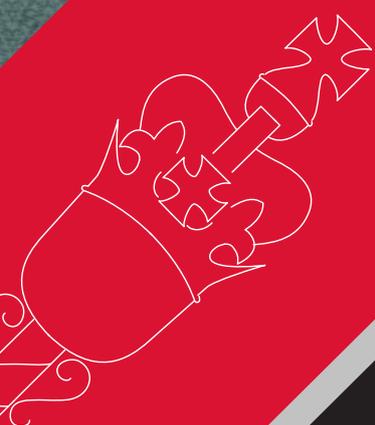




PARLIAMENT
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

**CPA POST-ELECTION SEMINAR:
PARLIAMENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD &
TOBAGO REPORT**

22, 24 FEBRUARY AND 1 MARCH 2021



About the CPA

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

About the authors

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Acknowledgements

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PROGRAMME IMPACT, OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

IMPACT

In line with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's strategic objectives, new and returning elected Parliamentarians from the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago will have improved knowledge and skills to undertake their parliamentary duties.

OUTCOMES

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

Outcome 2: Members and Senators of the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and other Commonwealth Parliamentarians and officials will have an understanding of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and relevant networks; including its, purpose, values and opportunities.

Outcome 3: Parliamentarians will be able to identify examples and adopt good practices to better help them maintain a high standard of delivering their parliamentary responsibilities.

OUTPUTS

Output 1: The majority of Members and Senators of the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago will have attended a Post-Election Seminar.

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

Output 3: A set of video materials will be produced for future training of Commonwealth Parliamentarians.

Programme Overview

On 22, 24 February and 1 March 2021, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Headquarters Secretariat in collaboration with the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago delivered a three-day induction programme for new and returning Members and Senators of the Parliament. The CPA Post-Election Seminar was delivered online using Zoom video communication software.

The programme saw the contribution of highly experienced and knowledgeable Heads of Government, Parliamentarians, Presiding Officers, and Clerks from across the globe.

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

The Seminar was opened by the Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives and Stephen Twigg, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.



From left to right: Ms Anne Gallagher AO, Hon. Beverley Schäfer MPP and Hon. Alincia Williams-Grant addressing Session 9 on *Engaging with Constituents*

Programme Background

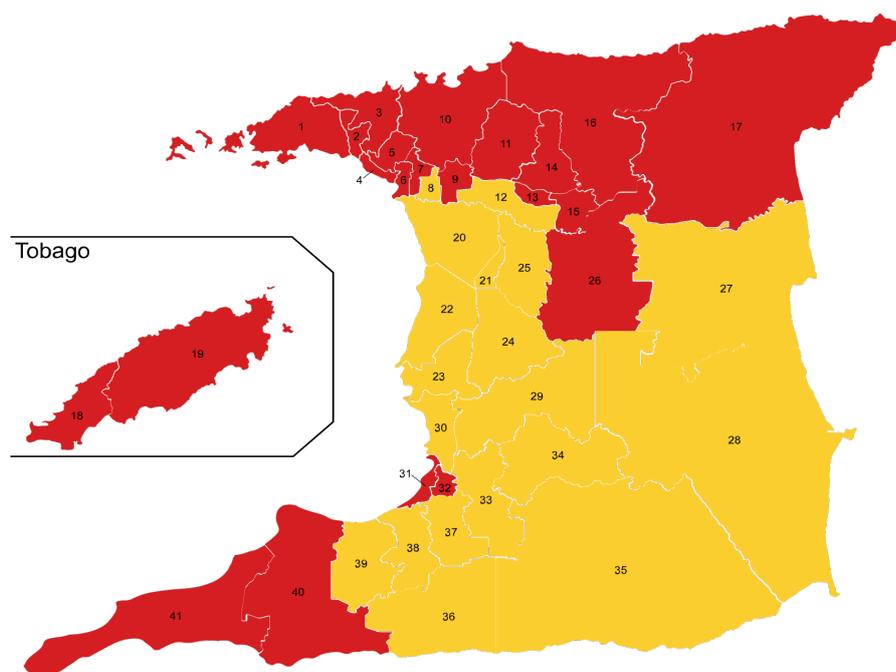
The virtual seminar was delivered following the Trinidad and Tobago General Election held on 10 August 2020.

The People's National Movement (PNM), led by Prime Minister The Hon. Keith Rowley MP, won a second consecutive term. The PNM won 22 seats with the United National Congress (UNC), led by The Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar MP, winning the remaining 19 seats. The election witnessed 11 women elected into the House of Representatives. Following the election, the House of Representatives elected Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George, as Speaker of the House for a second term and Sen. The Hon. Christine Kangaloo was reappointed as the President of the Senate.

The Senate has 31 members all appointed by the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago including 16 Government Senators appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister, 6 Opposition Senators appointed on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition and 9 Independent Senators appointed from civil society, on the discretion of the President. Subsequent to the election, an expression of interest was sent to the CPA Headquarters Secretariat by the Clerk of the House, Ms Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel, in January 2021.

People's National Movement <i>LEADER - Keith Rowley</i>	22 SEATS	49.08% VOTE
United National Congress <i>LEADER - Kamla Persad-Bissessar</i>	19 SEATS	47.09% VOTE

1. Diego Martin West
2. Diego Martin Central
3. Diego Martin Northeast
4. Port of Spain South
5. Port of Spain North-St. Ann's West
6. Laventille West
7. Laventille East-Morvant
8. Barataria-San Juan
9. St. Joseph
10. St. Ann's East
11. Tunapuna
12. St. Augustine
13. Arouca-Maloney
14. Lopinot-Bon Air West
15. D'abadie-O'Meara
16. Arima
17. Toco-Sangre Grande
18. Tobago West
19. Tobago East
20. Chaguanas West
21. Chaguanas East
22. Couva North
23. Couva South
24. Caroni Central
25. Caroni East
26. La Horquetta-Talparo
27. Cumuto-Manzanilla
28. Mayaro
29. Tabaquite
30. Pointe-à-Pierre
31. San Fernando East
32. San Fernando East
33. Naparima
34. Princes Town
35. Moruga-Tableland
36. Siparia
37. Oropouche East
38. Oropouche West
39. Fyzabad
40. La Brea
41. Point Fortin



Electoral map of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago's 2020 election

