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64th COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE
KAMPALA, UGANDA
22 to 29 SEPTEMBER 2019 (inclusive of arrival and departure dates)

For further information visit www.cpc2019.org and www.cpahq.org/cpc2019

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 6 August 2019

2019

August
30 Aug to 5 Sept  50th CPA Africa Regional Conference, Zanzibar.

September
19 to 20 September  Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Conference, Jersey
22 to 29 September  64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC), Kampala, Uganda – including 37th CPA Small Branches Conference and 6th Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference.

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10th Commonwealth Youth Parliament, New Delhi, India - final dates to be confirmed.

2020

January 2020  25th Conference of the Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC), Canada - final dates to be confirmed.

The CPA calendar fosters the exchange of events and activities between CPA Regions and Branches. For further information on any events, please contact the CPA Branch concerned or the CPA Headquarters Secretariat. CPA Branch Secretaries are asked to send notices of CPA events to hq.sec@cpahq.org in advance of the publication deadline to ensure the calendar is accurate.

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The CPA Parliamentary Fundamentals Programme

Enrolment is now open for the CPA Parliamentary Fundamentals Programme - on the general course for Commonwealth Parliamentarians or the course specifically developed for Members from CPA Small Branches. Programmes are accredited with McGill University, Canada (Small Branches programme) and the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa (General programme).

Programme includes: Online modules | Residential components | Teaching by world-class academics and parliamentary experts.

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CONFERENCE THEME: ‘ADAPTATION, ENGAGEMENT AND EVOLUTION OF PARLIAMENTS IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING COMMONWEALTH’.

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Benefit from professional development, supportive learning and the sharing of best practice with colleagues from Commonwealth Parliaments together with the participation of leading international organisations.

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Updated August 2019
THE COMMONWEALTH: ADDING POLITICAL VALUE TO GLOBAL AFFAIRS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The Editor’s Note

It was stated nearly fifteen years ago that the Commonwealth will continue to be a major player on the global scene. The challenge now is to consolidate its inherited strength, the achievements of the past, and use these as a basis for planning towards a better and more fulfilling future. In doing this, we must strengthen the organisation and its structures, deepen our bonds, expand the scope of our activities, build more viable networks within the organisation and with other partners, and define our priorities clearly at all times.

The strength of the Commonwealth lies in its origin, its inherited strength, the achievements of the past, and use these as a basis for planning towards a better and more fulfilling future. In doing this, we must consolidate and operationalise.

This statement is still relevant today in 2019 and the Commonwealth continues to strive to make an impact on global affairs in the 21st century. The Commonwealth is the only international organisation that has members on every continent and region of the world and representation in every country. Since the “modern” Commonwealth came into existence, the relevance and value of the relationships within the Commonwealth have been reaffirmed and consolidated. For the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), its membership has expanded across the CPA’s nine Regions and to over 180 Branches including national, state, provincial and territorial Parliaments and Legislatures. The Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Executive Committee, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Khan, celebrates the Geneva Conventions and building respect for International Humanitarian Law in the Commonwealth in his View article. Historian and commentator at the University of Oxford looks at the policy responses to disinformation and how freedom of expression is being stifled and barriers are preventing the functioning of an independent media in many countries. The global conference was co-hosted by the UK and Canada. The CPAs’ signature project is a global campaign titled ‘The Commonwealth Road Safety Initiative’. This issue of The Parliamentarian features two papers from the 50th President of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Jeffrey Hyland, Editor, The Parliamentarian, CPA Secretary-General highlights youth engagement and parliamentary successes during visit to CPA Belize Branch; CPA Parliamentary Seminar in Bermuda; CPA Parliamentary Seminar in Sierra Leone; CPA Technical Assistance Programme Workshop in Zambia; and CPA Asia Regional Conference in Pakistan.

This state of emergency, the role of the CPA in adding political value to global affairs in the 21st century. In this issue of The Parliamentarian, Hon. Trevor Mallard, MP, Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives provides a detailed case study of the Parliament of New Zealand as he examines how the parliamentary system and institution have changed in recent years, and how it is working to improve parliamentary effectiveness. And the Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons in the UK Parliament, Rt Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP, writes about the emerging security issues for Parliamentarians and the impact on democracy. 

In this issue of The Parliamentarian, Rt Hon. Jeremy Hunt, MP, at the time UK Foreign Secretary, speaks about Commonwealth countries showing leadership in defending media freedom and democracy. MP, Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, herself a former journalist, writes about defending media freedoms in the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association has featured in a new book published by the CPA Secretariat. The book covers the history of the Commonwealth as the 70th anniversary of the London Declaration in 1949 is marked as well as the role of the Westminster model in Parliaments and Legislatures around the modern-day Commonwealth.
The CPA engages in standard setting, benchmarking for Parliaments and Parliamentarians, and learning and development. Through these activities and engagement with its Members, the CPA adds political value to global affairs in the 21st century.

CPA as an international organisation

For more than two decades, the CPA has explored ways and means in which it could change its legal status from that of a UK charity to an international body like the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and APF – L’Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie. Significant progress has been made on this change during my time as CPA Chairperson working with the CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan.

The CPA General Assembly in 2016 asked the CPA Secretary-General to constitute a Working Group to look into the issue of status and this was established in 2017. After grappling with this constitutional issue for two decades, this Working Group comprising Members from the nine CPA Regions reached agreement that the organisation should be reconstituted as an international organisation. At the core of this thinking, was that the CPA wanted to ensure that it would retain its mandate which it has had since its founding in 1911 to represent Commonwealth Parliaments and Parliamentarians. In this regard, different models, such as L’Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, were looked at as future models for the CPA.

The Working Group’s report was unanimously endorsed by the 62nd General Assembly in November 2017 and the CPA Secretary-General and I opened discussions with Ministers at the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, immediately after the adoption of the report. In 2018, the CPA was invited to submit a business case to the UK Government as the grounds for reconstitution and this business case was approved by the CPA Executive Committee in November 2018 and then submitted to the UK Government in December 2018.

The UK Government is currently reviewing the business case and we are awaiting a response. The CPA Secretary-General has this year written to every Branch of the Association providing a briefing on what has been set out so that everyone is informed on the reasons for the requested change and as CPA Chairperson, I am appealing to our respective Parliaments and Governments to get engaged in the process by appealing to the UK Government to deal with the matter as soon as possible.

Promoting gender equality in Parliaments

I would now like to turn to the valuable work done by the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) network. The CWP Chairperson is Hon. Dr Dato’ Noraini Ahmad, MP from Malaysia and the CWP celebrates its 30th birthday this year, having been founded in 1989. The CWP emerged from recognising the need to increase women’s representation in political institutions and the importance of providing greater support to women in Parliaments. The CWP seeks to encourage women around the Commonwealth to stand for election by removing the barriers to their participation. It also seeks to ensure that gender is mainstreamed throughout all of the CPA’s activities.

One of the key instruments for this work is the CWP Regional Strengthening Funds. These funds provide each CPA Region with support to undertake activities that strengthen women’s position in politics. I am proud to say that the CPA Africa Region is one of the most active CWP regions in the network, and many Parliamentarians have participated in CWP programmes and activities in the CPA Africa Region.

I recently visited and addressed the CPA Tanzania Branch and Parliament of Tanzania where I noted that in Tanzania, over a third of the Parliamentarians are women. This means that Tanzania is achieving a level of women’s representation that is greater than 166 other Parliaments in the world. On behalf of the entire CPA family, I congratulate the Government and people of Tanzania for this political will, not forgetting the women who brave the odds to come forward as candidates.

This is just one example of the many successes across the Commonwealth where the CPA Small Branches network, the development of the Small Branches Steering Committee, the preparation of the climate change toolkit for CPA Small Branches and the outcomes of the CPA Small Branches Workshops. The CPA Small Branches Chairperson also referred to the establishment of the CPA Small Branches network during a visit to Malta.

The CPA has embarked on a two-year project to conduct CPA Benchmarks assessments with a number of its member Parliaments and I am delighted that already many CPA Branches have agreed to take part in this CPA Benchmarking exercise.

CPA Small Branches

I recently visited the Parliament of Malta at the invitation of the CPA Small Branches Chairperson, Hon. Angela Farugia, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta where I heard about the work of the CPA Small Branches network, the development of the Small Branches Steering Committee and the focus on climate change which greatly affects our CPA Small Branches.

The CPA’s focus on the CPA Small Branches has taken place since 1981 and it is one of the only global forums which provides this opportunities. The smallest of the CPA’s Legislatures seek to meet the same expectations as larger Legislatures and the CPA Small Branches network recognises the central role of Parliament in meeting the challenges of some of the Commonwealth’s smallest states.

CPC: 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference

From 22nd to 29th September 2019, the CPA Uganda Branch and Parliament of Uganda will host the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) with the CPA Headquarters Secretariat. The CPC – our annual flagship event – will bring together over 500 Parliamentarians, legislators and political decision makers from across the Commonwealth for this unique conference and networking opportunity and hope to see many Members at the conference. The CPC offers the prospect of the coming together of the CPA’s global membership to address the critical issues facing today’s Parliamentarians.

You will be able to find more information about the 64th CPC at www.cpc2019.org and on the CPA website www.cpahq.org/cpc2019.

Conclusion

I hope you will see that the CPA has been extremely productive and busy under my tenure. In order to continue our important work, I invite all of us as Parliamentarians and Legislators to come on board and be committed. We should not forget that as Members of Parliament, we have the mandate of the sovereign people, we are the voice of the voiceless and represent the hope and aspiration for many. We should therefore not lose sight of the value we are voting laws. Our legislation should be people-centered and we should make sure that international conventions are not just ratified but that the instruments of implementation are put in place in due time.

I look forward to engaging with you all in making the CPA an inspiring platform for Commonwealth Parliamentarians worldwide.
THE COMMONWEALTH: ADDING POLITICAL VALUE TO GLOBAL AFFAIRS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

View from the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Chairperson

Introduction
The year 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of the Commonwealth with a ‘Connected Communities, Diverse Futures’ theme.

According to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, HRH Princess Scotland, QC: ‘in celebrating 70 years of the Commonwealth we recall with pride the monumental record of impact and achievement which have brought sustainable development to the people of our diverse family of nations, with ever more inclusive progress and prosperity. Programmes such as the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda on Trade and Investment, and the Commonwealth Blue Charter on ocean protection, are both built on the foundation of the 1949 agreement by our 53 member nations to collaborate in new ways in response to the current needs of our countries and communities.’

As rising generations respond afresh and build together in the Commonwealth, the values of liberty, respect for human rights, and the rule of law, a narrowing of the wealth gap, an end to racial discrimination, and the Commonwealth Charter is a document that set out the governance principles of the Commonwealth with ‘...a world of open political discourse free of fear and a common set of principles that are deeply embedded in the hearts and minds of the Commonwealth’s people.’

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 53 independent and equal sovereign states that span across Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe and the Pacific. The history of the Commonwealth can be traced back to 26 April 1949 when the London Declaration was signed which marks the point at which the legacy of the British Empire was replaced with a partnership of equals.

The Commonwealth started with eight countries in 1949 to 53 in 2019. The two most recent countries to join the Commonwealth are Fiji and Raumati which grew towards the diversity in the culture as well as the geographical spread. Furthermore, all Commonwealth members have an equal say – regardless of size or economic status. Therefore, it ensures the smallest member countries have a voice in shaping the Commonwealth and that the voices of developing members are not overshadowed.

The Commonwealth Parliamentarians being involved in the so-called track-two diplomacy, sports diplomats could also contribute to the building of good will and trust among their peers via soft powers that they have under the second-tracks diplomacy platforms. Honef, a sports diplomacy, is often seen as a segment of soft diplomacy that brings 53 diverse nations together more than worthwhile. By combining the existing values, political and soft power, the Commonwealth has the unique potential to address complex challenges where other international organisations still regarded as relevant when it comes to global affairs in the 21st century.

By looking at the operationalisation and assessment of political power, it provides substantial guidance to steer through the complexity of international relations. Political will hence must be part of the equation for the Commonwealth to deal with global affairs in the 21st century.

The Commonwealth should be more open towards Members’ country performance, especially when it comes to the violation of sixteen values prescribed in the charter. No countries should be given an easy way or take advantage of the organisation leniency – especially in the context of gaining a fig-leaf of legitimacy. Developing Members’ countries are encouraged to raise their standard of democracy, rights and governance.

The role of CHOGMs should be enhanced in order to add political values.

Adding political value to global affairs in the 21st century
The Commonwealth has already added values in today’s global affairs in the 21st century through its Charter. The Commonwealth Charter itself provides five member values, that are embedded in the most contexts such as politics, the economy and social life. Through goodwill, friendship and historical ties, the Commonwealth has become the platform for cooperation without binding formal obligations. The Commonwealth has a curious, gentle, civilised way of viewing the world. While there is no formal trade agreement, the Commonwealth enables Prime Ministers and Trade Ministers to meet informally, which provides positive side effects for trade.

Conclusion
The Commonwealth is a voluntary association, a globalised collective of independent nations who possess shared values and a uniquely practical approach may or may not work in some cases. This Executive may provide the Commonwealth with the influence that it should have. This Executive, also, would confer the much awaited trade privileges and economic policy among Members. The gained authority also would chart the multilateral based decision-making, as stated in the Commonwealth and other superpowers and global organisations. For example, the Commonwealth are Singapore, Brunei and Malaysia link the Commonwealth to the ASEAN organisation.

TABLE 1: Political Will Definition and Operationalisation,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition Component</th>
<th>Operationalisation</th>
<th>Assessment Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With a common understanding of a particular problem on the formal agenda</td>
<td>• Use of similar tone and terminology; • Status &amp; prominence of decision makers on formal agenda</td>
<td>• Commonly and convergence in statements of decision makers with regard to problems; • Importance &amp; prominence of decision makers discussing problems; • Volume of discussion;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is committed to supporting</td>
<td>Distribution and strength of information sources</td>
<td>• Incentives and disincentives for political actors (institutional, electoral, and others); • Allocation of analytical resources; • Credibility and obligation of statements (based on reputational costs); • Policy and decision-making (domestic and international) and accountability relationships; • Bargaining mechanisms; • Cultural characteristics and constraints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A commonly perceived, potentially effective policy solution</td>
<td>• Use of similar frame and terminology; • Avoidance of known sources of ineffectiveness; • Capacity for policy effectiveness.</td>
<td>• Conformity and convergence in statements of decision makers with regard to proposed solution; • Non-interference of short-term issues; knowing ineffective policies and diplomatic countermeasures; • Funding commitment; • Inclusion of potentially effective sanctions and a commonly perceived, potentially effective policy solution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References:
2. Ibid
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
5. Ibid
In my role I saw the possibility to address this anomaly at least within the CPA, i.e. by developing a strategy aimed specifically at the CPA Small Branches, who would otherwise risk being left behind. This has now started to shift in order to give the smallest the voice they have been striving for.

