(2015-2018)  
*Also Vice-Chairperson*

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty, MLA**  
Speaker of Legislative  
Assembly, Northwest Territories  
(2016-2019)

**Hon. Kevin Murphy, MHA**  
Speaker of the House of  
Assembly, Nova Scotia  
(2017-2020)

#### CARIBBEAN, AMERICAS AND THE ATLANTIC

**Hon. Anthony Michael  
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Speaker of the National Assembly,  
Saint Kitts and Nevis  
(2015-2018)

**Hon. Leroy C. Rogers, MLA**  
Speaker of the House of  
Assembly, Anguilla  
(2016-2019)

**Hon. Bridgid Annisette-  
George, MP**  
Speaker of the House,  
Trinidad & Tobago  
(2017-2020)

#### INDIA

**Shri Feroze Varun Gandhi, MP**  
Lok Sabha, India  
(2015-2018)

**Shri Kavinder Gupta, MLA**  
Speaker of the Legislative  
Assembly, Jammu and Kashmir  
(2016-2019)

**Shri Hitendra Goswami, MLA**  
Speaker of the Legislative  
Assembly, Assam  
(2017-2020)

#### PACIFIC

**Hon. Nafaitoa Talaimanu  
Ketii, MP**  
Deputy Speaker of the  
Legislative Assembly, Samoa  
(2015-2018)

**Hon. Clayton Mitchell, MP**  
New Zealand  
(2016-2019)

**Hon. Simon Pentanu, MP**  
Speaker of the House of  
Representatives, Bougainville  
(2017-2020)

#### SOUTH-EAST ASIA

**Hon. Datuk Dr Ronald Khandee, MP**  
Deputy Speaker, Malaysia  
(2015-2018)

**Hon. Datuk Wira Haji Othman  
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(2016-2019)

**Hon. Mr Zainal Sapari, MP**  
Singapore  
(2017-2020)

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Parliament of Tanzania

#### ASIA

**Mr Syed Shamooun Hashmi**  
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