External Seminar Speakers

Ms Rita Payne
Commonwealth
Journalists'
Association

**Ms Debbie
Ransome**
Commonwealth
Journalists'
Association

**Hon. Gagan
Mohindra MP**
Member of the
UK House of
Commons

**Hon. Fleur
Anderson, MP**
Member of the
UK House of
Commons

**Hon. Rhun ap
Iorwerth MS**
Member of the
Welsh Parliament

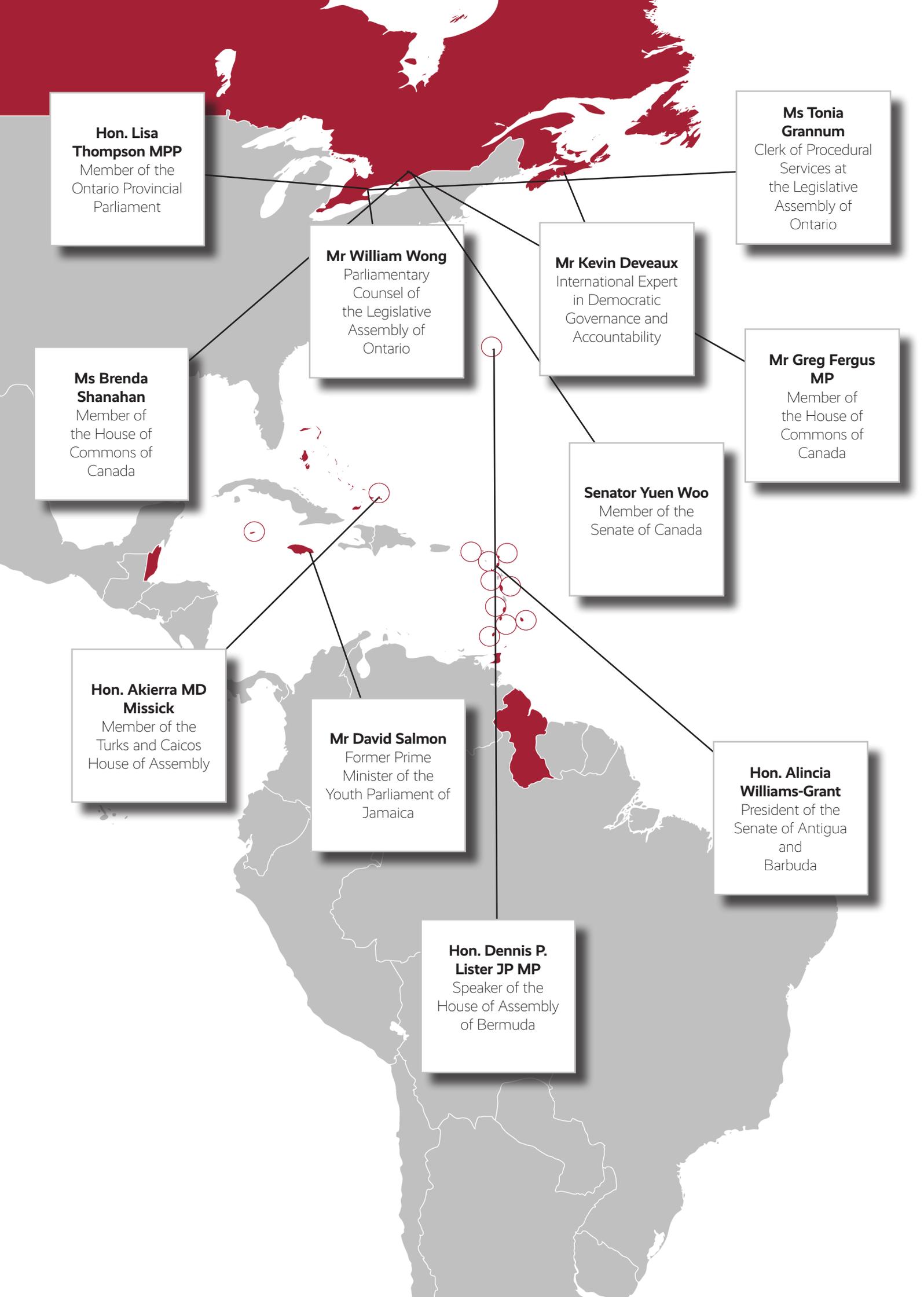
**Mr Alasdair
Rendall**
Head of Media
Relations at
UK House of
Commons

**Dr. Vasilios
Svolopoulos**
Head of European
Projects Innovation
Unit at the Hellenic
Parliament

**Ms Anne
Gallagher AO**
Director-General of
the Commonwealth
Foundation

Stephen Twigg
Secretary-
General of the
Commonwealth
Parliamentary
Association

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



Hon. Lisa Thompson MPP
Member of the Ontario Provincial Parliament

Ms Tonia Grannum
Clerk of Procedural Services at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Mr William Wong
Parliamentary Counsel of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Mr Kevin Deveaux
International Expert in Democratic Governance and Accountability

Ms Brenda Shanahan
Member of the House of Commons of Canada

Mr Greg Fergus MP
Member of the House of Commons of Canada

Senator Yuen Woo
Member of the Senate of Canada

Hon. Akierra MD Missick
Member of the Turks and Caicos House of Assembly

Mr David Salmon
Former Prime Minister of the Youth Parliament of Jamaica

Hon. Alicia Williams-Grant
President of the Senate of Antigua and Barbuda

Hon. Dennis P. Lister JP MP
Speaker of the House of Assembly of Bermuda

Programme Summary

This section provides a summary of the CPA Post-Election Seminar, capturing key findings from each of the virtual sessions.

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

The opening session saw Hon. Stuart Young MP, Hon. Rushton Paray MP, and Hon. Gagan Mohindra MP share their experiences, opportunities, challenges and lessons learnt from their time as Parliamentarians. They provided insight into the following:

- The importance of ensuring that constituents are aware of the impact of laws passed by parliament.
- Balancing the responsibilities of the constituency with the chamber.
- Conducting oneself in a professional manner befitting of a public servant.
- Taking time to understand the parliamentary process.

Members and Senators of the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago were also provided with the opportunity to reflect on their own opportunities and challenges during their time in office. These reflections were used as a basis to guide discussions during the remainder of the Seminar. Some of the reflections included the following:

Opportunities:

- Ability to inspire and motivate as well as to **lead change** in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Opportunity to serve the country and their constituents.
- The prospect to network with regional and international leaders to build relationships that can benefit the future of their terms.

Challenges:

- Identifying an effective method of communication to reach constituents.
- Understanding and knowing when to apply parliamentary procedure.
- Lack of MP staffing for research.
- Acrimonious debates between parties.
- Expectation management.

Given the feedback regarding the need for staff to support Members with research, it was emphasised by speakers that the research, general administrative support and advice provided by parliamentary staff are essential for Members to access. Members were also informed that they should keep in mind the resources available at the CPA such as the quarterly journal, *The Parliamentarian*, and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Research Service (CPRS). The importance of research is also mentioned under Article 8 of the CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Legislatures, where it is stressed that you cannot have an effective legislature if resources and knowledge are not available for Members to use.



There are a variety of other sources of academic research that can be found online which may support Parliamentarians:

- *Google Scholar* (<https://scholar.google.co.uk>), is a freely accessible search engine that indexes information on, and often the full text of, an array of publishing across multiple disciplines including political science.
- Often comparative analysis can prove useful in learning from the work of other parliaments when focusing on your own as a Parliamentarian. With this in mind, the website *Caribbean Elections* (www.caribbeanelections.com) is a useful source for finding out information not only about the elections of fellow Caribbean states, but also on budget statements, political parties and other political information on 28 Caribbean states.
- Another useful resource when researching internationally would be the website *Our World in Data* (www.ourworldindata.org), which holds a great amount of data worldwide on policy issues of Demographic Change, Health, Food and Agriculture, Energy and the Environment among many others.
- Paid resources can also benefit the understanding of Parliamentarians in areas that free resources do not cover. Journals such as the *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* and *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* are available at the Taylor & Francis Group's website (www.tandfonline.com). Another option would be the online platform *Europa World Plus* (www.europaworld.com).



COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH SERVICE (CPRS)

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

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

Members and staff of the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago are encouraged to utilise the research services provided by the CPA through CPRS.

There are a variety of ways in which the challenges listed on the previous page can be overcome, some of which are addressed in this Report itself. Firstly, Parliamentarians in Trinidad and Tobago should be mindful of the need for **cohesive** efforts in parliament that can be explored through cross party groups. These groups can meet periodically to discuss how cross-party consensus can be achieved on specific policy issues to improve the legislation that is passed. Thereby addressing the concerns of citizens.

Secondly, in terms of engaging with constituents, social media, as mentioned under the *Engaging with Constituents* session, provides Members with a unique way of directly interacting with constituents via SMS messaging. Setting up a professional website is another way that a Member of Parliament can ensure that information about their work and advocacy is accessible from early on in their term.