In my research I have come across a concept which led the Commonwealth to global affairs, The Commonwealth Effect. Albeit limited to the economic sphere, this is the first and most notable attempt to assemble a comprehensive data set on trade and investment relationships within the Commonwealth, made in the late 1990s by Lundan and Jones (2001). In a paper entitled “The Commonwealth Effect” and the Process of Internationalisation,” they set out to analyse the significance of a ‘Commonwealth Effect’ on trade and investment. They concluded that there is an overall tendency for high levels of intra-Commonwealth trade and investment, even when factors such as regional trade agreements or geographical proximity are considered.

The future of the Commonwealth, and its role on the global scene, has been discussed in various fora in the past years, and in a post-Brexit scenario I believe that such debate will only intensify and become more relevant. Added to this, one also needs to consider the growth of other markets such as China, India and Africa. In my role as Chairperson of the CPA Small Branches for the past three years I have deepened my understanding of this. Too often we observe that the work of international organisations is tailored to the circumstances of much larger jurisdictions whose experience and resources are much more vast than those which are either much smaller or still developing.

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What is international humanitarian law?

International humanitarian law (IHL) is a set of rules which seek, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflict. It protects persons who are not or are no longer participating in the hostilities and restricts the means and methods of warfare. International humanitarian law is also known as the law of war or the law of armed conflict. International humanitarian law is part of international law, which is the body of rules governing relations between States. A major part of IHL is contained in the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and nearly every State in the world has agreed to be bound by them. The domestic implementation of certain provisions of the Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocol is a legal obligation accepted by States.

The role of Parliamentarians in effectively implementing national criminal sanctions

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is an international community of around 180 Commonwealth Parliaments, Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff committed to deepening democratic governance through the promotion of Commonwealth values such as democracy, rule of law, human rights, international peace and security, good governance. The CPA, for example, played a key role in the establishment of the Commonwealth Latimer House Principles on the separation of powers which highlights the importance of the separation of powers between the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary to ensure effective governance and democracy. The Commonwealth Latimer House Principles provide guidance on the role of the separation of powers in the Commonwealth, its effectiveness in providing democratic governance and the role of civil society. All of these values are relevant to the role of IHL today. The implementation of IHL promotes and upholds a rules-based international system in which the proper implementation of and compliance with IHL is an important part of that system. Therefore, the implementation of IHL goes directly to the promotion of the rule of law and good governance, and contributes to international peace and security.

In most jurisdictions, the Executive is primarily responsible for IHL matters which includes becoming party to international treaties and can use parliamentary procedures to ask their government why the State has not yet signed and ratified or acceded to a treaty. If the State has signed but not ratified a treaty, Parliamentarians can initiate legislation to submit a Bill on the matter; Parliamentarians can lobby government to become a party to international instruments; and they can try to ensure that when the State does become a party to an international treaty, it does so without reservations or declarations that are contrary to the ‘object and purpose’ of the instrument.

Commonwealth Parliaments should play an important role in whether a State becomes a party to international treaties and they can use parliamentary procedures to ask their government why the State has not yet signed and ratified or acceded to a treaty. If the State has signed but not ratified a treaty, Parliamentarians can initiate legislation to submit a Bill on the matter; Parliamentarians can lobby government to become a party to international treaties and they can try to ensure that when the State does become a party to an international treaty, it does so without reservations or declarations that are contrary to the ‘object and purpose’ of the instrument.

Commonwealth Parliamentarians should play a key role in supporting international humanitarian law’ says Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Secretary-General at Red Cross International Humanitarian Law Conference in Rwanda

The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Mr Akbar Khan has stressed that Commonwealth Parliamentarians should play a key role in the implementation of international humanitarian law in a global context. The CPA Secretary-General said: “The CPA is a community of Commonwealth Parliaments, Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff committed to deepening democratic governance through the promotion of Commonwealth values such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights, international peace and security and good governance as enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter. The implementation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) promotes and upholds a rules-based international system, in which the proper implementation of and compliance with IHL is an important part of the system. The implementation of IHL goes directly to promoting the rule of law and good governance, and its role in contributing to international peace and security, and so Parliamentarians have a key role to play.

“In practice, Commonwealth Parliamentarians must ensure that national judicial authorities have the required legislative basis to investigate, prosecute and punish perpetrators while ensuring adequate penalties and judicial guarantees are respected. In Commonwealth countries, such matters are frequently covered in Geneva Conventions Acts and/or in International Criminal Court Acts.”

The CPA recognises the significant role of Parliamentarians in working with the Executive and others to promote IHL and to ensure its effective implementation. This requires Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff to be well-informed and consequently, the CPA has been working with the British Red Cross to develop a number of joint projects for Commonwealth Parliamentarians — including a handbook on International Humanitarian Law for Commonwealth Parliamentary Associations and Parliaments.

The CPA Secretary-General was speaking at the 5th Commonwealth Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) held from 10 to 14 June 2019 at the Kigali Convention Centre in Rwanda. The conference was held on the theme of ‘Celebrating the Geneva Conventions and IHL: A Commonwealth Perspective’ in the light of both the 70th anniversaries of the Geneva Conventions and of the ‘modern’ Commonwealth in 2019.

The conference partners included the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Rwanda Red Cross and the Commonwealth Secretariat. The CPA Secretary-General also chaired a working group in the margins of the conference on IHL engagement with Parliamentarians with the outcomes reported back to the main conference. The keynote address was given by Hon. Johnston Busingye, Minister for Justice of Rwanda and key topics discussed at the conference included: Addressing serious violations of IHL: national and international measures; the role of National IHL Committees in upholding IHL; Engagement with the judiciary and with Parliamentarians on IHL.

During his visit to Rwanda, the CPA Secretary-General also visited the Parliament of Rwanda and CPA Rwanda Branch where he met with the Chairperson of the CPA Rwanda Branch Executive Committee, Hon. Senator Nyagahura Marie, MP and Hon. Mutesi Anitha, MP. Rwanda is due to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 2020.
colleges. The courts also require resources to play their part and to help ensure that the rule of law is upheld in all circumstances.

States should spread knowledge of IHL, as widely as possible and this will have a financial implication; dissemination must start in peacetime so that the principles are embedded. Parliamentarians can ask Ministries what has been done to comply with the dissemination obligations.

**Encouraging National Implementation**

Parliamentarians can request the establishment of a National IHL Committee to advise the government on disseminating and implementing IHL. In the United Kingdom, the National Committee on International Humanitarian Law is an interdepartmental body with a mandate to consider implementation of IHL instruments and encourage dissemination. As in many jurisdictions, the national Red Cross Society is a member of the United Kingdom National IHL Committee. This is by virtue of its special auxiliary and IHL roles. IHL Committees can also undertake useful initiatives. A good example is the undertaking of a study on the jurisdiction’s implementation of IHL at a national level. Another useful action is to establish contacts with other national IHL Committees and share good practice and experiences. This can include sharing of legislative and other measures to address serious violations of IHL.

**Conclusion**

As the representative centre of any democracy, Parliament and Parliamentarians can play an essential role in advocating and legislating for IHL. Parliamentarians can support efforts to ensure that IHL is faithfully implemented given their role as political leaders and representatives of the people.

Parliamentarians can establish All-Party Parliamentary Groups to encourage strategies toward implementation. A very important and often unvisited role that Parliamentarians can play is to uphold the neutral character of IHL. Parliamentarians can do this by working across parties and by approaching IHL issues on an all-party basis. This will help to avoid politicising IHL and contrasts with other areas of law.

Parliamentarians can support national laws that implement international instruments and also support the setting up of national IHL committees. They can encourage the appointment of a focal point in Ministries for national programmes to help build capacity and mainstream IHL and use parliamentary speaking privileges to highlight IHL at home or abroad.

Parliamentarians can use parliamentary oversight bodies such as Select Committees to hold government accountable for IHL, which might not be a priority for the Executive, and to seek relevant briefings from experts to provoke constructive debate. Social media tools can be utilised to raise awareness of IHL and the resources that are available.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) recognises the significant role of Parliamentarians in working with the Executive and others to promote IHL and to ensure its effective implementation. This requires Parliamentarians and their staff to be well-informed. The CPA Headquarters Secretariat is working with the British Red Cross to develop a Handbook on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) for Commonwealth Parliamentarians which we hope will be published later this year.

Mr Akbar Khan
7th Secretary-General
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

This View article is based on a presentation made by the CPA Secretary-General to the 5th Commonwealth Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) held from 10 to 14 June 2019 at the Kigali Convention Centre in Rwanda.

References:

1 Dualists emphasise the difference between national and international law, and require the translation of the latter into the former. Without this translation, international law does not exist as law. International law has to be translated into national law. If a State accepts a treaty but does not adapt its national law in order to conform to the treaty or does not create national law as well, or it is no law at all. If a State accepts a treaty but does not adapt its national law in order to conform to the treaty or does not create a national law explicitly incorporating the treaty, then it violates international law. Source: Wikipedia.
Preparations continue for 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Uganda

Preparations are well underway for one of the largest annual gatherings of Commonwealth Parliamentarians at the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) hosted by the CPA Uganda Branch and the Parliament of Uganda in September 2019. The annual flagship event will bring together over 500 Parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and decision makers from across the Commonwealth for this unique conference and networking opportunity. The CPC offers the prospect of the coming together of the CPA’s global membership to address the critical issues facing today’s Parliaments.

The Commonwealth Foreign Ministers also reaffirmed their commitment to the Commonwealth Charter during the conference, which draws upon declarations made by Commonwealth Foreign Ministers re-affirming commitment to Commonwealth Charter. Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion of Malta; and Lord Ahmad of Richard Sezibera, MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Capacity as current Commonwealth Chair-in-office alongside the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers released an affirmation of the Parliamentarians’ View of the CPA Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures held in the margins of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) which will be held on the theme of: ‘Adaptation, engagement, and evolution of Parliaments in a rapidly changing Commonwealth’.

During the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, there will also be a number of additional conferences and meetings including: 37th CPA Small Branches Conference; 8th Triennial Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference; 84th CPA General Assembly; meetings of the CPA Executive Committee; and the Society of Clerks at the Table (SOCIATT) meetings.

Commonwealth Foreign Ministers re-affirm commitment to Commonwealth Charter

The 70th anniversary of the Commonwealth was celebrated when Commonwealth Foreign Ministers representing the governments of its member countries met in London, United Kingdom on 10 July 2019 and reaffirmed their commitment to the ‘core values and principles’ of the Commonwealth Charter. The Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting (CFMM) was chaired by the United Kingdom Foreign Secretary, Rt Hon. Jeremy Hunt, MP in his capacity as current Commonwealth Chair-in-office alongside the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland, QC.

Many Commonwealth Parliamentarians including Hon. Dr. Richard Sezibera, MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda; Hon. Carmelo Abela, MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion of Malta; and Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for the Commonwealth for the United Kingdom attended the meeting.

The Commonwealth Foreign Ministers released an affirmation to mark the 70th anniversary of the Commonwealth following the meeting which draws upon declarations made by Commonwealth Parliamentarians. The Commonwealth parliamentary community will be held on the theme of: ‘Adaptation, engagement, and evolution of Parliaments in a rapidly changing Commonwealth’.

SDG 16 at Commonwealth Partnership for Democracy panel event in New York

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association’s Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures have been highlighted as an important tool in the pursuit of achieving peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 16 at a Commonwealth Partnership for Democracy (CPAD) panel event in New York hosted by the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations.

The CPAD panel event in New York gave attendees the opportunity to share their experiences of how Parliamentarians have contributed to SDG 16 and to identify the value of the CPA Benchmarks in measuring parliamentary performance and effectiveness. Effective Parliaments are one of the principal institutions of any functioning democracy and they are central to the attainment of SDG 16, the development agenda and all of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.

The first of two moderated panel sessions on a Parliamentarian’s view of the CPA’s Benchmarks was chaired by the CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan who said: “The pioneering Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures is one of the CPA’s most important pieces of parliamentary strengthening work as we seek to further strengthen Parliaments and Legislatures in line with the aspirations of the Commonwealth Charter, the SDGs and the changing demands of our democracies. The focus on measuring impact and the need to demonstrate the effectiveness of Legislatures is critical at a time of increased scrutiny of Parliaments and of Parliamentarians and the CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures provide a key tool in assisting Commonwealth Parliaments to demonstrate their performance, increase their self-awareness and prioritise areas for development in the light of SDG 16.”

The panel event gave attendees the opportunity to share their experiences of how Parliamentarians have contributed to SDG 16 and to identify the value of the CPA Benchmarks in measuring parliamentary performance and effectiveness. Panellists included CPA Members of Parliament from Belize, Canada, Malaysia and the United Kingdom.

• Hon. Laura Tucker-Longsworth, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Belize who spoke about the experience of utilizing the CPA Benchmarks and how the process has assisted with parliamentary reform in Belize. She said: “The CPA Benchmarks provided us with a structure by which we could evaluate our methods of working in Parliament.”

• Hon. Alexandra Mendes, MP (Canada Federal), CPA Vice-Chairperson gave the Canadian experience of using the original CPA Benchmarks and the important work of the Public Accounts Committee in providing oversight. The CPA Vice-Chairperson said: “Being citizens is the guiding mantra to carrying out all oversight work of Public Accounts Committees and Supreme Audit Institutions.”

• Hon. Wai-Wing Chan, MP (Malaysia) outlined the current state of parliamentar system in Malaysia and the role that self-assessment against the CPA Benchmarks had assisted the reform process. He said: “It’s not about knowledge or capacity, it’s about political will and the separation of powers.”

• Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods, MP (United Kingdom) explained how the updated CPA Benchmarks could be used in established Parliaments like the UK and outlined the role of the CPA in promoting gender and more inclusive Parliaments. She said: “It’s very important that the CPA Benchmarks remain a ‘live’ document that is used by all our member Parliaments as there is always room for improvement.”

The CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures provide Parliaments across the Commonwealth with a set of democratic standards and many of the CPA’s 180 Commonwealth Parliaments have undertaken self-assessments using the CPA Benchmarks or have incorporated the CPA Benchmarks into their own parliamentary standards. Covering a comprehensive range of recommendations, the CPA Benchmarks propose guidelines in areas such as elections and candidate eligibility; political parties; parliamentary staff; legislative procedures; financial and budget oversight; transparency and integrity; diversity and gender sensitivity; and freedom of information.

