

History of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC)



The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) was founded in 1911 as the Empire Parliamentary Association, which later became the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in 1948.

The Empire Parliamentary Association was founded at a meeting on 18 July 1911 in what was then House of Commons Committee Room 15 in the Palace of Westminster. As well as Members of the UK Parliament, the meeting was attended by representatives of the then dominion Parliaments of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Newfoundland and South Africa. In 1924, the first conference was held outside London, with representatives spending two months in southern Africa, starting in Maseru in what is now Lesotho before moving across South Africa. Conferences followed in Australia and Canada, although London remained as the favoured destination.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association emerged from the Empire Parliamentary Association at a conference in London in October 1948, as Parliamentarians preceded their governments by several months in recognizing the future lay in working together as equals co-operating to build a new world. The Commonwealth was not to be born officially at the government level until 1949.

CPA Conferences, later known as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC), became annual from 1961, having previously been held every two years, and they added discussions on parliamentary and electoral processes to the usual agenda of political – especially foreign policy – issues. Seminars, such as the Westminster Seminar on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure which began in the early 1950s, meetings of Presiding Officers and Clerks and study groups on parliamentary subjects also began at this time.

The CPA has since 1981 held Small Branches Conferences for Members from more than 30 jurisdictions with populations of up to a current ceiling of 1,000,000 people. The CPA Small Branches Conferences are usually held in the margins of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC). Members discuss political problems and the operation of democratic systems in some of the world's smallest jurisdictions through the CPA Small Branches Network and in 2016, the first CPA Small Branches Chairperson was elected.

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) was founded as an informal group in 1989 to increase the number of female elected representatives in Parliaments and Legislatures across the Commonwealth and to ensure that women's issues are brought to the fore in parliamentary debate and legislation. The CWP was formally recognised by the CPA in 1996 and the CWP Chairperson was first elected in 2004. The CWP triennial conferences were first held in 2004 and are usually held in the margins of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) every three years.

The CPA celebrated its centennial in 2011 and has continued to develop the best traditions of the Commonwealth and the CPA to honour the work of the Association in a way which will promote and advance the evolution of the parliamentary system throughout the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC): Conference venues and Host Branches

Commonwealth Parliamentary Conferences statistics (to date):

- **Host CPA Branches by Region:**
 - ❖ **CPA Africa Region – 17 CPCs** (Kenya x 3; South Africa x 2; Mauritius x 2; Uganda x 2; Nigeria x 2; Zambia x 1; Namibia x 1; Malawi x 1; Cameroon x 1; Tanzania x 1; Zimbabwe x 1; Ghana x 1 – *Kenya and South Africa as joint hosts in 1954*)
 - ❖ **CPA Asia Region – 5 CPCs** (Sri Lanka x 3; Bangladesh x 2)
 - ❖ **CPA Australia Region – 5 CPCs** (Australia Federal x 4; New South Wales x 1)
 - ❖ **CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Region – 9 CPCs** (United Kingdom x 7; Cyprus x 1; Isle of Man x 1)
 - ❖ **CPA Canada Region – 7 CPCs** (Canada Federal x 3; Toronto and Québec *joint hosts* x 1; Alberta x 1; Saskatchewan x 1; Canada Region x 1 – held in Nova Scotia)
 - ❖ **CPA Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region – 9 CPCs** (The Bahamas x 3; Trinidad and Tobago x 2; Jamaica x 2; Barbados x 2)
 - ❖ **CPA India Region – 4 CPCs** (India x 4)
 - ❖ **CPA Pacific Region – 6 CPCs** (New Zealand x 4; Fiji x 2)
 - ❖ **CPA South East Asia Region – 5 CPCs** (Malaysia x 5)

The following CPA Branches/Regions have hosted Commonwealth Parliamentary Conferences:

Year	Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference	CPA Small Branches Conference*	Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference*
2025	68 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Barbados	41 st CPA Small Branches Conference	9 th CWP Conference
2024	67 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Sydney, New South Wales	40 th CPA Small Branches Conference	8 th CWP Conference
2023	66 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Accra, Ghana	39 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
2022	65 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada (hosted by the CPA Canada Region)	38 th CPA Small Branches Conference	7 th triennial CWP Conference
2021	No Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in 2021		
2020	No Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in 2020		
2019	64 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Kampala, Uganda	37 th CPA Small Branches Conference	6 th triennial CWP Conference
2018	No Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in 2018		
2017	63 rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Dhaka, Bangladesh	36 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
2016	62 nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference hosted by the CPA Headquarters Secretariat in London, UK	35 th CPA Small Branches Conference	5 th triennial CWP Conference
2015**	No Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in 2015 – however the 61 st General Assembly was convened by the CPA Executive Committee***		
2014	60 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Cameroon	34 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
2013	59 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, South Africa	33 rd CPA Small Branches Conference	4 th triennial CWP Conference
2012	58 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Sri Lanka	32 nd CPA Small Branches Conference	