The CPA's Top 10 Tips For New Parliamentarians



Tip 1: Don't Panic

Although this comes straight out of the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, the advice is still sound for newly elected or appointed Members of Parliament. Remember, many people have walked in the same shoes as you, and most, if not all, have come away unscathed. Stay calm and follow the advice below. A good tip, get your bearings. Go to Parliament on day one and take a look around. Get comfortable with your surroundings. Take a seat in the Chamber and congratulate yourself for getting this far. People want you to succeed. Especially all the people that just elected you. It's in their interest that you do well.

Tip 2: Remember Who You Work For

As a Parliamentarian you may have to answer to your local political party, your whip, a senior minister, the Speaker, a committee chair and perhaps lobbyists. But your boss is the people that elected you. You are answerable and accountable to them. It can be easy to forget as you only have to go through the process of being elected every four to five years. But you are a democratically elected representative and although decisions are delegated to you to make in Parliament, it is essential that you remember whatever decision you make, they are the ones you have to justify your decisions to. However, you cannot please everyone all of the time, perhaps some of the people some of the time. If you try to make everyone happy, you will probably make nobody happy.



Tip 3: Seek Advice

No one expects a new Member of Parliament to know all the answers. Don't be embarrassed to ask for help! Seek out clerks and parliamentary officials, your whips, former or current experienced Parliamentarians to give you advice and support. Befriend a clerk and treat them well, they are worth their weight in gold. You never know they may offer advice you didn't even know to ask. Look outside of Parliament. Use academics, NGOs, CSOs and most importantly remember the CPA is here to help too. Go on induction trainings, use online courses. What you learn early on will be invaluable for years to come.



Tip 4: Have A Plan

As the saying goes “fail to plan, plan to fail”. Sit and write down what you want to achieve whilst you are a Parliamentarian. This might be a one year goal, or for your whole term of office. Be realistic! Identify how you want to do it, what steps are needed, who can help you achieve this goal. Identify easy wins, but also the more challenging reforms. You might want to change the law or get the Government to change a policy. Pin your plan to your office wall as a reminder. A set of goals are important to keep you on the right track and stop you from getting distracted. You will also have something to measure your performance against. Remember there are no job descriptions for Parliamentarians, so its up to you!



Tip 5: Specialise



A good piece of advice for new Parliamentarians is to develop a speciality or an expertise in one or more thematic areas. It could be something you did in a previous career or something very important to your constituency. It might be on education, sustainable development, cybersecurity or even parliamentary procedure. Whatever you decide, take steps to keep abreast of developments and work with other leading experts. Why is this important? Parliamentarians who become known as an expert tend to get recognition from all Members and the Government. You will get asked for your input and will often be the first to get called upon in a debate. You might also get on a relevant committee or if you are lucky, a ministerial post.



Hon. Lisa Thompson, MPP (left) and Hon. Akierra Missick MP (right)

Tip 6: Draw Your Red Lines

From the very beginning it is essential that you take the time to determine what you will, but more importantly, what you won't do. It is helpful to remember you are human and not just a parliamentary-robot. You will have a family, friends, hobbies, maybe even an additional career outside of Parliament. To ensure you have a healthy work-life balance, determine how much time you want to dedicate to being a Parliamentarian so that other things don't get pushed to the side. There is often a pressure early on to commit to everything, to attend every reception, every meeting and work very late. But keep a tight grip on your diary, and be willing to say NO.



Tip 7: Keep It Clean



When you are standing at an election you often have to come across as a saint. Whiter than white and pure as the driven snow. But as a Parliamentarian you are also a human-being that can be flawed. Therefore it is important to remember to manage expectations and to try as best as possible to keep your moral compass pointing in the right direction. Follow your codes of conduct, be thorough in complying with Members interests and ensure what you are transparent and not corrupt in actuality or perception. As a Parliamentarian, you are a role model and so ensure you uphold the highest of standards. But be warned, "there is no such thing as a free lunch!"

Tip 8: Keep Positive

Mental health and wellbeing is often overlooked by Parliamentarians who feel they should be impervious to all pressures and problems. At times you will have setbacks. You won't always achieve your goals the first-time around. You will inevitably face bad press, abuse on social media, criticism from colleagues, your constituents and others. You'll be told to have a thick-skin and to ignore it, but that isn't always easy to do. Keep sane, remember it's just a job. Remember you have family, friends and others who can support you, and if you need to seek professional support there is no stigma in doing so. Focus on the positives and the small victories. But always put your health first.



Tip 9: Read Your Standing Orders!



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

Tip 10: What's Next?

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



From left to right: Hon. Gagan Mohindra MP, Hon. Stuart Young MP and Hon. Rushton Paray MP engaging virtually with attendees during the first session of the Seminar

Session 2: Giving Parliamentarians a Voice: Amendments, Debates, Parliamentary Questions and Motions

This session explored a wide range of tools Parliamentarians have at their disposal to raise issues of importance in parliament. Members and Senators were privileged to hear first-hand experiences from Hon. Fleur Anderson MP, Speaker The Hon. Dennis Lister JP, MP and Senator Yuen Woo.

Amendments: It is important to consider that changes to draft legislation or policies can be made before any legislation is formally laid in the chamber. This can have the benefit of engaging with a government who might be willing to compromise and listen before the more public confrontation when its being publically debated in the chamber.

Debates: Members are encouraged to make their contributions concise given that shorter contributions can be uploaded to social media, where recordings can be posted. It is important for Parliamentarians to familiarise themselves with the Standing Orders, particularly when in their first terms, to 'find their voice' in the chamber. **This will be discussed further under Session 3.**

Questions: Questions are a mechanism that provide Parliamentarians with the opportunity to push for specific government actions from the perspective of constituents and for their benefit. Oral questions are also a chance for members of the public to see that important issues are being taken seriously, which can improve the level of public engagement in parliamentary procedure. In order to get the response they want; a questioner should always be prepared to ask supplementary questions.

Written questions can provide Ministers with a platform to highlight their work and performance. As the questions are seen in advance, the Minister has all the information available to them and is able to provide a coherent answer, that not only answers the question, but also highlights positive work for the public. Questions should be seen as an opportunity for both sides of the House to enhance their agendas.



Session 3: Parliamentary Privileges and Immunities

In this session, Members and Senators explored the importance of privileges and immunities to parliaments and the responsibilities of Members and Senators to **safeguard** these privileges.

Mrs Sampson-Meiguel began by highlighting what the main privileges are that Members and Senators of the Parliament enjoy, including:

- **Right to free speech in debates. In accordance with Section 55 (1) of the Constitution.**
- **Right to freedom from civil arrest whilst going to, attending or leaving a sitting of the House or any committee. Section 55 (2).**
- **Other relevant privileges are inherited from the UK House of Commons as at 1976. Section 55 (3). Many of these privileges can be found in Erskine May, which provides a description of how procedures and conventions have evolved in the Westminster model (<https://erskinemay.parliament.uk>)**
- **Protection of witnesses and submissions before Committees. Section 55 (4).**



Standing Orders alone should not be viewed as the comprehensive codification of procedure given the unwritten customs and practice that exist in parliament.

As mentioned in the first session on *Giving Parliamentarians a Voice*, **no Member of the Parliament is above the rules** and, therefore, it is important for Members and Senators to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Standing Orders.