The Commonwealth Partnership for Democracy (CPAD) panel event brought together Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Parliament, Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff as well as senior academics and representatives of UN and other international bodies. The event was opened by Ambassadors James Roscoe, Head of Open Societies and Partnerships at the United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations and Mr Martin Chungong, Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

The panel event was held in the margins of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), which held its annual meeting from 9 to 19 July 2019, ahead of the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly and SDG Summit from 24 to 25 September 2019 in New York.
The Trinidad and Tobago Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) has successfully hosted the 44th CPA Regional Conference of the Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic (CACA) Region on the theme of ‘Globalisation and Nationalism: Quo Vadis – Impacts on Commonwealth Parliaments’. The CPA Regional Conference saw over 60 delegates from across the Caribbean participate in the week-long conference from 15 to 19 July 2019 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The CPA Caribbean Regional Conference also focused on the pressing issues facing the region such as de-globalisation, climate change and population growth. The regional conference was attended by Speakers, Members of Parliament and guest delegates from across the region and the wider CPA community.

Senator Hon. Christine Kangaloo, President of the Senate of Trinidad and Tobago and Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Trinidad and Tobago hosted the regional conference and they were joined at the opening ceremony by Her Excellency Paula-Mae Weekes, TT Ambassador to the Commonwealth; Mr Akbar Khan, Speaker of the House; Mr. Dr. Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago and the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Mr Akbar Khan.

During their opening speeches, the Caribbean leaders underscored the challenges faced by developing states in the region and urged delegates to use the topics selected for discussion to work towards solutions and best practice back to their jurisdictions.

The President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Her Excellency Paula-Mae Weekes spoke about the key role of Parliamentarians in the national life of democracies in the region and how public distrust of Parliamentarians had increased, making it vital that Parliaments work to increase public trust and engagement. The President of the Senate of Trinidad and Tobago said: “The Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago is thrilled to host Commonwealth Parliamentarians at this year’s regional conference. This regional conference allows us to gather as Parliamentarians to undertake two critical exercises – the first to renew and review our relationships with each other as Parliamentarians; the second to re-address and redefine our relationship with the outside world, whom we serve.”

The CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan said of the main topic of the regional conference: “Today we are witnessing the pervasive forces of nationalism, perhaps the most prevalent now globally than at any point in the post-war period. The most immediate impact on Commonwealth Parliaments from the phenomenon of ‘nationalism and globalisation’ is the persistent feeding of citizen’s political distrust in the institution of Parliament to their daily lives.

It is therefore vital for Parliament as an institution and Parliamentarians as elected representatives to sit up and consider how they are going to respond to the serious concerns posed by rising nationalism in opposition to globalisation. In fashioning their response, Parliamentarians of all political stripes need to listen carefully and constructively to each other and to citizen’s concerns and to take them into account in policy making.”

To read the CPA Secretary-General’s speech at the opening of the regional conference please visit www.cpahq.org.

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A large number of Caribbean nations and territories were represented at the regional conference, including Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Beliz, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, St Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, St Lucia, and Turks and Caicos. In addition, the regional conference also included observers from France and Spain. The 44th CPA Regional Conference of the Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic Region saw several other important events take place alongside the main conference including the Annual General Meeting for the Regional Executive Committee, the 15th Regional Conference of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic Region and the 15th Caribbean Regional Youth Parliament Debate.

The 15th Caribbean Regional Youth Parliament in Trinidad and Tobago saw young people aged 18-29 years from across the region come together to debate and experience parliamentary democracy in action. Caribbean Youth Parliamentarians discussed the global topic of ‘Securing our borders to mitigate the effects of crime whilst observing our human rights obligations’. The Youth Parliament aims to foster an appreciation and understanding of the rules and procedures of parliament among the youth of the region.

For more information and resource materials about the CPA Roadshows for young people please visit www.cpahq.org/cpahq/youngpeople.
The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Trinidad and Tobago Branch - the President of the Senate, Senator Hon. Christine Kangaloo and the Speaker of the House, Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George, MP - and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, Canada and CPA Ontario Branch President, Hon. Ted Arnott, MPP (Member of the Provincial Parliament), at the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago on 20th May 2019.

Speaker Arnott noted that the initiative will be centered on the principles of “co-operation, collaboration and understanding” and that the relationship could be ‘balanced, flexible and practical,’ given that both jurisdictions are unique. He continued that twinning agreements are ideal vehicles for capacity-building, skills training and the strengthening of parliamentary practice and democracy.

He said that MPs face a steep learning curve and a demanding schedule, but often lack formal training for the job concluding that the relationship could be tailored, flexible and practical, given that the partnership could be shaped around many different themes with presentations delivered by a wide range of speakers.

Guest speakers at the conference included former Parliamentarian at the Victorian Legislative Assembly, Professor Ken Coghlin who spoke about the CPA Codes of Conduct for MPs.

There was a diverse range of Parliaments and Legislatures represented at the conference, with Presiding Officers and Clerks from Australia (both the Federal Parliament and the State Legislatures), the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Micronesia, New Zealand, Nieu, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Commonwealth Parliamentarians from the Pacific and Australia Regions focus on enhancing parliamentary effectiveness at 50th Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference in Queensland

Commonwealth Parliamentarians from the Pacific and Australia Regions of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) have attended the 50th Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference (POCC) at the Parliament of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia from 8 to 10 July 2019.

Hon. Curtis Pitt, MP, Speaker of the Queensland Legislative Assembly said: “It was a great honour for the Queensland Parliament to host the 50th Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference (POCC). Each year, POCC is the annual peak event for Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in the CPA Australia and CPA Pacific Regions. It is an event where officers of the various Parliaments learn from each other and we strengthen the bonds between our respective Parliaments. In Queensland, we greatly value our membership in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The Queensland Parliament has strong twinning arrangements with Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu which have both been recently renewed. We were more than happy to roll out the welcome mat for this great opportunity to ensure the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association fulfills its purpose in the CPA Australia and CPA Pacific Regions.”

The annual conference is for Presiding Officers (Speaker) and Clerks from Parliaments from the CPA Pacific and CPA Australia Regions and is hosted by a different Parliament or Legislature each year with the Queensland Parliament taking up the honour in 2019. The conference also saw the continuation of the successful twinning programmes for Parliaments in the two Regions with meetings taking place between twinning partners.

The keynote address for the conference was given by Rt Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, Deputy Speaker of the United Kingdom House of Commons (please turn to page 222 to read a summary of this keynote).

Key topics on the agenda for the delegates included the role of a Speaker in determining an Opposion; impressions of a newly elected Speaker; renewing and enhancing parliamentary effectiveness; and the administration of Parliaments. The delegates at the POCC also discussed the CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures and measuring Parliaments effectiveness against them.

Conference papers revolved around many different themes with presentations delivered by a wide range of speakers.

The Queensland Parliament and the Province of Ontario, with many, if not most, choosing to live in the city of Toronto. In 2012, former Governor-General of Canada, David Johnston had noted that some 100,000 people from Trinidad and Tobago live in Canada.

Speaker Kangaloo said that thousands of citizens of Trinidad and Tobago and Canadians come together to celebrate the Caribbean Festival of Caribana in Toronto. “The truth of the matter, therefore, is that Trinidad and Tobago and the Province of Ontario have, in many ways, long been twinned. Today’s ceremony may mark the twinning of our Legislatures, but the lives and the destinies of our peoples have long been inextricably intertwined and inseparably linked,” she said. “Our historical and cultural indicators assure us that, as we work and live together, this endeavor, like all those of the past, will surely be immensely successful, and will add another important dimension to our shared destinies,” she added.

The twinning ceremony was also attended by the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, Hon. Rick Nicholls, MPP; the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and CPA Ontario Branch Secretary, Todd Decker; the Vice-President of the Senate of Trinidad and Tobago, Senator Hon. Nigel de Freitas; the Deputy Speaker of the House at the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, Hon. Esmond Forde, MP; and the Clerk of the House at the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago and CPA Trinidad and Tobago Branch Secretary, Ms Jacqueline Sampson-Meiguel.

Additional reporting by Pawa Namosi in Trinidad and Tobago.
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The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Mr Akbar Khan, has highlighted the advances made in establishing good governance and parliamentary democracy by the National Assembly of Belize during a visit to the CPA Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region member from 4 to 9 May 2019.

The CPA Secretary-General was welcomed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Belize, Hon. Laura Tucker-Longsworth; and President of the Senate, Senator Hon. Lee Mark Chang before attending a series of parliamentary meetings to discuss the CPA’s programmes for the upskilling of Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff and new developments in parliamentary strengthening in the Caribbean Region and in the wider Commonwealth.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives of Belize, Hon. Laura Tucker-Longsworth said: “I am delighted to welcome the Secretary-General and his team from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to Belize. We are working together to focus on the need for the Parliament to modernise and evolve to suit these modern times. The support of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the benchmarking exercise against international standards, developed through the CPA, has been invaluable to us.”

The CPA Secretary-General was received by Rt Hon. Dean O. Barrow, Prime Minister of Belize; Hon. Wilfred Eltington, Minister of Foreign Affairs; and Mrs Kim Simplic Barrow, Special Envoy for Women and Children. The CPA Secretary-General also met with Ms Cynthia Williams, Executive Director of the National Women’s Commission in Belize to discuss the work of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) in promoting equality in Parliament.

The CPA Secretary-General highlighted the positive role of youth engagement in democracy and stressed the importance of gender equality in Parliament at a series of CPA Roadshows for young people aged 11 to 18 at four schools in the capital, Belize City – Anglican Cathedral College (ACC); Edward P. Yorke High School; St Catherine Academy; and Wesley College. The CPA Secretary-General highlighted the positive role of youth engagement in democracy and stressed the importance of gender equality in Parliament at a series of CPA Roadshows for young people aged 11 to 18 at four schools in the capital, Belize City – Anglican Cathedral College (ACC); Edward P. Yorke High School; St Catherine Academy; and Wesley College.

The CPA Roadshows for Schools and Universities provide an opportunity for 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 question and answer sessions. The CPA Secretary-General spoke to students about the importance of youth engagement in the political process and the sharing of Commonwealth political values enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter, especially with the 60% of the 2.4 billion population of the Commonwealth aged under 30.

The CPA Secretary-General also highlighted the empowerment of all women and girls in the Commonwealth to achieve gender equality as outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 5.

For images of the CPA Secretary-General’s visit to Belize please visit www.cpahq.org/ashleyvod.

The CPA Secretary-General said: “I am delighted to visit Belize to launch the CPA Roadshow for young people for the first time here 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 is key objectives of the CPA and our visit to Belize has emphasised this.”

The National Assembly of Belize is also engaging with the CPA Headquarters Secretariat in undertaking a self-assessment against the updated CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures. The CPA is currently implementing activities to encourage Commonwealth Parliaments to strive and uphold a high standard of parliamentary performance and the utilization of the CPA Benchmarks as a tool to provide Parliaments across the Commonwealth with assistance to strengthen their capacity to adhere to good governance principles.

This is part of a wider project, the Commonwealth Partnership for Democracy (CP4D), which is being led by Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) working with partners including the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the CPA UK Branch and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF). The Commonwealth Partnership for Democracy was launched during the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London, UK and the programme will work with Commonwealth Parliaments including Belize.

During his visit to Belize, the CPA Secretary-General was also briefed on the National Referendum that was held in Belize on 8 May 2019 on the question of whether to refer the longstanding legal territorial dispute between Guatemala and Belize to the International Court of Justice for resolution.

Parliamentarians in Bermuda aim to strengthen parliamentary democracy at Commonwealth Parliamentary Association seminar

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) has helped strengthen parliamentary practice and procedures for Members of the Parliament of Bermuda with a CPA Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar from 1 to 2 May 2019. The CPA seminar in Hamilton, Bermuda was held to enable current and recently elected Parliamentarians to gain a broader understanding of the principles of parliamentary democracy across the Commonwealth and to strengthen their skills.

The Parliament of Bermuda is made up of thirty-six elected Members in the House of Assembly and eleven appointed Senators in the Senate. It is located on a small island archipelago with a population of around 44,000 people that is a self-governing British Overseas Territory. Bermuda last held transparent, free and fair elections in 2017 with a 73% voter turnout which demonstrated the island’s commitment to the democratic ideals enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter.

The CPA Bermuda Branch is one of the smallest Legislatures in the CPA’s membership of over 180 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures. The CPA is the only Commonwealth body that works to strengthen small territorial Legislatures in the British Overseas Territories like Bermuda as well as working with larger national, state and provincial Legislatures.

The CPA Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar gave Members of the Parliament of Bermuda an excellent opportunity to learn about parliamentary practice and procedure and to gain a better understanding of the parliamentary system and democratic processes in other Commonwealth jurisdictions. The seminar was opened by Hon. Dennis List, JP, MP; Speaker of the Bermuda House of Assembly; Hon. Senator Mrs Kathy Lynn Simmons, JP, Attorney-General and Minister of Legal Affairs of Bermuda; and the CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan.

Hon. Dennis List, JP, MP; Speaker of the Bermuda House of Assembly and CPA Bermuda Branch President said at the opening of the seminar: “This CPA Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar is an example of the many benefits that are available to Parliaments within the Commonwealth. It’s the mandate of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to develop, promote and support Parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance. We must continue to evolve a modern democracy so when future Parliamentarians look back at this time, they can clearly see the improvements we are making today.”

The CPA Secretary-General said: “The CPA is pleased to partner with the Parliament of Bermuda to support the strengthening of democratic governance in one of the smallest Legislatures in the Commonwealth. The CPA Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar demonstrates the CPA’s commitment to the CPA Small Branches in the Overseas Territories and to the mutual benefits of learning among CPA Members. We must always seek opportunities to strengthen Parliament, nurture public trust and confi dence in the institution and build the capacity of its parliamentarians through programmes like this CPA Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar.” Please visit www.cpahq.org/parliamentspeches to read the full text of the Secretary-General’s opening address.

The CPA Secretary-General also highlighted the work of the Parliament of Bermuda in developing the original CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures in 2006 and the ongoing engagement of the Parliament in this vital parliamentary tool.

The Members of the Parliament of Bermuda heard from experts from across the Commonwealth at the CPA Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar including the CPA Small Branches Chairperson, Hon. Angelo Farrugia, MP; Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malawi, Hon. Shirley Osbome, MLA; Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Montserrat; Mrs Jacopa Sampson-Meiguel, Clerk of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago; and Mr Paul Béliste, former Clerk of the Senate of Canada; as well as local Members and officials from Bermuda.

Members attended workshop sessions on a wide variety of topics including: the Separation of Power and the relationship between the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary; Administration and Financing of Parliament; Democracy and Civil Society; the role of Members of Parliament; Senators and Backbenchers; Practice and Procedure in the House; Parliamentary Committees; Ethics and Accountability of Members of the Legislature; and Parliament and Social Media: Is it a menace or benefit for Democracy and Parliament? During his visit to Bermuda, the CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan also met with the Governor of Bermuda, John Rankin CMG and Hon. E. David Burt, JP, MP, Premier of Bermuda to discuss CPA parliamentary strengthening programmes in the Commonwealth.

