



64th CPC News

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Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians discuss new ways to increase women's representation in Parliament at CWP triennial conference in Uganda and mark 30th anniversary of the network

Women Parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth have gathered in Kampala, Uganda for the triennial conference of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), held ahead of the wider 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. The theme of the sixth Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference was 'CWP at 30 years: Achievements and Unfinished Business – Looking forward to the next 30 years' in recognition of the CWP's 30th anniversary in 2019.

The CWP Conference was opened by the outgoing Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, Hon. Dr Dato' Noraini Ahmad, MP (Malaysia) who has held the office since her election in 2016 and said: *"In 2019, the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) marks its 30th anniversary and can reflect on the many successes of the past three decades. The CWP envisions a world where women and men have equal access to opportunities – a world where women's voices are recognised and respected. I urge all Parliamentarians, with the support of the CWP network, to pursue this vision with continued dynamism and enthusiasm. Together we can and will build the future we want, working towards a future of equal rights, equal opportunities and progress for all."*



Over 100 Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians attended the conference from across the Commonwealth. The CWP conference saw leading figures in Commonwealth Parliaments addressing the conference and included four wide-ranging sessions for Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians on the following issues: *The Importance of Mentoring for New Parliamentarians; Promoting Women to Leadership Positions and Senior Portfolios; Empowering Women as Effective Legislators in the 21st century; Combatting Bullying and Harassment Within Parliaments.*

The CPA President, Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda congratulated Hon. Dr Dato' Noraini Ahmad, MP on her leadership, her dedicated and committed work that has brought about positive results for the CWP. The CPA President went on to state that gender equality must be factored into all government policies in each respective jurisdiction and it is important that women take their place in Parliament to ensure that this may come about.

The CPA Chairperson, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon also addressed the CWP Conference and said: *"Women must look to assume leadership roles within their respective Parliaments. The topic of the sixth triennial CWP conference allows us to reflect on the successes of the last 30 years and to look ahead to the role of women in Parliaments for the future."*



The CWP President (2018-2019), Hon. Syda Namirembe Bbumba, MP (Uganda) spoke to the CWP conference about her experience as a legislator in the Parliament of Uganda. The CWP Conference also heard from CWP Alumni Champion, Dr Lesley Clark, a former Member of Parliament of Queensland about the CWP's mentoring initiative and her work with women across the Commonwealth; Hon. Lechesa Tsenoli, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly in South Africa spoke about male champions of gender equality and the work that male Members of Parliament can do to achieve equality; and UK MP, Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods, MP spoke about gender mentoring programmes at the UK Parliament and shared best practice of combating bullying and harassment in Parliaments.

In recognition of the 30th anniversary of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) in 2019, a special ceremony was held with the current and previous CWP Chairpersons - Hon. Dr Dato' Noraini Ahmad, MP (Malaysia 2106-2019); Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, MP, Speaker of Parliament (Uganda 2013-2016); Hon. Alix Boyd Knights, MHA, Speaker of the House of Assembly (Dominica 2010-2013); Ms Kashmala Tariq (Pakistan 2007-2010) and Hon. Lindiwe Maseko (South Africa 2004-2007).

Hon. Shandana Gulzar Khan, MNA from the National Assembly of Pakistan was elected as the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (Designate) during the CWP Conference and at the CWP Steering Committee meeting held immediately after the election, the Members of the Steering Committee also elected Hon. Zainab Gimba, MP (Nigeria), CWP Africa Region Chairperson as the CWP Vice-Chairperson.

Ahead of the CWP Conference, the current CWP Chairperson and CWP Steering Committee met in Uganda representing the nine CPA Regions: Africa; Asia; Australia; British Isles and the Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic; India; Pacific; and South-East Asia.

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) is the network of women Members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's Parliament and Legislatures. The CWP network provides a means of building the capacity of women elected to parliament to be more effective in their roles; improving the awareness and ability of all Parliamentarians, male and female, and encouraging them to include a gender perspective in all aspects of their role - legislation, oversight and representation and helping Parliaments to become gender-sensitive institutions.

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Notes to Editors:

Sixth triennial Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference, 23-24 September 2019, Kampala, Uganda #64CPC2019: The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference takes place every three years in the margins of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. This CWP Conference took place ahead of the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Kampala, Uganda hosted by the CPA Uganda Branch and the Parliament of Uganda. For further information visit www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cpc2019.

The **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)** exists to develop, promote and support Parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and to implement the enduring values of the Commonwealth. The CPA is an international community of around 180 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures working together to deepen the Commonwealth's commitment to the highest standards of democratic governance. Visit www.cpahq.org.

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