‘Members of Parliament cannot function effectively without absolute privilege’ Mrs Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel, Trinidad and Tobago

It is always important to consult with the office of the Clerk if you have a question regarding privilege, they can help with:

- **Understanding the Standing Orders .**
- **Knowing what to do if you suspect there has been a breach of privilege.**
- **Clarification on any queries relating to privilege.**
- **Seeking advice on any unwritten customs or practices.**

Parliamentarians are able to raise matters that cannot be raised in civil society, they can question government ministers without fear of reprisal and they have the right to free speech in debates. This is only possible because of parliamentary privilege and Members and Senators should know of the opportunities bestowed upon them because of this.

Session 4: The Impact of Technological Innovation on Parliaments and Parliamentarians

How parliaments confront the challenge of modernising their facilities with the new technologies that are available, is a question that many legislatures are contending with in the context of COVID-19 and the physical restrictions it has brought about.

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

The importance of reviewing the security of videoconferencing applications was stressed to ensure that parliament uses a platform which does not risk data breaches or the interference of third parties when convening. The importance of having the Clerk, the relevant chair (for a committee) and Presiding Officer (for a debate) in Parliament, where possible, was also noted. As this role holder is key to the smooth running of proceedings, it is vital to mitigate against any personal internet connections being lost due to them being outside parliament, by having them on the estate.

'IT has now become the platform to facilitate parliamentary procedure' Mr Garreth Ferguson, Trinidad and Tobago

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

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

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

A useful example of a technological innovation in a parliament would be the recent introduction of electronic voting in the House of Commons of Canada. In March 2021, the House of Commons of Canada gave its Members the opportunity to vote via remote voting application accessible on tablets and mobile phones. This method of voting has provided the House of Commons with a secure and reliable way to conduct proceedings during the lockdown as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The new voting system has saved time and can work in conjunction with the existing voting system that takes place in the Chamber.



Women's Caucus: Empowering Female Voices

In this session, attendees engaged in an important discussion with women Parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth, concerning the representation of women in parliaments.

It is always important to learn from other women Parliamentarians, both past and present, and from across the party lines. This collaboration leads to better decisions being made at the legislative level and can enhance female representation in parliament.

GENDER SENSITISING PARLIAMENTS GUIDELINES

Designed to encourage Parliaments to look into priority areas that need to be strengthened in order to help legislatures to become effective gender sensitive institutions. Members and Senators are encouraged to access the CPA Gender Sensitising Parliaments Guidelines to understand the necessary conditions of parliaments to deliver on their responsibility to reach the standard of gender sensitivity and to identify the actors and means through which reforms are implemented. The document is available from: <https://www.cpahq.org/media/s20j1lws/cwp-gender-sensitizing-guidelines.pdf>

Things that the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago could consider introducing would be:

- Holding seminars on women's rights
- Meetings and discussion groups to mark International Women's Day
- Mentoring by more experienced women Members and Senators of newer Parliamentarians

'I stand on the shoulders of giants'

Hon. Lisa Thompson, Ontario

It is important for Members and Senators to support fellow female Parliamentarians, one way to do this is by calling out any negative comments or behaviors that occur in Parliament. These comments and behaviors could impact the reputation of parliament and discourage women from entering politics. All speakers stressed the need to stop **siloin** matters as 'women's issues' as these issues affect all citizens and therefore, they should be considered as societal issues. The inclusion of male Members and Senators in discussions relating to women's empowerment was also encouraged, given their ability to contribute in supporting the work needed to achieve gender equality. **The CPA stands ready to provide support in setting up a women's cross party caucus.**

The CPA's Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) network as a consortium of women Members of the Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures provides a means of building the capacity of women elected to Parliament to be more effective in their roles. The network provides an avenue for women Members and Senators of the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to support one-another and share best practice with other Parliamentarians around the globe.



Session 5: Members of Parliament as Leaders

This session served to discuss how Parliamentarians can lead on issues both in parliament and externally. There is a fine balance between leading on an issue that you are passionate about and following the wishes of the electorate, especially if the two conflict. Members and Senators

‘Members need to ask themselves, what leader do you want to be?’

*The Hon. Speaker Dennis Lister,
Bermuda*

were privileged to hear first-hand experiences from Speaker The Hon. Dennis Lister JP, MP, Hon. Akierra Missick and Stephen Twigg.

The need for mutual respect between the government and opposition was highlighted in

understanding that both parties are representing their constituents and come from a place of wanting to improve the lives of fellow citizens in society.

As leaders in society, it is important to continuously communicate with your constituents and to be fully aware of who you are representing. Your constituents views can evolve over time and you have the power, as a leader, to shape them. Instances were recounted where constituents approach Parliamentarians questioning their advocacy on international issues and whether they are relevant to their own constituencies. It is advised that the following three tips should be kept in mind in this situation:

*‘All politics is local’
Stephen Twigg*

1. If you do take an interest in an area that does not directly relate to your constituents, never neglect local or national issues as a result.
2. Do respect that others will have a different view but be aware that minds can be changed over time if you engage with them in a respectful way. However, sometimes you will never agree with someone on a particular issue, but in that case, respectful communication is still the best approach.
3. If you are hardworking on the issues that do matter to local constituents, you will earn their respect for your other areas of advocacy.



From left to right: Hon. Speaker Bridgid Annisette-George MP, The Honourable Keith Christopher Rowley MP, HE Paula-Mae Weekes ORTT and Sen. The Hon. Kangaloo at the 44th CPA Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic Regional Conference in Trinidad and Tobago



Session 6: Ethics and Standards

This session sought to explore various best practices Parliamentarians should adhere to when engaging in robust debates in the chamber, scrutinising legislation, and overseeing the actions of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. This session touched on how Members and Senators can appropriately declare conflicts of interest that could improperly influence their actions and decisions as a Parliamentarian.

*'Members of Parliament are always
in the public eye'*
Mr Kevin Deveaux

Members and Senators were given the opportunity to share what they believe to be important matters that should be included when drafting a code of conduct for Parliamentarians. These included the following:

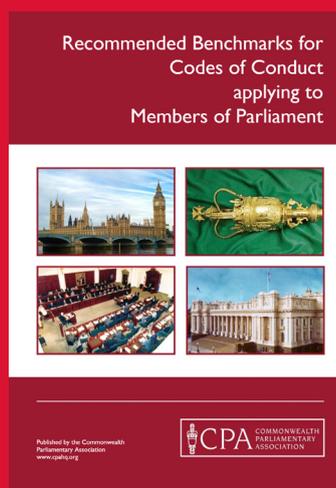
- Effective modes of communication both in parliament to fellow Members and Senators as well as externally when interacting with constituents.
- Guidance on conflict resolution and de-escalation.
- Rules regarding attendance.
- Principles regarding the respect of fellow Members and Senators.

The levels of trust granted to Parliamentarians by their electorate, as mentioned in the session on *Members of Parliament as Leaders*, has to be considered in all of their actions. With this mind, Members and Senators should ensure that they are mindful of the core tenets of being a Parliamentarian in their work, these fundamentals are perhaps best exemplified by the seven Nolan Principles mentioned on the following page.