For more images of CPA activities and events please visit www.cpahq.org/flickr.
Parliamentarians examine the impact of ‘fake news’ and media freedom at 48th CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Conference in Guernsey

Over forty Parliamentarians from more than thirteen Commonwealth countries and territories met in Guernsey to discuss the impact of ‘fake news’ and the media challenges for Parliaments and democracy. The 48th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Conference, was hosted by the States of Guernsey and CPA Guernsey Branch from 19 to 22 May 2019 in St Peter Port. Parliamentarians discussed the impact ‘fake news’ and digital information on media freedoms in the Commonwealth and the importance of quality journalism in the reporting of Parliamentary proceedings and elections.

The regional conference was opened by the Bailiff of Guernsey and President of the CPA Guernsey Branch, Sir Richard Collas, Presiding Officer of the States Assembly and Parliamentarians were welcomed to the regional conference by Deputy Lyndon Trott, Chair of the CPA Guernsey Branch. Deputy Trott said: “We are very excited to have so many high-quality speakers with us in Guernsey and we are also pleased that as well as delegates from the CPA BIM Region, we have a large number of observers from other parts of the Commonwealth. It’s a very relevant topic and I think our Guernsey meeting will showcase what is best about the CPA.”

Guest speakers at the regional conference included Dr Victoria Nash, Senior Policy Fellow and Deputy Director of the Oxford Internet Institute at Oxford University; Rita Payne, Journalist and President Emeritus, Commonwealth Journalists Association; Professor Dr Horst Risse, Secretary-General of the German Bundestag; Victoria Schofield, Historian and Contributor to The Cambridge History of the Journal of International Affairs; and Doug Wills, Managing Editor of The Evening Standard and The Independent. Other topics discussed included ‘no-platforming’ which is the practice of preventing someone from discussing their ideas by refusing them a platform either physically at an event or online via a website or social media.

Delegates also heard presentations on the CPA Headquarters Secretariat’s roll-out to CPA Branches of self-assessment against the updated Secretariat’s roll-out to CPA Branches of self-assessment against the Commonwealth Secretariat’s roll-out to CPA Branches of self-assessment against the Commonwealth Secretariat’s roll-out to CPA Branches of self-assessment against the Commonwealth Secretariat’s roll-out to CPA Branches of self-assessment of Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures and the CPA UK Branch’s work on Commonwealth Election Observations. They were also briefed by the CPA Headquarters Secretariat on preparations for the upcoming 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) due to take place in Uganda in September 2019.

The CPA Small Branches Chairperson, Hon. Angelo Fumagali, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Malta also attended the regional conference.

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) British Islands and Mediterranean Region held a meeting of the regional Steering Committee in the margins of the CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Conference in Guernsey at which Hon. Dr. Roberta Blackman-Woods, MP (United Kingdom) was elected as the new CPA Steering Committee Member, before she reported back to the delegates on CPA activities for the region. The regional conference also incorporated the CPA BIM Region’s Annual General Meeting and a reception at Government House, Guernsey.

For feature articles by guest speakers at the CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Conference please turn to pages 232-237.

CPA UK seminar brings together key actors in fight against modern slavery

A seminar for Commonwealth Parliamentarians and legislative drafters was held at the Parliament of the United Kingdom from 26-29 March 2019, hosted by the CPA UK Branch. Organised as part of the CPA UK Branch’s Modern Slavery Project, the seminar drew together some of the leading lawyers and practitioners working to bring an end to modern slavery-related crimes. In attendance were Parliamentarians at the forefront of reviewing and amending legislation and raising awareness of these issues in their constituencies.

The Legislative Drafting Seminar aimed to deepen Parliamentarians’ knowledge of international standards and new developments in modern slavery and human trafficking law. It also examined how the process of passing legislation can be used to ensure it is effective, drawing on lessons learnt from the UK Modern Slavery Act and other legislation from around the world. Parliamentarians also spoke about introducing anti-trafficking legislative amendments and Bills that address modern slavery-related crimes.

Uganda, Member of Parliament, Hon. Herbert Afro, who has recently introduced an anti-slavery Private Member’s Bill, said: “The CPA UK Modern Slavery Project has helped mobilise, create awareness and support efforts to expose the vice of slavery in the Commonwealth. We are privileged and honoured to be a key partner in this effort.”

Legislature represented at the Legislative Drafting Seminar included Bangladesh, Canada, Ghana, Hong Kong, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Turkey & Caicos Islands, Uganda and the UK.

Strengthening legislative practices and parliamentary procedures on the agenda at 57th CPA Canada Regional Conference in Nova Scotia

Over 60 Commonwealth Parliamentarians from across the Canada Region recommitted to increasing parliamentary strengths at the 57th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Canada Regional Conference, which took place in Halifax, Nova Scotia from 15 to 19 July 2019. Delegates were welcomed to the CPA Canada Regional Conference by Hon. Kevin Murphy, Speaker of the Nova Scotia Legislative and CPA Nova Scotia Branch President.

The CPA Canada Regional Conference was attended by Commonwealth Parliamentarians from the federal, provincial and territorial legislatures of the region as well as Parliamentary Clerks who attended workshop sessions on a wide range of topics including: Legislating for Children in Care; Carbon Tax and Climate Change; Forestry Practices for the 21st century and beyond; Representation: Identities, Equalities and Pluralities; The Notwithstanding Clause and Canada’s Rights; Criminal Legislation and Administration; The Impact of Negative Campaigning and Dress Codes in Parliament.

The CPA Secretary-General, Mr. Altar Khan attended the 57th CPA Canada Regional Conference and encouraged Canadian Parliamentarians to learn more about the work of the CPA and the CPA’s programmes for Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff and updated Members on preparations for the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) to be held in Uganda in September 2019. The CPA Secretary-General spoke about the updated CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures and also thanked Canadian Parliamentarians who have recently represented the CPA Canada Region on the CPA International Executive Committee.

The CPA Canada Regional Conference was also attended by the CPA International Vice-Chairperson, Hon. Alexandra Mendes, MP (Canada Federal); Hon. Geoff Regan, Speaker of the House of Commons at the Parliament of Canada; and Hon. Yasmin Ratansi, MP, Chair of the Canadian Federal Branch of the CPA.

Ahead of the CPA Canada Regional Conference, the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Canada Regional Conference took place from 12 to 15 July 2019 in Nova Scotia. Turn to page 249 for a full report of the CPAWCP Canada Regional Conference.

The CPA Rwanda Branch has held its General Assembly and has welcomed 25 new Members into the association and elected new Members of Parliament to Officer positions. Hon. Valens Muhika, MP was elected the Vice-Chairperson of the Rwanda Branch and Hon. Pio Niyonzima, MP and Hon. Emma Furaha Rubaguva, MP were elected new Members of the Branch’s Executive Committee.

Speaking at the CPA meeting that took place in the Parliament of Rwanda, the CPA Rwanda Chairperson, Hon. Marguerite Nyagahura, MP said that since its admission to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in 2011, the Parliament of Rwanda and CPA Rwanda Branch have been very active and played an important role in CPA activities. She said that CPA Rwanda has been represented in many different meetings, seminars and conferences, and has contributed to sharing Rwanda’s experiences and furnishing new Members of Parliament with information on the Commonwealth in general and the processes, procedures and practices of the CPA. She added:” In particular, she reiterated Rwanda’s preparedness for the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) scheduled to take place in Kigal on 2020.

Delegates were also briefed on the CPA Rwanda Branch President, Rt Hon. Mukabakiza Donatille said that under such meetings, Members are able to think together and forge the best way to promote the CPA’s fundamental values which include human rights, international peace, rule of law, alleviation of poverty, equal rights and representation for all citizens. She said: “Our country remains fully committed to implementing all those fundamental principles of CPA. Our government also ensures good governance through transparency and accountability. Since the Parliament of Rwanda joined the CPA, Members of Parliament have played a vital role in terms of parliamentary diplomacy and closer political cooperation through different regional, continental and global conferences, seminars and workshops.”

Under the CPA meetings in Rwanda, different presentations and discussions were made, all revolving around the functions and practices of the body and the Rwanda’s objectives in joining the Association. A special delegation of Members of Deputies and the Senate of Rwanda, the CPA Rwanda Branch is one of the CPA Africa Region’s members.
Parliamentarians from the Parliament of Zambia have benefited from a successful two-day workshop on the role of Parliament in ratifying international treaties and agreements, hosted by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Zambia Branch from 19 to 20 June 2019, and part-funded by the CPA Headquarters Secretariat through its Technical Assistance Programme.

The substance of the CPA workshop revolved around the new oversight duty that the Parliament of Zambia was given in the new Constitution of Zambia in 2016: to approve international agreements and treaties before they are acceded to or ratified. Many Parliaments around the world play different roles when it comes to the ratification of international treaties and there are several examples of Commonwealth Parliaments who have this oversight role including the United Kingdom and Australia.

In Zambia, Parliamentarians were welcomed to the Workshop on the Role of Parliaments in Ratifying International Treaties and Agreements by the First Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia, Hon. Catherine Namugala, MP and the Clerk of the National Assembly of Zambia, Mrs Cecilia Mbowo.

The First Deputy Speaker said that the attendance of Members of the Zambia National Assembly at the workshop demonstrated their commitment to the values of the Commonwealth and thanked the CPA Headquarters Secretariat for its financial support for the workshop. The First Deputy Speaker also said that the workshop gives Members an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of Parliament’s role in ratifying international treaties and agreements, and demonstrates the significant role that Parliaments and Parliamentarians play in national decision-making, especially where the distinction between national and international decision-making is difficult to separate and public matters being settled by means of international law and practice. In response, the CPA Headquarters Director of Operations, Mr Jarvis Mutya, delivering the remarks of the CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan, said: “The CPA firmly believes in the benefits of ‘peer to peer’ learning to maximise the development of Parliaments and the broader parliamentary community. It is in this spirit of mutual learning and partnership that this workshop takes place with the support and presence of the highly experienced and dedicated resource persons sourced by the Parliament of Zambia. We at the CPA understand that democracy is a continuously developing concept that requires nurturing. We recognise that no single country or Parliament can provide a source of best practice in all areas of governance but believe that the Commonwealth can be a source of best practice in all areas of governance.”

Also attending the CPA workshop were: the Vice-Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the CPA Africa Region, Hon. Mnawa Mbulukulima, MP; CPA International Executive Committee Member for Central Africa Sub-Region, Hon. Lazarous Chuntu Bwalya, MP; together with Cabinet and Provincial Ministers and Members of the Executive Committee of the CPA Zambia Branch.

Participants at the workshop heard from Apolot Esther Freda, Senior Legal Counsel at the Parliament of Uganda who also attended the workshop to demonstrate how international treaties and agreements are reviewed and approved in the Uganda Parliament. The workshop also heard from experts at the University of Zambia School of Law and the Zambia Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Justice.

The CPA Workshop on the Role of Parliaments in Ratifying International Treaties and Agreements was delivered as part of a CPA Technical Assistance Programme for the Parliament of Zambia and the programme follows the delivery of a successful CPA Post Election Seminar for the Parliament of Zambia in November 2016. The CPA Technical Assistance Programmes offer a wide range of different support and expertise to the CPA’s Member Parliaments including self-assessment against the CPA’s Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures; and training and support for Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in many different aspects of Parliament.

For further information about the funding, assistance and workshops available through the CPA Technical Assistance Programme, please contact the CPA Headquarters Secretariat hq.sec@cpahq.org.
To mark its 20th anniversary in 2019, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Patron of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, accompanied by HRH The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay, visited the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh on 29 June 2019. The Queen was received by Rt Hon. Kenneth Macintosh, MSP, Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament and CPA Scotland Branch President, and by Rt Hon. Nicola Sturgeon, MSP, First Minister of Scotland.

The Queen addressed Members of the Scottish Parliament and said: “Twenty years on, this chamber continues to be at the heart of Scottish public life, as an important forum to engage and unite diverse communities and also a home for passionate debate and discussion. Through new initiatives you continue to strive to be responsive and accountable to the people you serve, and to engage and involve those who might not otherwise participate in political debate.”

Also listening in the chamber were young people who were born on the day the Scottish Parliament was convened on 1 July 1999, who are now aged twenty.

The Presiding Officer welcomed Her Majesty and His Royal Highness and addressed the young people in the chamber: “And I want to say a special welcome to your young guests. Your families are watching on – beaming with pride and pleasure at who you are, what you have already achieved and the promise of what is yet to come. I want to let you know that you carry with you all our dreams, all our ambitions and all our hopes for the future. You have grown in self-confidence over the past two decades, just as this place has grown into a self-confident institution. And just as your families have been there for you, so I hope this Parliament is now here to help you along the way.”

Scotland’s First Minister said that Members of the Scottish Parliament were “united by our desire to do our best for the people” while the Scottish Conservatives Leader, Ruth Davidson, MSP said that Holyrood was “limitless into the fabric of our society”, adding that “there is consensus that as a process, devolution has made our country stronger.”

The Queen was preceded into the chamber by the mace and the Crown of Scotland, while a fanfare was played by the brass ensemble from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. As the Queen departed, the Scottish Parliament’s Piper and CPA Executive Committee Member, Stuart McMillan, MSP played traditional music including ‘A Man’s a Man for a’ That’ by Robert Burns.

The ‘modern’ Scottish Parliament was established two years after Scotland voted for devolution in a referendum in 1997. It initially sat at the General Assembly in Edinburgh before moving to its purpose-built home at Holyrood in 2004. The Queen was last in the landmark building in July 2016, marking the opening of the fifth session of the Scottish Parliament.

To mark the 20th anniversary of the Scottish Parliament, Rt Hon. Ken Macintosh, MSP, the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament and CPA Scotland Branch President, reflected on democracy and political participation in Scotland as the Parliament reached this milestone anniversary in The Parliamentarian 2019: Issue Two. To access this issue of The Parliamentarian please visit www.cpahq.org/cpahq/parliamentarian and click on ‘archived issues’.

Erskine May: ‘Bible’ of parliamentary procedure made freely available to all in historic first

The 25th edition of Erskine May, the authoritative text on parliamentary law and practice, has been published online, becoming the first edition to be publicly available and free to use, with a searchable, navigable and accessible version hosted on the UK Parliament website. Previous editions have only been available for purchase as a hard copy book.

The publication of Erskine May online is part of a range of efforts by the UK Parliament to make parliamentary proceedings more accessible and open. In recent months, the UK House of Commons has launched an innovative Guide to Procedure and set-up a ground-breaking Centre of Excellence for Procedural Practice.

The online version of Erskine May will be true to the print version in the first instance, although periodic updates may be made to the online text. These updates will be done as transparently as possible so that users can tell where and when changes have been made.

Rather than being a set of rules, Erskine May is a description of how procedure in the UK House of Commons and House of Lords has evolved and the conventions that apply. The book is widely used by Commonwealth Parliaments across the world and many Legislatures that are based on the ‘Westminster’ model.