2011	57 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, United Kingdom	31 st CPA Small Branches Conference	
2010	56 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Kenya	30 th CPA Small Branches Conference	3 rd triennial CWP Conference
2009	55 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Tanzania	29 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
2008	54 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Malaysia	28 th CPA Small Branches Conference	2 nd triennial CWP Conference
2007	53 rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, India	27 th CPA Small Branches Conference	1 st triennial CWP Conference
2006	52 nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Nigeria	26 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
2005	51 st Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Fiji	25 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
2004	50 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Toronto, Ontario, Canada	24 th CPA Small Branches Conference, Québec, Canada	
2003	49 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Bangladesh	23 rd CPA Small Branches Conference	
2002	48 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Namibia	22 nd CPA Small Branches Conference	
2001	47 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Australia	21 st CPA Small Branches Conference	
2000	46 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, United Kingdom (London and Edinburgh)	20 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
1999	45 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Trinidad and Tobago	19 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
1998	44 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, New Zealand	18 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
1997	43 rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Mauritius	17 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
1996	42 nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Malaysia	16 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
1995	41 st Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Sri Lanka	15 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
1994	40 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Alberta, Canada	14 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
1993	39 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Cyprus	13 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
1992	38 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, The Bahamas	12 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
1991	37 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, India	11 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
1990	36 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Zimbabwe	10 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
1989	35 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Barbados	9 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
1988	34 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Australia	8 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
1987	33 rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Malaysia	7 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
1986	32 nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, United Kingdom	6 th CPA Small Branches Conference	

1985	31 st Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Saskatchewan, Canada	5 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
1984	30 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Isle of Man	4 th CPA Small Branches Conference	
1983	29 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Kenya	3 rd CPA Small Branches Conference	
1982	28 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, The Bahamas	2 nd CPA Small Branches Conference	
1981	27 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Fiji	1 st CPA Small Branches Conference	
1980	26 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Zambia		
1979	25 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, New Zealand		
1978	24 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Jamaica		
1977	23 rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Canada		
1976	22 nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Mauritius		
1975	21 st Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, India		
1974	20 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Sri Lanka		
1973	19 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, United Kingdom		
1972	18 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Malawi		
1971	17 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Malaysia		
1970	16 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Australia		
1969	15 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Trinidad and Tobago		
1968	14 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, The Bahamas		
1967	13 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Uganda		
1966	12 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Canada		
1965	11 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, New Zealand		
1964	10 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Jamaica		
1963	9 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Malaysia		
1962	8 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Nigeria		
1961	7 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, United Kingdom		
After 1961, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference became an annual CPA conference.			
1959	6 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Australia		

1957	5 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, India		
1954	4 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Kenya, South Africa and Northern and South Rhodesia		
1952	3 rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Canada		
1950	2 nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, New Zealand		
1948	1 st Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, United Kingdom		
In 1948, the Empire Parliamentary Association became the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The annual conference changed from the Empire Parliamentary Conference to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. Conferences prior to 1948 were held as the Empire Parliamentary Conference and delegation visit to Parliaments.			

**The CPA Small Branches Conferences and the CWP triennial Conferences were held in the same venue as the CPC unless stated otherwise. In 2024, the CWP Conference became an annual event.*

***In 2015, the annual conference was due to be held in Pakistan, but this was later moved to London, United Kingdom in 2016.*

****The CPA Executive Committee was reconstituted as the 61st General Assembly in October 2015 to conduct essential business for the Association.*

CPA Executive Committee Mid-Year Meetings: Host Branches

The following CPA Branches have hosted CPA Executive Committee Mid-Year Meetings, which began in 1968:

Year	CPA Executive Committee Mid-Year Meetings	Year	CPA Executive Committee Mid-Year Meetings
2023	Gibraltar	1995	Malta
2022	Assam, India	1994	Norfolk Island
2021	Virtual meeting	1993	British Columbia, Canada
2020	Virtual meeting	1992	Cayman Islands
2019	Ottawa, Canada	1991	Guernsey
2018	Mauritius	1990	Botswana
2017	Northern Territory, Australia	1989	Quebec, Canada
2016	London, UK (CPA Headquarters)	1988	Trinidad and Tobago
2015	Sabah, Malaysia	1987	Gibraltar
2014	London, UK (CPA Headquarters)	1986	Newfoundland, Canada
2013	Cayman Islands	1985	Cyprus
2012	Tonga	1984	Malawi
2011	Yukon, Canada	1983	Singapore
2010	Swaziland	1982	Bermuda
2009	Bermuda	1981	Hong Kong
2008	Jersey	1980	Jersey
2007	Cyprus	1979	Western Australia
2006	Isle of Man	1978	Penang, Malaysia
2005	New South Wales, Australia	1977	Sierra Leone
2004	Uganda	1976	St Lucia
2003	Malaysia	1975	Isle of Man
2002	Kiribati	1974	Western Samoa
2001	Barbados	1973	Cayman Islands
2000	Gibraltar	1972	Singapore
1999	Singapore	1971	Prince Edward Island, Canada
1998	Swaziland	1970	Jersey
1997	British Virgin Islands	1969	Gibraltar
1996	South Africa (Cape Town)	1968	Mauritius

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