THE CPA RECOMMENDED BENCHMARKS FOR CODES OF CONDUCT

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

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



The 7 Nolan Principles¹

Selflessness	Act solely in the public interest, as opposed to in the interest of financial gains or other benefits for yourself, friends or family.
Integrity	Do not place yourself under any financial obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your duties.
Objectivity	Be objective in carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, Parliamentarians should make choices on merit.
Accountability	Parliamentarians are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
Openness	Parliamentarians should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
Honesty	Parliamentarians have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
Leadership	Parliamentarians should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Session 7: Public Financial Management

This session served to emphasise the importance of parliamentary independence through the concept of public financial management, with a particular look at the budget cycle in parliament. In particular reference to public financial management, parliaments that have a more robust process of scrutinising the expenditure of the executive, perform better in Transparency International's *Corruption Perceptions Index*.² The following are key considerations for Parliamentarians when addressing public financial management:

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

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

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

¹ The Seven Principles of Public Life were established to outline the ethical standards that individuals working in the public sector should adhere to. They were first set out by Lord Nolan, a UK judge who chaired the Committee on Standards in Public Life in 1995. The principles were included in a range of Codes of Conduct across public life. Further information can be found via this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>

² Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/1997>) is an index published annually since 1995 which ranks countries by their perceived levels of public sector corruption determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys.



Key to effective and robust parliamentary scrutiny of PFM is the work of parliamentary Public Accounts Committees (PAC). These committees play a pivotal role in ensuring that there is accountability in the scrutiny of expenditure. Importantly, the PAC be understood and seen as a 'critical friend' by the government.

PACs, like any other Committee, are an important area for **bipartisan** collaboration. Membership of the PAC should be understood by Parliamentarians as supplementary to their party affiliation. The consensual approach, crucial to any committee, is of vital importance when scrutinising government expenditure, given the sensitivity of its content as the funds used are raised by taxes to citizens.

The Chair of the committee is also an important aspect. In addition to leading the committee, they are also key to pushing its work forward and maintaining a collegiate approach which provides Members and Senators with equal opportunities to participate regardless of party affiliations.

CAPAC COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION
OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEES

An avenue for the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to gain assistance with their PAC would be the Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees (CAPAC). CAPAC was founded in 2015 at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) as a network for strengthening public financial management and accountability. CAPAC assists PACs by making clear, not only for committees themselves, but for parliaments and governments, what is good practice in relation to fellow Commonwealth PACs.

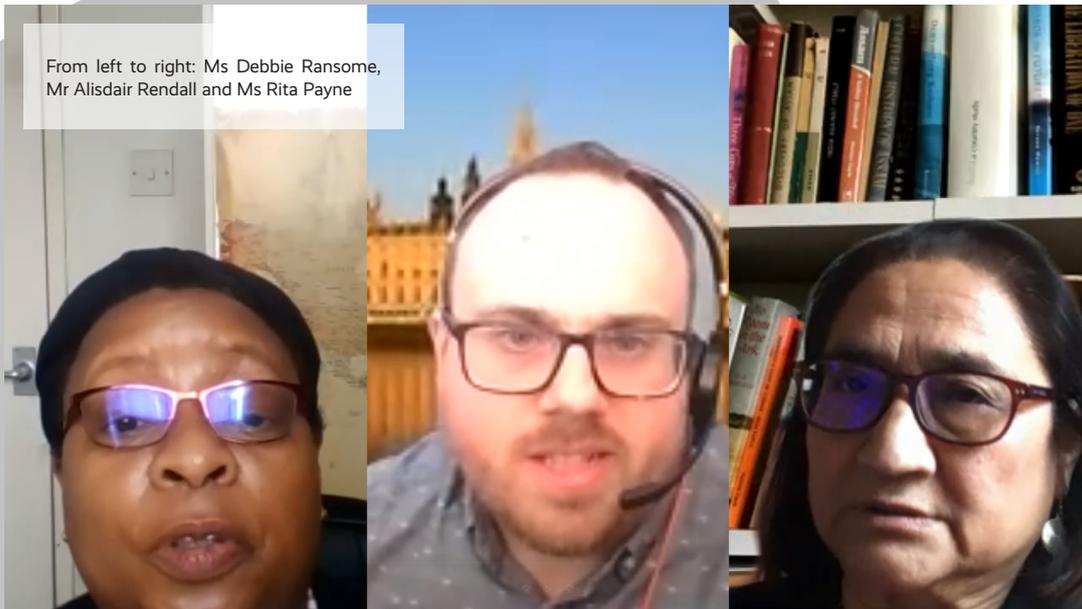


Another institution offering assistance on public financial management is McGill University's School of Continuing Studies, who offer courses for parliamentary staff that include education on public financial management.



Session 8: Media Relations

The ability to communicate effectively and to build relationships within the media are essential skills for Parliamentarians. This session was designed to look at the importance of interacting with different media outlets as a Parliamentarian and how these outlets can uplift Parliamentarians in their role. The session was aimed to address the ways in which Parliamentarians could develop **mutually beneficial** relationships with contacts in the media.



During these discussions, Members and Senators in attendance were privileged to hear first-hand experiences from Mr Alasdair Rendall, Head of Media Relations at the UK House of Commons, and Ms Debbie Ransome and Ms Rita Payne, both of the Commonwealth Journalists' Association. Members and Senators had the opportunity to identify some of the main challenges to their relationships with media outlets. These were:

- The potential for comments to be taken out of context by media outlets.
- That comments made in the media now have more of a permanence given that they remain online indefinitely.
- Social media and the influence that it can have on elections.

Ms Debbie Ransome shared her role in reporting on the Jamaat al Muslimeen coup attempt in 1990 in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. From her experience reporting on this impactful moment in Trinidad and Tobago's history, Ms Ransome emphasised how the mutual respect in the relationship between the media sector and Members of Parliament ensured that the situation could be resolved.

The importance of parliament itself in maintaining impartiality and educating citizens is paramount. Although the current climate on social media surrounding politics can be very polarised and hostile, many parliaments have seen this as an opportunity to use social media to educate citizens who want to learn more about their institution's processes.

Along with parliament, government plays a key role in media relations in ensuring that media freedom is upheld and that journalists are given the right to conduct investigative reporting on political affairs. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, many governments have seized the opportunity to stamp out journalism that does not report positively on its actions by measures such as internet shutouts and the detainment of journalists.

There are four tips that Parliamentarians should be mindful of in their relations with the media:

- Skepticism, be skeptical about every piece of news that you see, whether from traditional organisations, blogs, online videos or any other source.
- Exercise judgement, make every effort to distinguish between who is telling the truth and who is not.
- Be open-minded. To be well informed, seek out and pay attention to different sources of information which will offer new perspectives and challenge our own assumptions.
- Be inquisitive. Keep asking questions, follow up media reports, learn media techniques as it is essential to grasp the ways in which people use media to persuade and manipulate. It is important to understand how to distinguish between a marketer and a journalist.



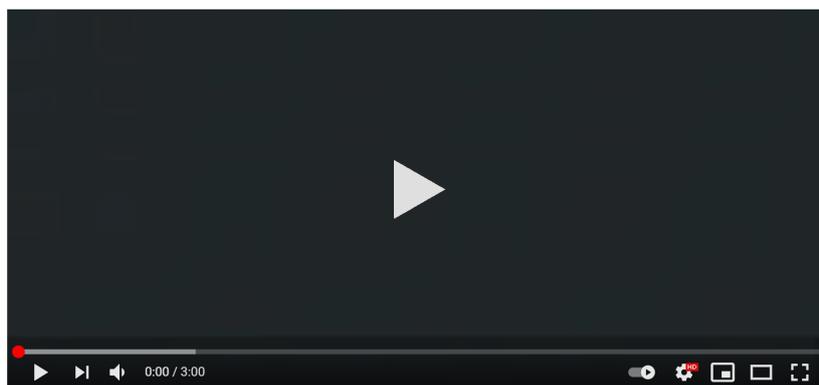
Session 9: Engaging with Constituents

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

Following on from some of the points made in the previous session on *Media Relations*, the importance of social media as an outlet for constituency relations was highlighted. There were two particular methods discussed which social media is particularly useful for as a Parliamentarian. These methods were:

Interacting with constituents via direct messaging on social media channels

For more direct engagement



Posting Recordings of Short Debate Contributions

357 views

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It is always important to be accountable to all constituents, no matter how directly responsible a Parliamentarian is. This point is of particular relevance to Senators of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, as despite not being directly elected by citizens, Senators must still engage with citizens to ensure that their **voices are being heard and views are being represented** in parliament. This is particularly important given that Senators can take the elevated responsibility of ministerial posts.