The latest edition of Erskine May includes details of the many changes that have occurred since the 24th edition was published in 2011. In addition to being made available online, the hard-copy version of Erskine May will still be published on behalf of the Erskine May Memorial Trust by LexisNexis, who will also publish a digital version in their online library.

The Speaker of the UK House of Commons, Rt Hon. John Bercow, MP commented: “Parliamentary practice and procedure does not exist in a vacuum. It is in fact the lifeblood of the day to day work of Members, as recent months have starkly brought into focus. All too often parliamentary rules are seen as a Byzantine mystery, only understood by a select few. Therefore I am delighted that Erskine May, the venerable ‘bible’ of parliamentary procedures, is to be made freely available to all, to help people develop a wider understanding of how their elected representatives work.”

Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from CPA Sri Lanka Branch benefit from Committee Strengthening Programme at Westminster through CP4D project

As part of the Commonwealth Partnership for Democracy (CP4D), the CPA UK Branch and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy welcomed a delegation from the CPA Sri Lanka Branch and the Parliament of Sri Lanka to the UK Parliament for a work programme for Members and Clerks to provide support for Parliamentary Committees in the public aspects of Committee work including Committee effectiveness, outreach and communications. The Sri Lanka delegation heard from a number of UK Parliamentarians including Tom Tugendhat, MP, Chair of the UK Foreign Affairs Select Committee; David Hanson, MP; Baroness Barker; Kerry McCarthy, MP; and Baroness Anelay, Chair of the UK House of Lords International Relations Select Committee.
A case study of the Parliament of New Zealand.

The strength and vitality of the institution of Parliament is the responsibility of every person in this room. Every Presiding Officer must uphold the important traditions that underpin the Parliament’s enduring independence and constitutional standing, while also ensuring that Parliament remains relevant, effective, and fit-for-purpose. Each Clerk advises the Presiding Officer both about the important traditions and about the need for change. This paper champions the process through which Parliament reviews and improves its own effectiveness, and urges you to ensure that each process occurs in your jurisdiction.

I will start by discussing the balance between tradition and innovation, and the need for regular review and reform. In doing so, I will advocate for the importance of the Standing Orders as constitutional rules that should be amended only with broad support. I will talk about what it means to review the Standing Orders so that Parliament is more effective, and will explain how the process works in New Zealand. Finally, I will give a sense of the issues I will raise, following limited preliminary consultation, when we undertake our next review of the Standing Orders later this year.

Retain the traditions that matter – but not every relevant

When the New Zealand Parliament is opened after each general election, the first action of the Speaker-elect is to seek confirmation in the role from the Governor-General, and to lay claim to the privileges of the House. I expect that a similar ceremony takes place in many of your Parliaments too. The claim of the Speaker’s right to attend on the Sovereign, and to expect the ‘most favourable construction’ on the House’s proceedings, is a custom that appears to go back as far as the reign of Henry IV, when records show it occurring in 1523. So, Speakers have been claiming the House’s privileges for at least 600 years, probably longer. In particular, the claim of free speech, the right to not get embroiled in any ongoing tension between the Crown and Parliament over many years, culminating in 1614, when King Charles I entered the UK House of Commons with an armed escort and attempted to arrest five members for treason. This gives rise to the strong parliamentary convention that neither the Sovereign nor their representative enters the Chamber of the House.

These venerable traditions might seem quaint, but they go to the heart of the House’s constitutional status as an autonomous, representative institution. They have been retained so as to convey the important historical basis of Parliament, which underpins the House’s day-to-day operations. There are many more traditions of this sort, from the symbolism of the Mace, to the role of the Leader of the Opposition, to the deliberate discipline of debating a Bill and testing the House’s support for it three times over.

But we don’t cling onto traditions that have lost their relevance. While in claiming the privileges of the House we continue a tradition that can be traced to the time of Henry IV, we have lost helpful practices from that era that dropped away long ago. Parliament hasn’t recently deposed a monarch, rotten boroughs are a thing of the past, and we even allow people to watch debates in the House if they want.

In the last 40 years, the Standing Orders have been regularly reviewed and updated. In New Zealand, we fortunately have a regular cycle of review, which takes place at the beginning of each term of Parliament. Regular reviews of the Standing Orders are required by the Constitution Act, 1986; the State Sector Act, 1988; the Public Finance Act, 1989; and the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act, 1990, and commenced the process of electoral reform that resulted in the shift to MMP (Mixed Member Proportional).

As well as promoting a new Parliamentary Service Act to reduce Executive control over the administration of parliamentary resources, the New Zealand Government instigated a review of the Standing Orders in 2013. This paper champions the process resulted in radical changes, such as the current structure of multi-functional Select Committees that can initiate their own inquiries, and the curtailment of the Government’s ability to throw the House into urgent sittings lasting through the night.

Regular reviews of the Standing Orders followed, at the instigation of successive Governments, but it wasn’t until 2003 that the Standing Orders Committee was itself mentioned in the Standing Orders. Now, the cycle of regular review is well embedded. Like Australia, we have a three-yearly electoral cycle, which is very short by international standards, and so the effect is that the Standing Orders Committee is itself mentioned in the normal sense; instead of the House deciding by a vote to suspend Standing Orders, the Standing Orders Committee is itself mentioned in the Standing Orders. The Committee tends not to decide matters by a vote in the normal sense; instead of the Standing Orders Committee is itself mentioned in the Standing Orders.

So, the regular cycle of review means that constitutional change that should not be imposed arbitrarily by the majority, and maintained a bipartisan approach. The last time a major procedural change was made against strong opposition was in 1951, when Prime Minister George Forbes engineered the adoption of a closure motion to cut off debate. This was a majority decision, but important changes still occur when it was otherwise only after a deal that had been carefully brokered in the Standing Orders Committee fell over. As an interesting twist, in 1986 when changes to the Standing Orders were sought to add Madisonian style Executive domination of the House, Rob Muldoon himself was the leading Opposition Member on the Standing Orders Committee. In his speech to the House on the proposal, he wholeheartedly endorsed the Standing Orders Committee. No, the regular cycle of review means that the constitutional importance of the Standing Orders is recognised by adopting a consensus-based approach, but important changes still occur
out in the parliamentary practice, as set as one of its indicators of good Parliamentary Association parliamentary rules, and it is also importance of regularly reviewing reviews to enhance parliamentary rules, and procedures, and which recommends that: what is now benchmark 2.1.3, promoted the inclusion of benchmarks in 2018, the Parliament should be constituted set a minimum standard for how a Parliament better.

Drivers of change
It is really important, though, to make sure reviews of procedure aren’t just about the words. There are numerous factors that drive changes to Parliament’s ways and methods. Legislative, societal and political changes, technological developments and evolving practices can all prompt requests for the process of a review of Standing Orders resembles that for a Select Committee inquiry, including an open call for public submissions. This provides a unique opportunity for Members, non-government instrument, ‘disallowable instruments that are not legislative instruments’. All of these forms of law will simply be referred to as legislation. The Clerk noted these changes in his submission on the Legislation Bill, and once the Bill passes, the Bills provisions will be reflected in his submission to the committee on the review of Standing Orders.

Technology and new opportunities
A driver of change that feels more emerging is the need to stay relevant, to promote accessibility, and transparency of parliamentary processes, and to engage the public with the work of Parliament. To this end, we need to open exploring new technologies and their application in the parliamentary context. However, the adoption of technological innovations has a flow-on effect, requiring the examination of parliamentary rules to ensure they reflect the new ways of doing things.

In 2013, the New Zealand Parliament launched a successful pilot to webcast Select Committee hearings. The Standing Orders Committee observed in 2014 that the pilot had increased the accessibility and transparency of parliamentary processes, and that a full roll-out should ensure that this development is reflected in the practices and procedures of the House. As the most-cost-effective means for livestreaming was through Facebook, each Select Committee now has a separate Facebook identity. This has resulted in comments being posted by the public on these Facebook pages, including comments about hearings as they are taking place. Additionally, the Standing Orders Committee has increased the availability of more affordable technologies enabling the Office of the Clerk to implement a phased roll-
Members wishing to hold or hand over their infants for care. I have now provided that caregivers can come into the lobbies and go to the door of the Chamber for this purpose. Again, this is a minor change, though it has made a significant difference for MPs juggling their demanding roles both as Members and as parents.

Evolving procedures

Members are also drivers of change: they are well placed to identify when procedures are not working well and can feed these into the review process through various avenues. Sometimes these proposed changes might seek to address concerns Members have about procedural tactics in the House. For example, in 2009 when the then Government sought to push through a controversial Bill to completely reconfigure the governance of the Auckland region, and to do so under urgency and without Select Committee scrutiny, the then Opposition undertook a determined and innovative filibuster to frustrate its progress. As many as 30,000 amendments were tabled, and the Government responded with its own tactics, such as a last-minute change to the Bill’s title to short-circuit the multiplicity Opposition amendments to clause 1. Long after the dust had receded, and Members took stock of events during the subsequent review of Standing Orders, in 2011 it was agreed that such procedural battles were not ideal. New procedures were introduced to allow the Presiding Officer to group and select amendments, so Members are encouraged to promote serious alternative proposals. Presiding Officers are also more proactive in urging Members to focus on debating issues, and thus extend the debate by writing on relevant fresh material, rather than to seek to delay Bills simply by bringing up endless votes on amendments. The Standing Orders Committee also recommended the introduction of extended sittings, which enable the Government to access additional House time with safeguards against the truncation of proper process that can occur when urgency is taken. It is really important to ensure the Opposition can filibuster when it considers necessary to constrain the Government’s ability to impose controversial reforms, while still enabling the Government to implement its popular mandate through legislation.

Parliamentary effectiveness, and what it means

Which brings us to the concept of parliamentary effectiveness. The overall point of reviewing the Standing Orders of the House is not just to tidy the words of the rule book, or to make the House easier to administer and more compliant with statutes. The purpose of the exercise is to improve the effectiveness with which Parliament as an institution operates, in the public interest.

The effectiveness of the institution depends on your perspective: for the Government, the efficiency of the legislative process in converting policy into law is most important; for the Opposition, it is the ability to examine legislative proposals, challenge the Government’s policies, and test alternatives; and hopefully for all participants the aim is for the country to be regulated by quality and up-to-date laws. In terms of financial scrutiny, the Government requires the appropriation of public money to run the State and implement its priorities, the Opposition needs good information and the ability to hold the Government to account, and all voters have a desire for good governance and improved prosperity. When it comes to representation, Parliament is effective when Members can raise issues of concern and interest to their constituents - freedom of speech is fundamental. But it is balanced by the need to exercise that freedom responsibly, and the House restrains Members from debating matters that are before the court or suppressed by a court order, and generally seeks to impose a level of decorum on debate so as to maintain the dignity of the institution.

I could go on. The point is that parliamentary effectiveness is served when all of the different perspectives and interests can be advanced while remaining in the public interest. It is only fair to be found by the Members themselves, exercising their political judgement and working together to find solutions that can obtain overwhelming support.

Conclusion

As a Member of the Standing Orders Committee, I have the opportunity to put forward ideas. With the next review approaching, I am keen to explore a number of proposals with Members.

whips or spokespersons of other parties. To find a consensus, there is necessarily a process of give and take by Members around the table to find a balanced package of proposals.

The role of the Chairperson is key to all this. For the process to be successful, the Committee needs a reasoned programme so there is time to consider proposals thoughtfully and weigh the various interests. Dialogue should be encouraged between Members to arrive at a balanced package that Members will support and advocate for in caucus meetings. It is important that serious proposals are not dismissed out of hand at the hint of an objection, rather an opportunity is provided to talk through the issues so agreement can be reached. When there is disagreement, the Chairperson can work with Members to identify the particular concerns and problems, with a view to identify possible ways forward. Of course, this is part and parcel of good chairing anyway, but it is crucial when it comes to getting meaningful outcomes from a consensual-based process in the partisan world of Parliament.

Ideas for improving the Standing Orders

As a Member of the Committee, I also have the opportunity to put forward ideas. With the next review approaching, I am keen to explore a number of proposals with Members.

Promote family-friendly initiatives

Any review of parliamentary life poses unique challenges, particularly for Members’ families, with long hours, extended periods away from home and increased public profile placing pressure on family life. While some of these challenges, like the increased profile that comes with public office, are outside our control, there are a number of things we can do to make Parliament more family-friendly.

In 2017, the Standing Orders Committee considered how we might find a better balance of work and family life in the parliamentary setting, including promotion of more effective and predictable use of House time and provision of support for Members needing to care for young children or other dependants. It was agreed that the Clerk of the House, in collaboration with the General Manager of the Parliamentary Service, would consult Members on how to better accommodate family needs in parliamentary life. The ideas and information shared by Members in this consultation will feed into the upcoming Standing Orders review in 2020, as well as other reviews that are being carried out on the provision of services to Members and Parliament.

One option is to consider extending the traditional five-day working week, through the introduction of extended sittings, which enable the Government to access additional House time with safeguards against the truncation of proper process that can occur when urgency is taken. It is really important to ensure the Opposition can filibuster when it considers necessary to constrain the Government’s ability to impose controversial reforms, while still enabling the Government to implement its popular mandate through legislation.

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The effectiveness of the institution depends on your perspective: for the Government, the efficiency of the legislative process in converting policy into law is most important; for the Opposition, it is the ability to examine legislative proposals, challenge the Government’s policies, and test alternatives; and hopefully for all participants the aim is for the country to be regulated by quality and up-to-date laws. In terms of financial scrutiny, the Government requires
fit-for-purpose parliament: reviewing and enhancing parliamentary effectiveness

By making Parliament more family-friendly we can create more opportunities for family members to travel to be together; or opportunities for family members so more Members can leave the families and constituencies.

In the review of Standing Orders, it was agreed that it would be helpful to find ways for the House to reward the use of inclusive and robust pre-legislative processes by the Government. The aim would be to reverse the incentives, driven by the short electoral cycle, for Governments to hasten policy processes so Bills can be introduced with enough time to be passed before the next election comes around. The Clerk of the House also indicated her intention to collaborate with relevant central agencies to identify ways that pre-introductory policy and consultation processes by Government agencies could align more closely with the House’s consideration. This work would inform the development of proposals for rewarding good pre-legislative policymaking.

Better debate
I am interested in relaxing some of the requirements for debates so that Members are engaging with each other rather than reciting speeches. This could involve software that Members address the House through the Chair and avoid the use of the second person. Another option could be to encourage greater use of yielding, to promote constructive exchanges across the floor - while the technically is permissible already, I think it is important for Members to have opportunities to debate the big issues, aside from those that arise in the House through the passage of legislation and financial cycles. An idea is to have regular structured debates on topics such as foreign affairs, or longer-term issues like climate change. The Business Committee already has the power to arrange such debates, but it does not do so often; it would be good to develop an expectation that debates of this sort could be arranged every once in a while to address major issues.

Select Committee effectiveness
For most Parliaments, the effectiveness of the Select Committee system is key to the overall performance of the Parliament. There are always improvements that can be made to enable Committees to deal more effectively with Members under urgency, including those that arrive in the House after the Bills’ initial release or Select Committee report. At the time, the Committee felt there should be a notice period to allow Members to study and consider the policy and principles of the Bill, or the changes proposed by other Members, before they consider the Bill. The Select Committee, prior to debating and voting on the Bill at its next stage (1985 report, 16A, p 55). But back in those days it was taken while for copies of Bills to be circulated around the country by the Government Printing Office. Now Members can access means that hearings of evidence, and particularly the examination of Ministers and State sector chief executives, can be overly superficial. Moreover, Members may feel less compulsion to prepare and engage when their contributions are outvoted by a large Committee membership. Large Committees also mean Members may tend to be on more than one Committee, thus increasing the workload, and there are more logistical difficulties in deploying Members to cover absences and support other people for particular items of business.

Conclusion
Some of these ideas are revolutionary - in the New Zealand context, at least - while others are more incremental. It is important to take stock and provide an opportunity for fresh thinking. Parliament as an institution should not be critical in self-review and continuous improvement; we have to trust the public with particular items of business. My motivation in presenting this paper is to establish the regular review of parliamentary rules and procedures as a good practice, and to embed it in our culture so that, too, becomes a tradition of long-standing. I would like to leave with you these key messages:

The rules of Parliament are constitutional in nature, and should not be amended through a majoritarian approach; consensus or over-riding support should be sought for any changes.

A regular review of the practice mitigates the potential consequences of rushed decisions that arise out of the need for broad agreement.

The need for cross-party agreement means the role of the presiding officer is critical to the success of the process: providing a context that welcomes the exchange of ideas, working with parliamentary officers to identify concerns, facilitating constructive negotiations to address them, mediating where there is disagreement, and bringing all parties together to settle on an overall package of changes.

The aim for the review should be to enhance the effectiveness of Parliament, balancing the interests of the Government, the Opposition and other non-Government parties that are represented in parliamentary Committees (or public accounts Committee) and for the Governance and Administration Committee, the Finance and Expenditure Committee, and the Business Committee; and for the Finance and Expenditure Committee. For instance, the Finance and Expenditure Committee might otherwise have been put off standing for election, because of what the role entailed, might now consider it an option.

Rewards for good pre-legislative process
In the last review of Standing Orders, it was agreed that it would be helpful to find ways for the House to reward the use of inclusive and robust pre-legislative processes by the Government. The aim would be to reverse the incentives, driven by the short electoral cycle, for Governments to hasten policy processes so Bills can be introduced with enough time to be passed before the next election comes around. The Clerk of the House also indicated her intention to collaborate with relevant central agencies to identify ways that pre-introductory policy and consultation processes by Government agencies could align more closely with the House’s consideration. This work would inform the development of proposals for rewarding good pre-legislative policymaking.

Progress is being made to promote diversity of our elected Members, as people who might otherwise have been put off standing for election, because of what the role entailed, might now consider it an option.

Attention should be given to the provision or additional sitting time without the usual ban on simultaneous Select Committee meetings. I would like to explore the possibility of providing ideas for promoting inclusive policy processes.

fit-for-purpose parliament: reviewing and enhancing parliamentary effectiveness

As Speaker of the New Zealand Parliament, I want to champion the process of improvement, and to ensure it is an institution that is responsive, resilient and relevant into the future.

the case, but provision could be made for votes to be deferred until the start of the next sitting day so Members could leave the precincts. Consideration could be given to enabling Select Committees to meet in the evening, but with a finish time no later than 9pm.

Alternatively, the dinner break could be shortened or dispensed with altogether. Any such option would need careful consideration of how it would impact on other aspects of parliamentary life, such as attendees at dinner-time events. But it would be worth working these issues through so as to avoid the current late-night finish, and potentially to enable members who live outside the Wellington area (particularly those in more remote localities) to return home sooner to their families and constituencies.

Other options include relaxing proxy-vote limits at certain times, so more Members can leave the parliamentary precincts sooner; providing more meaningful opportunity for family members to travel to be together; or providing additional support to reduce workload. There are many more ideas that are emerging, and I look forward to exploring them with the Committee.

By making Parliament more family-friendly we can create more opportunities for family members to travel to be together; or providing additional support to reduce workload. There are many more ideas that are emerging, and I look forward to exploring them with the Committee.
EMERGING SECURITY ISSUES FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS AND THE IMPACT ON DEMOCRACY

The Deputy Speaker of the UK House of Commons examines increasing security issues in Parliament.

This article highlights how security issues for Parliamentarians impact on their lives as well as on the practicalities of administering Parliament and the democratic process itself.

As the Deputy Speaker of the UK House of Commons, I am responsible for maintaining order in the Chamber but outside the Chamber, I am passionate about improving security for my colleagues and staff in the House of Commons – on and off the Estate.

As Chair of the Consultative Panel on Parliamentary Security for the UK Parliament, I lead a Committee composed of senior MPs and Peers which works closely with security professionals to provide advice, make recommendations and add political support to security policy in Parliament.

The context – UK threat levels

The UK threat level from international terrorism has been 'severe' (ie 'highly likely') since 2014, and twice in 2017 went to 'critical'. Attacks in the UK have included the attack on Westminster itself, the Manchester Arena, London Bridge, Finsbury Park mosque and Parsons Green tube bomb. Of course, many more plots have been disrupted during that period and since by police and security services.

This 'severe' threat level applies to everyone in the country, and former heads of our Security Services have said publicly that it is likely to continue at this level for another 5-10 years at least. In other words, the threat is not going away any time soon.

When the Director of Security for the UK Parliament talks to new Members of Parliament and staff about this threat level, he says that it means they should be alert, not alarmed. However, for Parliamentarians, international terrorism is not the major threat they face. Instead, for MPs there are other threats which are far more prevalent, likely to cause them harm and increase their fear - domestic terrorism, familial individuals, individuals with mental health issues or those with extremist views.

Threats to Members of Parliament

UK MPs tell me that abuse towards them and their staff is reaching unprecedented levels. This is unacceptable. Many UK MPs are regularly threatened and abused through interactions on social media or in supermarkets in their constituencies and recently there have been vocal protesters outside the UK Parliament intimidating them daily. Threats to UK MPs, their staff and families include threats to kill, rape, physical assaults, anti-Semitic, homophobic, misogynistic and racist abuse and harassment. Women and ethnic minority colleagues tend to be targeted more.

MPs are particularly at risk because they debate and vote on divisive issues (for example, abortion, fox hunting and of course, Brexit); they are public figures who need to be accessible and recognisable; they are dealing with and trying to help people in vulnerable and desperate circumstances and are often the last port of call they want to use social media to connect with constituents and are regularly subject to media scrutiny and coverage which can inflame public opinion.

There are not many jobs where complete strangers will have such open access to somebody, whether at events, at surgeries, at their constituency offices or even online. For many MPs, this creates a dilemma – how can democratic access to an elected representative be maintained whilst also ensuring that measures are in place to keep them safe?

The threat manifests itself whenever the Member is busy, particularly acute in the local constituencies. The murder of Jo Cox in June 2016 was shocking amongst MPs, but it was not the time a UK MP has been attacked working in their constituency.

Member of Parliament, Stephen Timms was attacked with a knife at a surgery in 2010 and in 2000, Nigel Jones, MP was attacked with a samurai sword by a constituent in a mental health issue. Nigel’s Political Assistant, Andrew Pennington, was murdered helping him. Most recently is the story of Rosie Cooper, MP who was the subject of a murder plot by a white supremacist which thankfully never took place. The interesting thing about Rosie’s story is that she is not an outspoken MP within the UK Parliament. She is very unassuming with a low profile. This demonstrated to me that all MPs are at risk and should be protected. Although such physical attacks are rare, in the last couple of years sadly there has also been a big increase in the intimidation of MPs beyond Westminster – office windows smashed, leaflets burnt in letterboxes, MPs being followed and approached late at night, phone calls or tweets saying somebody wants to talk to Jo Cox or a Member.

The mitigations

The UK Parliament was already in the process of reviewing how security for Members both on the estate, off the estate and online could be improved in late 2015 but the murder of Jo Cox gave us a much bigger driver to develop plans much quicker.

The UK Parliament cannot get rid of the threats, but it can help protect against them. We adopt a holistic approach which combines layers of security – perimeter, personnel, access control, measures in homes and constituency offices, cyber, social media, personal security. However, we recognised the need to establish a dedicated team, called the Members’ Security Support Services, focused solely on the security of UK Parliamentarians, their staff and families. In addition, we established a contract with a national security firm which can recommend and install security measures at relevant properties.

One key way to mitigate against threats is to encourage Members of Parliament not to accept such threats as merely ‘part of their job’. Many Members now have a high tolerance level for behaviour which should not be tolerated. Politicians need to speak to each other, peer to peer, to encourage each other to face and report each incident to help authorities build up a picture of the level and type of threats received.

Parliament’s unique context as both a workplace, heritage site, and elected representative only community creates competing needs and demands. Protestors, many of whom are peaceful, want to demonstrate in locations where their protest will have worst impact, close to the seat of democracy. Members and staff want to ensure that their functions are unhindered and they can enter and leave the estate in safety and without fear of intimidation. We are therefore considering, whether in the current climate of increased threats against Members and those on the estate, the UK Parliament now requires different arrangements to those already set out in legislation to allow lawful protests in its vicinity but ensure unimpeded access for those who work there.

The current law applicable to the area is based on the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act, 2011 and the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act, 2014. Some Parliamentarians have called for the reintroduction of Sessional Orders to ensure MPs can freely access the parliamentary estate. Reinstating sessional orders may not be the answer as they do not have any legal standing and the police cannot act on them. In my opinion, it would be more effective to push for a review of the current laws applying to protests, perhaps through delegated legislation. The laws which could capture what has been lost from Sessional Orders - that the police and other authorities have a special obligation to ensure that Members of both Houses have free access to Parliament when in session to ensure business is not disrupted.

The threat to democracy

We are now finding that the fear of threats alone is enough to have an impact on MPs, their staff and families, even if a specific threat has not been made or an incident has not occurred. The ‘drip drip’ effect of constant abuse and online attacks is eroding the confidence of MPs. It is having a big impact on their mental health, their resilience and their ability to function in their roles. Quite simply, they, their families and their staff are scared. In order to protect themselves we know that MPs are changing their behaviour in the way they work and hold surgeries and possibly even in the way they vote or what they say in the Chamber. I also know that several MPs are considering not standing at the next election, won down by the constant barrage of abuse and threats. If MPs are reluctant to engage with their constituents for fear of attack, if they are reluctant to appear at public events for fear of threats, or if they are reluctant to speak out on issues for fear of malicious communications then how can we be informed about the issues or truly represent their constituents and fulfil their roles?

Ensuring the safety and security of MPs is therefore a much bigger issue than ensuring the safety of individuals. It is also about ensuring the stability of national democracy. This is something which the UK Government is now keenly aware of. It has established a cross departmental initiative called ‘Defending Democracy’ to examine how measures can be put in place to ensure candidates and elected representatives and the electorate can participate in democracy without fear or intimidation.

The need to work together

The evolving threat towards elected representatives, their staff and families require a constantly evolving approach and is more important than ever that Parliamentarians across the Commonwealth talk to each other honestly about our security issues, share best practice and build new friendships.

This article is based on the keynote address given by the author to Commonwealth Parliamentarians from the CPA Pacific and CPA Australia Regions at the 50th Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference (POCC) at the Parliament of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia in July 2019. Please turn to page 205 for a report of the conference.
Working Together and Playing to Our Strengths: Jersey and the Commonwealth

Jersey’s Minister for International Development reports on an innovative project linking Jersey and Rwanda.

In Rwanda, a female Jersey, or Jersey-cross, calf will be born every hour for the next three years, thanks to a pioneering project run by Jersey Overseas Aid, the Government of Rwanda, Send a Cow and the Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society. The impact on poor families is huge; milk yields can treble or quadruple, providing both a sustainable livelihood and an excellent source of nutrition for a family. The project also facilitates Rwanda’s ground-breaking Girinka programme, whereby the transfer of heifers between poor families promotes cohesion and reconciliation as well as poverty reduction and food security.

Jersey cows and crosses are proving particularly suitable for smallholder farmers where resources are scarce. With their faster, more nutritious milk, higher feed conversion rate and tolerance of heat, drought and disease, Jerseys make much more sense for low-input systems than other exotics. And it’s a matter of considerable pride in Jersey that our beloved brown cows are playing such a role in the amazing progress being made by Rwanda, perhaps the more so that we are also two countries united not only in our love of dairy cows, but in the bonds created by the Commonwealth.

The cooperation between Jersey and Rwanda is worth examining for a moment, because it shows what two countries can do when they work together as equals. Actually, Rwanda’s economy is at least 50% bigger than Jersey’s — and growing much more quickly — and we have fewer people and less land. But we meet as fellow participants in the brotherhood of the Commonwealth, and we have more to talk about than just cows! Our mutual interests include gorilla conservation, tourism, financial services and parliamentary democracy — and Rwanda can teach us all a thing or two about ensuring women are properly represented in politics.

This kind of relationship shows the Commonwealth at its best, and it’s one which Jersey tries to emulate in all its partnerships.
Freedom of expression and a free and responsible media are enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter, which brings together the values and aspirations that unite the Commonwealth’s member states, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and its vast and rich network of organisations.

On 10 and 11 July 2019, two Commonwealth countries, the UK and Canada, hosted the Global Conference for Media Freedom at the Printworks in London. Over 100 countries were represented by members of governments, civil society and the media. This was the first ever ministerial gathering of its kind, and included twenty-four Ministers from the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth added its own distinctive voice to the debate. On the second day of the conference, Hon. Julie Bishop, AO, the former Foreign Minister of Australia, chaired a panel discussion on strengthening media freedom across the Commonwealth. She was joined by a panel of three Commonwealth Ministers—Hon. Kama Niaseba, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Lomé; Hon. Richard Sezibera, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Rwanda; and Hon. Kogi Oppong Nkunah, Ghana’s Minister of Information—as well as Desmond Brown, QC of the Commonwealth Lawyers Association and Zoe Titus, Strategic Coordinator of the Namibia Media Trust. The panelists showcased to an audience including a number of Commonwealth Ministers and the Commonwealth Secretary-General, shared best practice in protecting and promoting media freedom, and discussed further practical actions the Commonwealth can take, including the development of Commonwealth principles on freedom of expression and the role of the media in good governance.

All of the Commonwealth’s component parts have an important role to play working together to advance the values of the Commonwealth Charter, which were at the heart of the UK Foreign Secretary’s keynote speech, delivered on the first day of the Global Media Freedom Conference.