Key points to remember when interacting with your community:

- Be HOT (Honest, Open and Transparent), with constituents.
- Ensure that there is a strong team to support you in fulfilling your duties, manage casework and ensure that you are visible in the community.
- Remember that 'all politics is local' and that 'it only takes two minutes to listen' therefore it is important to allocate time to meet and speak with constituents and if not possible, to ensure that there is a member of staff to step in and support. The development of staff here is important, as staff should be trained and given experience that will allow them to stand in when the Member cannot.
- It is important to make pledges and commitments to constituents but it is more important to keep them.

Session 10: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The final session of the workshop focused on the importance of the inclusion of two minorities in the processes of parliament; young people and persons with disabilities. The session began with a breakout exercise where Members in attendance were asked to consider three fictional case studies of individuals, their engagement with parliament and what barriers they face.

The discussion raised the following points regarding the inclusion of young people and persons with disabilities for the parliament to consider:

- The importance of ensuring that minorities can **access parliament both remotely and physically**, both by developing detailed information about its processes and by ensuring that this information is delivered in a way that is considerate to persons with audio-visual impairments.
- Pressure groups and the role that they play in campaigning from civil society for parliamentary reform. It is imperative that parliament as an institution is **aware** of the demands of these groups.
- The importance of working with and listening affected persons, as their experience can help shape parliamentary practices going forward.

Actions that the Parliament could consider may include the following:

Youth engagement:

The National Youth Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, outreach activities, mentorship schemes and scholarships can bring a youth perspective into the parliament and generate more interest in the political process from younger citizens. Integrating the work of parliament into civic education via the school curriculum is also essential, parliaments and Parliamentarians can pursue this with relevant government ministries. A good example of a tool for this would be the CPA's *Teachers' Resource Pack on Commonwealth, Parliament and Democracy*, available from: https://issuu.com/the-parliamentarian/docs/commonwealth_class_cpa_resource_parliament_and_dem

Inclusion of persons with disabilities:

Both the physical and online infrastructure, and the general environment in parliament play a key role in ensuring that persons with disabilities are granted equal access to its processes. Large structural changes to parliament buildings, such as lifts, ramps and handrails, when met with digital and more audio-visual facilities, such as the use of braille, sign language and screenreaders, ensure that people can access the institution if they work there or are simply visiting. However, more social changes to engender a culture of inclusivity, as addressed in the CPA's two *Disability Inclusive Communications Guidelines* mentioned below, also play a role.

CPA DISABILITY COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

The CPA's two Disability Inclusive Communications Guidelines are tools that provide various examples of best practices that can be adopted by both Parliaments and Parliamentarians in order to continue to ensure that they sensitively address Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff with disabilities. It is encouraged that Members access the CPA Disability Communications Guidelines for information on how to enhance and sensitise their communications with persons with disabilities. They are accessible at <https://issuu.com/the-parliamentarian/docs/disability-communication-guidelines-linguistic> and <https://issuu.com/the-parliamentarian/docs/disability-communication-guidelines-facilities>.

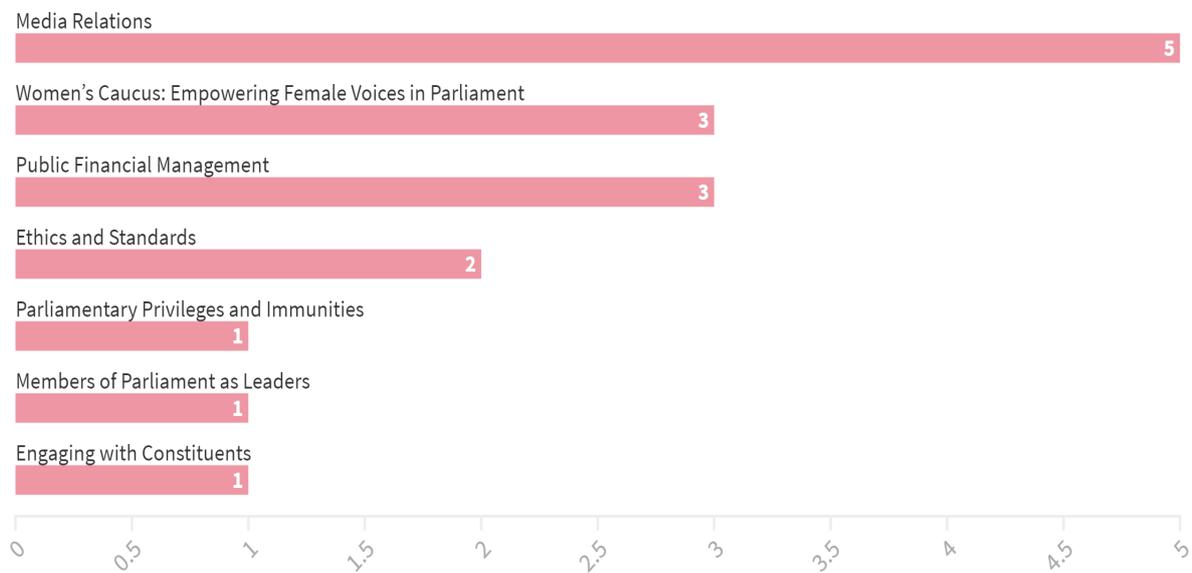


Monitoring and Evaluation Report

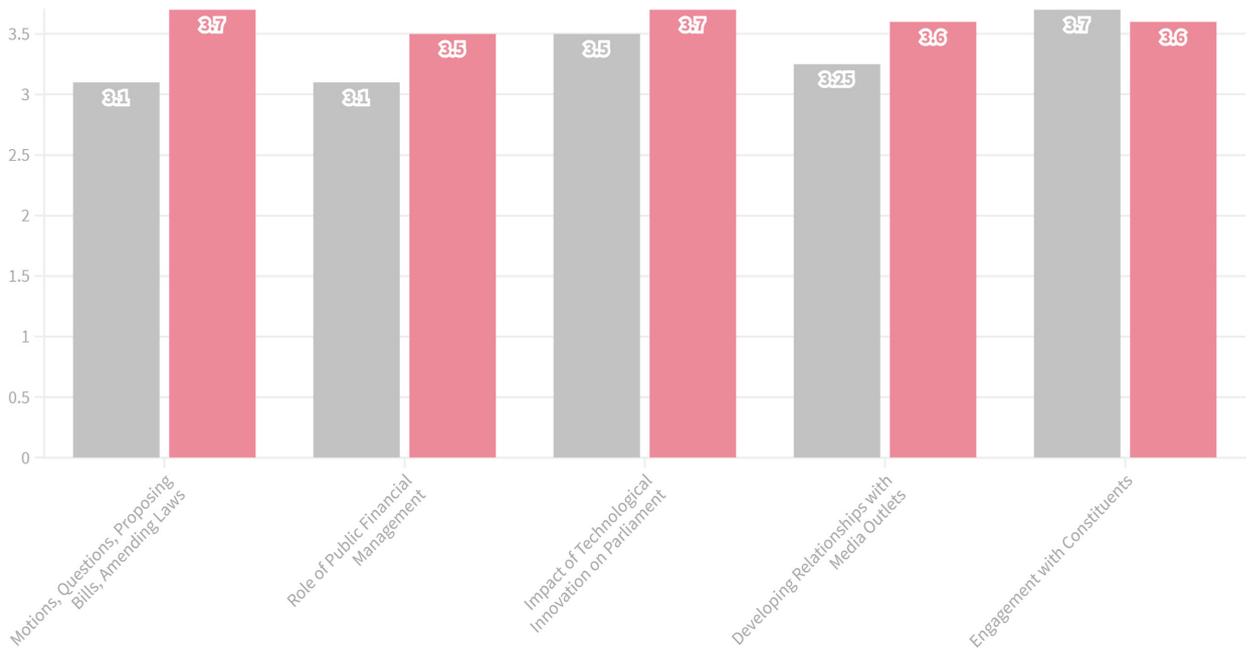
During the week, Members and Senators were provided with the opportunity to give ongoing feedback on the sessions and recount any expectations and insights. Members and Senators were also invited to complete pre- and post-assessment forms and their results can be found in the graphs below.