Plenary speech by Rt Hon. Jeremy Hunt, MP, UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs:

Just two months ago, on 15 May 2019, a 28-year-old Mexican reporter called Francisco Romero Diaz got a call before dawn about an incident at a nightclub in Playa del Carmen. Romero specialised in exposing organised crime. He responded as any good journalist should by getting to the scene as quickly as possible. In fact, he was probably walking into a trap. As he arrived, Romero was ambushed and shot dead.

He would have known the risks he was taking. In the previous two months, he’d been detained by the police – allegedly for refusing to pay a bribe – and abducted by armed men. He’d been called anonymously by someone threatening to throw him off a bridge and claiming to know where his son went to school. And yet despite every act of intimidation and harassment, Romero pressed on with reporting for the newspaper Quintana Roo Hoy and running a website focused on organised crime.

He was the sixth journalist to be shot in Mexico this year. Then just one month ago, a seventh, Norma Sabah, was shot dead in Tabasco.

Across the world, 99 journalists were killed last year – more than twice as many as a decade earlier – and another 348 were locked up by governments. Few perpetrators of these crimes are ever held to account. Indeed, even after 11 years, of the 46 journalists who suffered violent deaths in 2008, only 8 cases have been resolved.

Media Freedom: a universal cause

Which is why our conference and this global campaign are so important. Our challenge is to honour the memory of Francisco Romero Diaz – and others like him – by protecting journalists and championing their work as a vital pillar of a free society.

My friend Chrysila (Canada’s Foreign Minister), as she said herself a former journalist, and I are the first Foreign Ministers ever to convene an international conference on this subject and as Chrystia said, we want this to become an annual event around the globe.

Aside the bleak news, today we are joined by delegations from over 100 countries, including 60 ministers, and more than 1,500 journalists, academics and campaigners. Never before have so many countries come together in this cause. And today we send a resounding message that media freedom is not a Western but a universal value.

At its best, a free media both protects society from the abuse of power and helps release the full potential of a nation. In 1887, the historian and politician Lord Acton wrote his famous words: ‘Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.’

The strongest safeguard against the dark side of power is accountability and scrutiny – and few institutions fulfil that role more effectively than a free media. Real accountability doesn’t emerge from official and theoretical ‘crackdowns’ on corruption mounted by authoritarian states, which mysteriously eliminate political opponents whilst leaving the
biggest offenders untouched. Real accountability comes from the risk of exposure by a media that cannot be controlled or subdued.

And the evidence is very clear. Of the 10 cleanest countries in the world, as ranked by Transparency International, 7 are in the bottom ten for media freedom. Powerful people value their reputations, so the sunlight of transparency is the greatest deterrent to wrongdoing. I am a politician, and, like many members of my profession, I don’t always enjoy reading what the media says about me. Indeed, a politician who stands up for journalists might occasionally feel like a turkey voting for Christmas. And of course, I need to say, it may be my only chance, newspapers also make mistakes. Journalists are not immune from the temptations of hyperbole or excess. But those of us who are sometimes on the receiving end of criticism should also reflect on the wisdom of Nelson Mandela, who said: ‘The media are a mirror through which we see ourselves as others perceive us, warts, blemishes and all... Such criticism can only help us to grow; by calling attention to those of our actions and omissions which do not measure up to our people’s expectations.’

So, if we are wise, we politicians will treat the media as a critical friend. Our politicians might tell us what we want to hear; the media tell us what we need to hear, providing unvarnished reality whether we wish it or not.

How a free media helps society
But a free media does more than just criticise failure and deter wrongdoing; it also nurtures and nourishes the progress of ideas. Throughout history, humanity has achieved its swiftest progress whenever we have allowed ideas to be freely debated, tested and challenged. No discovery was ever achieved, and no invention perfected by the scoffing tools of suppression or censorship. The open exchange of ideas through a free media allows the genius of a society to breathe, releasing the originality and creativity of the entire population.

As the great thinker, John Stuart Mill wrote: ‘The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing the human race of the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth which would arise from the constant stimulation of competing ideas.’

Societies which embrace free debate make a disproportionate contribution to the advance of human knowledge. The ten nations with the freest media in the world have produced 120 Nobel Laureates between them — 13 times as many as Russia and China combined.

Norway, with only 5 million people, has won 13 Nobel Prizes. Great respect to my Norwegian friends, Norwegians are no more pioneering or inventive than anyone else. They have flourished because their open society and free media — ranked the freest in the world — have created the very best setting for their talents to thrive.

The challenges faced by journalists
In other countries life is tougher — but journalists are succeeding against the odds. In Venezuela, we just heard from Lucas Molist Reyes, who has defied the Maduro regime by co-founding an independent news website, Electro Corocoy. In Kazakhstan, Gulnara Badshonova runs the website Holonews, which exposed how fish stocks in the Urals river had been devastated by poisoning. In Peru, Gustavo Giberti of Diario Reporteros has brought to light a series of corruption scandals involving business, the government and the judiciary.

But sadly, in many countries the situation continues to deteriorate. In China, automated censorship and the Great Firewall block access to thousands of news websites, with millions of people employed to censor content; fake social media posts and manipulate online debate. The first person to establish a website in China focused on human rights was an activist called Huang Qi. He was jailed in 2016 and nothing has been heard from him since a secret trial in January, though he is in poor health. We have raised his case with the Chinese authorities, and I urge them again to disclose Huang Qi’s fate and provide any medical care he may need.

In Vietnam, Tran Thi Nga produced video evidence of police brutality, only to get a 9-year prison sentence in 2017. So today I call on the Vietnamese authorities to release her.

Defending media freedom
In a world where a Washington Post columnist, Jamal Khashoggi, was murdered inside a Saudi diplomatic property — and a talented young journalist, Lyra McKee, was shot dead by dissident republicans in Northern Ireland — it would be easy to succumb to fatalism. But we must resist that. Because if we act together, we can shine a spotlight on abuses and impose a diplomatic price on those who would harm journalists or lock them up for doing their jobs.

So today, I want to announce five practical steps the British government will take alongside our partners.

Firstly, we will join other governments to establish a new Global Media Defence Fund to be administered by UNESCO. This will take forward the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists. Among the aims will be to help fund legal advice for journalists and safety training for those venturing into conflict zones. Britain will provide $3 million to the Fund over the next 5 years — and we invite others to contribute.

Secondly, we will establish an international task force to help governments to deliver their commitments on media freedom, including by developing national action plans. Every year at the UN General Assembly, we will meet to review progress of the task force, commending those countries where media freedom is getting better and agreeing what should be done where it is not.

Thirdly, my special envoy, Amal Clooney, has convened a panel of experts to advise governments on how to strengthen the legal protection of journalists. I would encourage all governments to join the panel and respond to its recommendations.

For our part, the British government will ensure that whenever we propose or amend a law, we will consider the potential impact on press freedom. Earlier today, my colleague, UK Foreign Minister, Rt Hon, Harriet Baldwin, announced that our Department for International Development will spend up to £15 million on new programmes to promote media freedom across the world.

Fourthly, Chrystia Freeland and I will bring together a contact group of like-minded countries to lobby in unison when media freedom comes under attack. Our aim is for this to be a rapid response mechanism, helping Foreign Ministers and ambassadors to react as one when abuses take place.

Finally, I invite every country represented here to sign the Global Pledge on media freedom, resolving that we will work together as a coalition to promote this cause and meet again next year.

Conclusion
Colleagues, the struggle for media freedom is being waged day after day, not in conference centres like this, but by independent journalists in authoritarian states; by vigilant bloggers who expose corruption; and by courageous activists who publish the evidence of human rights abuses. There is no place for neutrality in this struggle.

We are on the side of those who seek to report the truth and bring the facts to light. We stand against those who suppress or censor or exact revenge.

After the killing of Francisco Romero Diaz, his newspaper carried the headline: ‘Pain, Fear and Impotence,’ and declared: ‘The voice of a journalist has been silenced...’

In the end we all face a choice. Ignore the threats and we tolerate the stifling of independent voices and the dangers of an accountable power. But defend our values and nations will flourish from the free exchange of ideas. By coming to this conference, each and every one of the 1,000 people here has made that choice. We have pledged to do what it takes — and no less — to ensure that instead of being silenced, the plural and varied voices of a free media are nurtured and encouraged as the most important contribution to the open societies that are the foundation of human progress.

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1. https://www.transparency.org/

Global Media Freedom
#DefendMediaFreedom
COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES SHOW LEADERSHIP IN DEFENDING MEDIA FREEDOM

The Parliamentarian | 2019: Issue Three | 100th year of publishing
A free and independent media in all of its disputatious, cantankerous glory is one of the cornerstones of liberal democracy. Reminding ourselves and each other of that fundamental reality is why it is so useful for us to come together today. The truth, to be sure, is that it is harder to be a politician, to be a government, in a country with a free and independent media.

This funding will focus on addressing malign disinformation, supporting electoral processes, reinforcing democratic practices by combating disinformation and strengthening civic engagement. An initial one million dollars will go to the new Global Media Defence Fund housed at UNESCO.

Of course, as Aimal has just described, we are launching the independent panel of legal experts to support and advance media freedom worldwide.

Canada is very excited by this work and we are delighted that our former Minister of Justice, and I outline these actions, not as an exhaustive list, but as examples of some first concrete steps we can take together. Canada has been delighted to co-host this year's Media Freedom Conference with the UK and we are honoured to see an even bigger turnout this year. We will look forward to you being with us in Canada, Jeremy.

To get depressed, but let's choose instead to be inspired. Let's be inspired by Luz Meli Reyes of Venezuela who, together with her colleagues, decided - as she so eloquently put it - ‘not to wait for her own funeral but instead to create some fireflies to light up the darkness of the Maduro dictatorship. We all need to defend our independent press - even, and perhaps especially, when it criticizes us - as a central institution of democracy.

We need to fight for the complexity of democratic truth rather than regurgitating simplistic authoritarian rhetoric. Then and only then will we have weeded out our democratic gardens, and will we have kept the jungle from growing back.
Disinformation is defined as “false, inaccurate or misleading information designed, presented and promoted to intentionally cause public harm or for profit.”

At the Oxford Internet Institute at the University of Oxford, we conduct field-leading research into the societal implications of digital technologies. The Institute focuses on many topics with urgent policy relevance and we aim to bring evidence and intellectual rigour to bear on live policy issues that relate to the Internet. The Institute conducts a series of long-term projects on the effects of digital technologies on government and democracy, including a major research programme investigating the role of computational propaganda on elections.

Like many others, we are thus very interested in the discussions that took place at the 48th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Conference held in Guernsey in May 2019. I note from continuing media coverage that the term ‘fake news’ is still popular, but we choose not to use this term and recommend much more careful use of terminology in this area.

This is because:
• Fake news doesn’t cover the full spectrum of content and behaviour that is concerning (e.g. false and true information can be blended together, whilst we are also interested in phenomena such as astroturfing, bot networks, misleading memes and opaque political adverts).
• In the future, we will also see more use of deep fakes, chatbots, and AI (Artificial Intelligence) manipulation.
• In studies focusing on this area, such as that conducted by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, we see that citizens associate the term ‘fake news’ just with poor journalism.
• Perhaps most importantly, the term ‘fake news’ has been used to dismiss unfavourable coverage by politicians such as US President Donald Trump.

Instead it is useful to refer to the problem of ‘disinformation’. Disinformation is of course not new, but the most exaggerated forms of political propaganda can be found as far back as Ancient Rome, with Julius Caesar using his accounts of the barbarity of his opponents in the Gallic Wars to undermine the relative benefits of Roman rule.

One of my favourite historical examples of calculated fake news campaigns, was identified by The Economist. The New York Sun newspaper claimed in 1835 that giant bat men and temples made of sapphire had been observed on the moon by John Herschel through his new telescope. This made use of the fact that actual reports of observations from the telescope would take months to make their way back from South Africa to the US, and in the meantime, enabled the New York Sun to dramatically increase its readership, making the paper briefly the most widely read in the world.

These examples should be sufficient to remind us that the Internet doesn’t cause disinformation, and that a desire to manipulate or mislead is a long-observed, albeit nefarious, human motivation that we could expect to see played out in every new communication technology as they have developed over the centuries.

Digital technologies thus don’t cause disinformation; but they may well facilitate its spread.

New manifestations of disinformation have rapidly developed in the past ten years. The potential to spark and spread ‘digital wildfires’ has been around since the earliest days of the Internet. We can recount a variety of harms resulting from this, such as panic-mongering during the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy in the US or the terrorist attacks in Nice; as well as longer-running conspiracy theories such as Psagotage and now the rising tide of measles epideics in the face of concerted anti-vaccination campaigns. There are several features of the Internet that enable such wildfires, for example the decentralised, unmediated nature of content creation and sharing, the capacity for anonymity, and the role of personal networks in sharing ‘trusted’ information.

Before we leap to say that ‘something must be done’, it’s worth reflecting that these new forms of information campaign may look alarming, but that evidence of their effects is hard to come by. For example, we can observe the use and scale of automated social media accounts (bots) spreading disinformation in election campaigns, but we don’t yet know who (if anyone), voted differently as a result. It is methodologically challenging to produce rigorous evidence of effect, but unfortunately, it’s all too easy to blame online ‘fake news’ for unexpected political outcomes such as the United Kingdom Brexit referendum result or the election of US President Donald Trump.

There is some evidence that suggests disinformation effects may not be as significant as we think. For example, research suggests that in the US, more people still get their news from TV and looking at the United States election, supporters of Hillary Clinton were far more likely than supporters of Donald Trump to be on Reddit or Twitter in order to produce a clear evidence base for the effects of online disinformation we would need to understand what contribution small aspects of our daily media experience make to particular users, in different contexts, a research process that would be very challenging to deliver.

Despite the current gaps in our understanding of effect, governance around the world are concerned by the growth of online disinformation, and particularly by concerted campaigns to shift public opinion by state and non-state actors. There is a huge variety in the approaches that governments are adopting to tackle these problems. Colleagues at the Oxford Internet Institute recently produced an inventory of government responses to malicious uses of social media (which goes beyond just disinformation), providing insights into tools employed by 43 different countries since 2016.

For example, the inventory report identified:
• measures targeting social media companies (e.g. Brazil, Germany and South Korea have established laws requiring firms to take down illegal content)
• measures targeting offenders (e.g. Egypt, Indonesia and Kuwait can legally prosecute offenders, and there are Bills in Ireland to prosecute not only those who create content but who circulate it).
• measures targeting government capacity (e.g. the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada have held parliamentary and congressional hearings or inquiries to review the need for policy action).
• measures targeting citizens and civil society (e.g. Croatia and France have introduced new media literacy campaigns and the regulation of journalism via accreditation has been established in the United States and Tanzania).