The feedback provided by Members and Senators on the programme was positive. Despite the seminar being delivered virtually, Members and Senators overall were satisfied with the format of the sessions and were extremely pleased with the quality of the various resource persons who delivered the sessions. Members and Senators were questioned on their levels of knowledge related to pertinent issue areas on parliamentary practice and procedure. In the pre-assessment forms, many Parliamentarians stated that they sought to gain more understanding of parliamentary codes of conduct and to improve their knowledge on parliamentary procedure which we addressed in the first three sessions on the *Opportunities and Challenges of Being a Newly Elected MP*, *Giving Parliamentarians a Voice*, and *Parliamentary Privileges and Immunities*.

Which session did you find to be most useful?

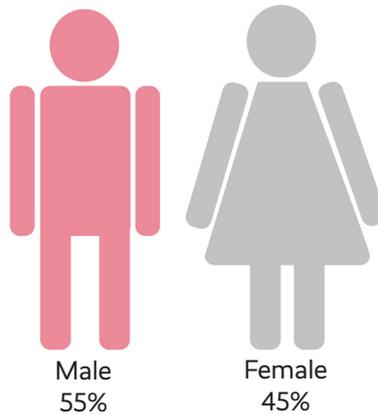


■ Average rating of understanding pre workshop ■ Average rating of understanding post workshop



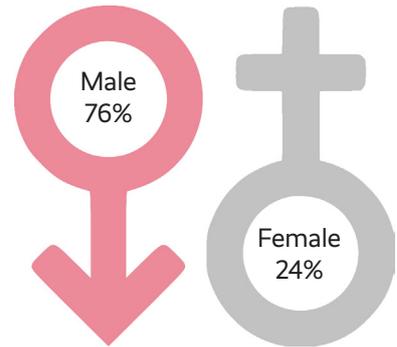
Overall, levels of knowledge and understanding increased in almost every area. A six month follow up with the participants of the Post-Election Seminar will be conducted to see how Members are using the skills they learnt during the Seminar and applying them in practice.

Gender of Speakers



13 female and 16 male speakers participated in the Seminar.

Gender of Attendees



The Seminar was attended by 9 female and 29 male attendees and featured 29 speakers from 9 different countries.

“The CPA Post-Election Seminar provided an invaluable forum for our Parliamentarians to discuss various elements of parliamentary practice and procedure while simultaneously gaining the perspective of colleagues from the Commonwealth family.”

Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives

Seminar Programme

TIME	SESSION
	OPENING OF THE VIRTUAL POST-ELECTION SEMINAR
09:00-09:30 (AST)	Participants will be introduced to the format of the virtual Post-Election Seminar and asked to fill in a survey to record their expectations and learning processes. Opening remarks will also be made from the following: <i>Speakers:</i> <i>The Hon. Speaker Bridgid Annisette-George, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago</i> <i>Stephen Twigg, CPA Secretary-General</i>
13:00-13:30 (GMT)	
30 minutes	
	VIRTUAL SESSION 1: THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF BEING A NEWLY ELECTED MP
09:30-10:15 (AST)	In this session, participants will identify opportunities and challenges of being a newly elected Member of Parliament. The outcomes will form the basis for the wider programme. <i>Speakers:</i> <i>Hon. Stuart Young MP, Minister of National Security and Member of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago</i> <i>Mr. Rushton Paray MP, Member of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago</i> <i>Hon. Gagan Mohindra MP, UK House of Commons</i>
13:30-14:15 (GMT)	
45 minutes	
10:15-10:30 (AST)	
14:15-14:30 (GMT)	Break
15 minutes	

VIRTUAL SESSION 2: GIVING PARLIAMENTARIANS A VOICE: AMENDMENTS, DEBATES, PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS, AND MOTIONS

10:30-11:30 (AST)	Parliamentarians have a wide range of tools at their disposal to raise issues of importance. This session will explore the practice and effectiveness of different tools, including contributing to debates, drafting and signing motions, written and oral questions, proposing Bills and amendments to legislation and raising issues at the constituency level.
14:30-15:30 (GMT)	
1 hour	

Speakers:

Hon. Fleur Anderson MP, UK House of Commons

Senator Yuen Woo, Member of the Senate of Canada

Hon. Alincia Williams-Grant, President of the Senate of Antigua and Barbuda

VIRTUAL SESSION 3: PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES

11:30-12:45 (AST)	The session will explore the privileges and immunities of Members of Parliament. The Session will address the importance of such privileges and the responsibilities of Members to safeguard these privileges. A brief discussion on the internal arrangements to address matters of privilege will also take place.
15:30-16:45 (GMT)	

Speakers:

1 hour 15
minutes

Ms Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel, Clerk of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Parliament

Hon. Alincia Williams-Grant, President of the Senate of Antigua and Barbuda

Mr William Wong, Parliamentary Counsel, Ontario Legislative Assembly

12:45-13:00
(AST)

16:45-17:00
(GMT) Break

15 minutes



VIRTUAL SESSION 4: THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION ON PARLIAMENTS AND PARLIAMENTARIANS

13:00-14:00 (AST)	Parliaments currently face the challenge of modernising their facilities and processes with the dawn of new technologies. This session will address how this can be done, drawing on case studies of reforms that various parliaments across the globe have implemented.
17:00-18:00 (GMT)	
1 hour	<p><i>Speakers:</i> <i>Hon. Beverly Schäfer MPP, Deputy Speaker of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament</i> <i>Ms Tonia Grannum, Clerk of Procedural Services, Procedural Services Branch, Legislative Assembly of Ontario</i> <i>Dr. Vasilios Svolopoulos, Technical Advisor & Head of the European Projects Innovation Unit at the Hellenic Parliament</i></p>

**14:00
(AST)**

End of Day 1

**18:00
(GMT)**

TIME	SESSION
09:00-09:15 (AST)	GUIDED REFLECTION OF DAY 1
13:00-13:15 (GMT)	An opportunity for discussion on learning and outcomes from 22nd February.
15 minutes	
WOMEN'S CAUCUS: EMPOWERING FEMALE VOICES IN PARLIAMENT	
09:15-10:15 (AST)	This informal discussion will provide an opportunity for female Parliamentarians and women leaders to discuss women representation and to share experiences of working together to succeed. The session may lead to the development of the work of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Network in the CPA Trinidad and Tobago Branch.
13:15-14:15 (GMT)	
1 hour	
	<i>Speakers:</i> <i>Hon. Zainab Gimba MP, National Assembly of Nigeria and CWP Vice-Chairperson</i> <i>Hon. Akierra M.D. Missick MP, Turks and Caicos House of Assembly</i> <i>Hon. Lisa Thompson MPP, Ontario Provincial Parliament</i>
VIRTUAL SESSION 5: MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AS LEADERS	
10:15-11:15 (AST)	This session will be an opportunity for Members to learn more about how Parliamentarians can lead on issues both in parliament and externally. There will be a discussion on the balance between a Parliamentarian leading on an issue that they are passionate about and following the wishes of their electorate.
14:15-15:15 (GMT)	
1 hour	
	<i>Speakers:</i> <i>Stephen Twigg, CPA Secretary-General</i> <i>The Hon. Dennis P. Lister JP MP, Speaker of the House of Assembly of Bermuda</i> <i>Hon. Akierra M.D. Missick MP, Turks and Caicos House of Assembly</i>
11:15-11:30 (AST)	
15:15-15:30 (GMT)	Break
15 minutes	



VIRTUAL SESSION 6: ETHICS AND STANDARDS

11:30-12:30 (AST)	This session will focus on how to lead as an example for fellow Parliamentarians in establishing an ethical culture. When do you have to declare interests, and how do you avoid having a conflict of interest? What are examples of good and bad practice in public service?
15:30-16:30 (GMT)	
1 hour	<p><i>Speakers:</i> <i>Kevin Deveaux, International Expert in Democratic Governance and Accountability</i> <i>Hon. Brenda Shanahan MP, House of Commons of Canada</i> <i>Hon. Rhun ap Iorwerth MS, Member of the Welsh Parliament</i></p>

VIRTUAL SESSION 7: PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

12:30-13:30 (AST)	With a particular look at the budget cycle, this session will address public financial management in the parliamentary context. All parliaments play an integral role in representing citizens in the agreement of the Executive's expenditure, this session aims to discuss how this role is best carried out.
16:30-17:30 (GMT)	
1 hour	<p><i>Speakers:</i> <i>Ms Keiba Jacob Mottley, Procedural Clerk and Head of the Financial Scrutiny Unit at the Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago</i> <i>Hon. Greg Fergus MP, House of Commons of Canada</i> <i>Hon. Gagan Mohindra MP, UK House of Commons</i></p>

**13:30
(AST)**

End of Day 2

**17:30
(GMT)**

TIME	SESSION
09:00-09:15 (AST)	GUIDED REFLECTION OF DAY 2
13:00-13:15 (GMT)	An opportunity for discussion on learning and outcomes from the previous day.
15 minutes	
VIRTUAL SESSION 8: MEDIA RELATIONS	
09:15-10:15 (AST)	This session will look at the importance of interacting with different media outlets as a Parliamentarian and how they can uplift their profile. It will also cover how to develop good relationships with contacts in the media, that can be mutually beneficial.
13:15-14:15 (GMT)	
1 hour	
	<i>Speakers:</i> <i>Ms Debbie Ransome, Commonwealth Journalists' Association</i> <i>Mr Alasdair Rendall, Head of Media Relations at UK House of Commons</i> <i>Ms Rita Payne, Commonwealth Journalists' Association</i>
VIRTUAL SESSION 9: ENGAGING WITH CONSTITUENTS	
10:15-11:15 (AST)	This session will examine one of the three key roles of Parliamentarians - constituency relations. There will be a detailed look at the various modern ways that Parliamentarians can interact with constituents to ensure that their presence in the community they represent is felt. In addition, the session will offer guidance on how constituency casework can be best managed whilst attending to the other demands expected of Parliamentarians.
14:15-15:15 (GMT)	
1 hour	
	<i>Speakers:</i> <i>Hon. Beverly Schäfer MPP, Deputy Speaker of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament</i> <i>Ms Anne Gallagher, Director-General of the Commonwealth Foundation</i> <i>Hon. Alincia Williams-Grant, President of the Senate of Antigua and Barbuda</i>
11:15-11:30 (AST)	
15:15-15:30 (GMT)	Break
15 minutes	



VIRTUAL SESSION 10: EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WORKSHOP

11:30-13:00 (AST)	In this session the importance of the inclusion of minorities in parliamentary processes will be examined. The inclusion of minorities such as persons with disabilities is crucial in providing parliaments with alternative perspectives. Therefore, this session will look at how Parliamentarians can influence the institution of parliament to include these groups, among others.
15:30-17:00 (GMT)	
1 hour 30 minutes	

Speakers:
Sen. The Hon. Paul Richards, Member of the Senate of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Hon. Speaker Kevin Murphy MLA, Speaker of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly
Mr David Salmon, former Prime Minister of The National Youth Parliament of Jamaica

CLOSING CEREMONY

13:00-14:00 (AST)	This official closing of the Post-Election Seminar will provide the opportunity for attendees to voice their thoughts on how the event went. There will also be closing remarks from the following speakers:
17:00-18:00 (GMT)	
1 hour	

Speakers:
Sen. The Hon. Christine Kangaloo, President of the Senate of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Stephen Twigg, CPA Secretary-General

**14:00
(AST)**

End of Day 3

**18:00
(GMT)**

MS LYDIA BUCHANAN
PROGRAMMES MANAGER - BILATERAL ENGAGEMENT,
CPA

Lydia Buchanan has recently joined the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Headquarters Secretariat as a Programmes Manager, working on parliamentary strengthening around the Commonwealth on a bilateral basis. Prior to this appointment, Lydia spent two years at CPA UK most recently as a Programmes Officer and before this, she supported the UK Overseas Territories Project on public financial scrutiny, a special project funded by the UK Government. As part of this project, Lydia has supported the Public Accounts Committee of Anguilla and worked alongside its Members. Before joining CPA UK she worked as the Clerk of Council for the Legislative Council of St Helena, which is where her keen interest for small branches and parliamentary strengthening primarily began.

Lydia has a degree in Politics and a Masters in Public Policy and Practice from the University of Greenwich. Lydia also holds a Project Management for Development (PMD Pro) certification.



MR CLIVE BARKER
PROGRAMMES OFFICER- COORDINATOR,
COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS WITH
DISABILITIES NETWORK AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
CPA

Clive joined the CPA in March 2018 and is the coordinator of the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) network and Youth Engagement programmes. Clive has a degree in Global Development and Sociology from Derby University. Clive also holds a Project Management for Development (PMD Pro) certification.



MS OLIVIA FLYNN
PROGRAMMES ADMINISTRATOR, CPA

Olivia joined the CPA Secretariat in November 2020 as a Programmes Administrator. Olivia primarily works on the CPA Secretariat's bilateral programmes. Prior to joining the CPA Secretariat Olivia worked for a host of international organisations including as a Supporter Relations Officer for Médecins Sans Frontières and as a Project Assistant for the UK National Commission for UNESCO .

Olivia graduated with a International Relations Bachelors degree from the University of East Anglia in the UK and Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China. Olivia is a PRINCE2 Practitioner and holds a level 3 qualification in Foreign Speakers of Mandarin (HSK).



About The CPA

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

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

The CPA represents more than 180 Parliaments and Legislatures in 53 Commonwealth countries. Its network extends to over 17,000 Parliamentarians and Parliamentary staff and is the only Commonwealth organisation to represent national, state, provincial and territorial Parliaments and Legislatures.

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

All CPA Branches are autonomous and regarded as equal. There are nine Regions of the CPA: Africa; Asia; Australia; British Islands and Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic; India; Pacific; South-East Asia.



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