Within this inventory, we can observe some very different approaches: in Singapore, government actors will be responsible for deciding what content is factual, whilst the approach in the United Kingdom recognises the need for government to work with networks such as fact-checking organisations. It is worth noting that these strategies for tackling disinformation do face some challenges. In the long history of content regulation (which dates back at least to the publication of the Catholic Church’s Index Librorum Prohibitorum in 1559), we have gathered a number of well-tested tools – for example, censorship, licensing, prosecution for holding or creating certain content, and more recently, filtering out the ‘bad’ or making companies to take it down. However, online disinformation content may not easily suit such strategies because:
• it may be untrue but need not contain banned or illegal content;
• it may not be a mix of truth and lies;
• it may be opinion or be presented as humour;

In addition, it is not even clear that banning or flagging disinformation will be effective. Indeed, it may even make the problem worse either by drawing more attention to the content (known as the ‘Streisand effect’) or enabling distributors of such content to claim that their views are persecuted or censored, adding fuel to claims of conspiracy. Even more radically, issues of human rights arise. If content is not in itself illegal, should it be removed or even down rated in our social media feeds and searches?

How do we balance and protect the full range of human rights at stake in tackling disinformation? This would include not just the right to freedom of expression but also the right to information, the right to participation and rights to protection from harm; these need to be considered and balanced in the construction of any proportionate regulatory framework.

Personally, I have been impressed by the outlook of the European Union’s High-Level
**POLICY RESPONSES TO DISINFORMATION: A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH**

“Ultimately, we should be thinking far more about how we support a healthy information ecosystem, rather than just how we get rid of ‘fake news’. This would entail a much more ambitious policy framework that goes far beyond simply tasking social media platforms with better moderating of their content.”

Working Group (HLWG) on Fake News and Online Disinformation8

The EU HLWG have not rushed to generate and replicate social media content.8

Working Group (HLWG) on Fake News and Online Disinformation8

To develop tools that can empower users and journalists to engage in a fast-moving information environment.

To safeguard the diversity and sustainability of the news media.

To evaluate success through continuous research in collaboration with platforms.

For further information about the Oxford Internet Institute please visit www.oi.ox.ac.uk.

This article is based on a presentation by the author at the 48th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Conference in Guernsey from 19 to 22 May 2019 which discussed the impact of fake news and disinformation on media freedoms in the Commonwealth.

References:
3 Poepleage is a widely discredited conspiracy theory that went viral during the 2016 United States Presidential election that combined fake claims linking high-ranking officials of the Democratic Party with an alleged human trafficking and child sex ring involving a pizza restaurant chain.

The Streisand effect is a phenomenon whereby an attempt to hide, remove, or censor a piece of information has the unintended consequence of publicizing the information more widely, usually facilitated by the Internet. It is named after American singer Barbra Streisand, whose attempt to suppress photographs of her residence in California inadvertently drew further public attention to it.


Victoria Schofield is an historian and commentator on international affairs, with specialist knowledge of South Asia, having travelled widely in the region. She is a contributor to BBC World Today, BBC World Service and a variety of newspapers and journals. She has written many books on topics such as the Kashmir conflict and the history of the Black Watch regiment. She is Chair of the Oxford Union Literary and Debating Trust (OLDUT) and Chair of the Editorial Board of The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs.

Introduction

The topic of the presentation was ‘Fake News and No platforming’. This article will illustrate how the increasing trend of ‘no platforming’ speakers can lead to a form of fake news: if certain subjects or viewpoints are circumscribed, information people are getting is take. A particular area of concern in the current discussion is ‘no platforming’ on university campuses.

‘No platforming’ on university campuses is happening at a time in students’ lives when, as young people, they should be eagerly listening to alternative viewpoints. All of us who are slightly older will agree that this is a new variation of censorship. If people can’t listen to alternative viewpoints, their thought process is essentially being constrained. The same is true with the ‘safe space’ movement which is prevalent in the United States of America. The demand for ‘safe space’ is also a form of ‘no platforming’, often by young people whose minds should be rather more robust than they apparently are as they grow to adulthood.

When I was at university in the 1970s, we eagerly joined clubs and societies to listen to a wide range of opinion to educate ourselves; we wanted to try to understand fully about the complex issues of the day – Palestine, the civil war in Lebanon, civil rights in the United States, apartheid in South Africa, communism in the Soviet Union – all topics about which we thought we knew something, but, when we heard another side of the argument, we realised that our knowledge was limited and that there may not just be one ‘truth’.

Today, students are liable to take a dislike to the views of a person even before they have heard them speak. In her book, ‘Why we get the wrong politicians’, the writer, Isabel Hardman, pub the general trend to abuse politicians for their political views in this broader context: ‘It coincides with a general struggle in Britain to debate respectfully and fully, with even university students retreating into ‘safe spaces’ and ‘no platform’ policies simply so they do not have to encounter ideas they find uncomfortable. Arguing and disagreeing is too much effort: much better to hate, resent and, in extreme cases, abuse and attack.’8

When UK Member of Parliament, Jacob Rees-Mogg, MP went to address students at Bristol University, he was heckled and pushed about by those who did not want him to speak. One may not agree with Jacob Rees-Mogg’s views, but that does not mean that those who did want to listen to him, should have been prevented from hearing him speak by those who did not. As it happened, he literally battled through the crowd of protestors and was able to give his speech.

In 2015, the writer, Germaine Greer was ‘no platformed’ by the University of Cardiff because her ‘insolent trans woman deniers of transphobia views on feminism’ did not suit the extreme feminists. But, as was pointed out by journalist, Claire Lehmann, the fact that she was prevented from speaking (she withdrew because of all the complaints) deprived students at Cardiff from the opportunity to hear one of the most significant female intellectuals of the last century. ‘The “no-platforming” campaign against Germaine Greer reflects a deeper sickness afflicting Western universities. While the stated aim is to reduce harm, the end result is enforced ignorance,” wrote Lehmann.

Speaker’s who ‘no platform’ other speakers are part of the same phenomenon. Some years ago, the former British Parliamentary, broadcaster and writer, George Galloway ‘no platformed’ his Israeli counterpart, when he walked out of an Israeli-Palestinian debate held at Christ Church College, Oxford. What is significant is that he was stopped by the spread of obviously fake content. The EU HLWG proposes five pillars of action:

• To enhance the transparency of the digital information ecosystem;
• To promote and enhance media and information literacy approaches;
• To develop tools that can empower users and journalists to engage in a fast-moving information environment;
• To safeguard the diversity and sustainability of the news media;
• To evaluate success through continuous research in collaboration with platforms.
applauded for doing so, with comments on YouTube like: ‘Well done George, Don’t debate with devils!’. But, as illustrated by another commentator, this cannot be considered a healthy approach to dialogue. ‘I think this is wrong. He may not agree with the state of Israel, but how will you ever make progress without debate?’

Even the Oxford Union – founded in 1823 and where all manner of topics have been debated – has had to reinforce its identity as the ‘bastion of free speech’. So concerned was Genevieve Athis, the President of the Oxford Union in Trinity Term 2019, that she and her fellow officers and standing committee believed that a clause should be inserted in the Oxford Union Rules indicating that free speech was one of the Oxford Union’s objectives."

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IN DEFENCE OF MULTILATERALISM: A VIEW FROM THE UK

IN DEFENCE OF MULTILATERALISM: A VIEW FROM THE UK

Brexit is an attempt to tackle a serious problem by altering our relationship with our European neighbours. Some feel that this is doomed to fail because our economy and security is so integrated with our neighbours and we should therefore concentrate on avoiding it or getting the least-worst option while tackling with renewed vigour the discontents – about housing, unemployment, crime and income, and rapid cultural change which brought this populist wave. Others believe that through the process of Brexit, Britain can rebuild our prestige and renew our international relationships. But what if the domestic discontents are conflated with the polling of international developments?

After all, Britain is not the only European country facing tough economic competition from the Far East; or large-scale immigration; or the pressure on its youth from an apparently unmanageable internet and social media. And if this is the case, what does it mean for the way we conduct our foreign policy?

The essays aim to look at all three things: the nature of the modern world, what we want to achieve in it and thirdly at the levers we can pull to help us bring to bear our aims.

The Modern World

Interconnectedness beyond national boundaries is not a new phenomenon. Once England was part of the Roman Empire, then we were ruled by Scandinavia; even as the Kingdom united and grew we were part of the Roman Catholic Church. Later we became a phenomenally successful trading nation with an Empire which stretched the globe, bringing cultural change as well as financial exchange.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the propulsive force of our economy which is traded remained constant between 1900 and 2000. In 1900, exports constituted 24.9% of the economy and in 2000, it was back at 24.9%. But the degree of interconnectedness today seems far more immediate and intense – at the click of a button we can be in touch with people thousands of miles away, huge movements of people, goods motivated by economic opportunities, others forced by war, desperation and climate change.

We, in the UK, are fortunate for the last 75 years to have lived in a largely peaceful and prosperous environment. This is frequently attributed to the very successful institution-building in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War (WWII), in which we played a significant role, the United Nations (UN), the UN Declaration of Human Rights, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the economic institutions – the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – in which we had reformed influence, the World Bank, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which developed into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) – and, of course, the European Union (EU).

One of the high points in this period came on 9th November 1989 when the Berlin Wall fell. The TV coverage of the crowds breaking the Berlin Wall and writing in my diary – “this is the most important day of my life.” Other heads were happy, to be young was very heaven. It felt like the contemporary implications of the Potsdam Agreement of May 1945. The bipolar world and the threat of nuclear war, which that had meant, was lifted. We were certain we could sail on our own as we had the resources we can bring to bear and sustain a path that would take seriously the Eastern European commitment to equality and the West’s enterprise and openness. Russia was invited to the G7 meetings in London. We discussed the possibility of using co-ops and the Yugoslav model. However, Yugoslavia was the first country in the 1990s to experience a bloody and violent war, refugees from its horrors began arriving in London and we were shaken from our optimism.

The political right claimed victory – market liberalism was declared to be both the cause and the destination of this new world – the alpha and the omega – even in China, Deng Xiaoping was now very heaven. It felt like the most important day of my life.”

Again, of course, their confidence was overblown. The rise of religious fundamentalism – of Islam as a political force in the West – the rise of nationalist organizations – in India and China. Forty years ago, Deng Xiaoping was very heaven. It felt like the most important day of my life.”

According to the UN, the UN Conference on Human Rights in New Delhi and the Declaration of Human Rights turned the world on its head. We have made progress, but it is not yet enough. The US President, Donald Trump, is particularly irritating, because he is good at identifying actual weaknesses – Chinese theft of intellectual property and European countries’ failure to pay a fair share of NATO costs – which no one can deny, while at the same time proposing solutions which are totally counterproductive: a trade war or US disengagement from a shared alliance.

So it is that the UN has been much stronger than the League of Nations in providing a forum for resolving disputes peacefully and successfully.

The modern system of alliances, up until now, prevented the ‘beggar thy neighbour’ policies which have dogged economies in the 1930s, but allowed us to think about how to govern the internet and tackle climate change effectively which have not been cracked. And that, especially post-2008, a sense of insecurity has brought to the fore strong men – Trump, Putin and Matteo Salvini and Viktor Orban whose proposals are to build up walls, whether physical, legal or metaphorical, against outsiders.

Brexit is our own special national brand of populist in the UK. This then is the hostile environment in which we might be seeking to tackle our problems.

What do we want to achieve in UK Foreign Policy?

Citizens regard the first duty of government as being to provide security and stability. This does not of course mean that we have needs to be an exerciser in crude nationalism such as America ‘First’. There is a huge appetite for policies which bring security and stability, but are also socially responsible.

Brexit is regarded as an attempt to advertise its benefits and virtues. To explain its benefits and virtues.

The modern international system of alliances is very far sighted and strong, but we established to tackle the world problems in 1945 and as we have seen, there is a lot of public pressure. Let me give some examples: the international climate change, the impact transnational corporate has on human rights, migration and the rights of refugees.

We are often enjoined to defend the rules-based international order and express its benefits and virtues. This is usually in response to a populist attack from US President Donald Trump. The Trump administration is particularly irritating because he is good at identifying actual weaknesses – Chinese theft of intellectual property or European countries’ failure to pay a fair share of IN DEFENCE OF MULTILATERALISM: A VIEW FROM THE UK

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Helen Goodman, MP is the Shadow Minister for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and a Member of the UK Parliament. Before her election, Helen worked in the office of the Czechoslovak Prime Minister between 1990-91. She has represented the Bishop Auckland constituency in County Durham since 2005, winning three consecutive elections.

The last Labour Government, Helen served as Deputy Leader of the House and as a Minister at the Department of Work and Pensions.

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development and tackling climate change effectively will increase our security, because they will increase the security of others and promote a shared worldwide. HR. Emily Thornberry, MP, the Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs spoke at length about this to the Institute for Government recently. (We should shun certain values as well as commercial interests “and try putting values back at the heart of our foreign policy”.

Opposition, Rt Hon. Jeremy Corbyn, MP has said ‘Labour will speak for democratic values and using our influence to promote these values through our values, through our diplomatic policy but not reforming the relationship so it’s positive without being subservient to that or changing it in the way that is done by other countries. This is not about Brexit, but it is worth noting that the current government as part of its Brexit predictions has estimated the number of diplomatic posts in European countries by 50.

This, of course, is part of a broader general re-focusing which will be required if the UK leaves the EU. An assessment and review of the impact and significance of this change means that much that is harder to be heard elsewhere. Individual bilateral relationships matter. But it is too easy to dismiss that alone because they cannot deliver our aims.

China is a global power and as such has interests growing rapidly. But the truth is we are conflicted. We want and need the trading opportunities offered. This will help our economic stability, but this is tempered by our concerns over Chinese political culture and human rights record. We look for opportunities to work together – like climate change – but sometimes the conflicts become sharp as well as when we look at developments in Hong Kong and the treatment of Uighurs. These bring into relief, as we were, the dilemma. Could we hope to persuade the Chinese that if they treat China as a key player by 2050 in the world economy, then they will have a role in shaping the world order? The answer is a no.

China is a global player and we need to be conscious of that. The UK will no longer have a seat at the table, and this will be reflected in the new relationships we will have with the countries of Asia. This will challenge our influence and ability to avoid foreign policy descending into endlessly reactive crisis management.

What are the levers we can pull and the resources we can bring to bear to achieve our aims?

The UK has important resources to offer, but this is limited by our concerns over Chinese political culture and human rights record. We look for opportunities to work together – like climate change – but sometimes the conflicts become sharp as well as when we look at developments in Hong Kong and the treatment of Uighurs. These bring into relief, as

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The Bretton Woods Institutions are a group of international economic institutions founded in July 1944 at the Bretton Woods Conference.
Every day, 3,700 people are killed in road crashes around the world. Tragically, road traffic injuries are now the leading cause of death for children and young people aged 5-29 years. This is a major challenge for the Commonwealth as 60% of its combined population is under 30. Promoting safety for young people is therefore a major focus of the newly-launched Commonwealth Road Safety Initiative (CRSI), which, under the patronage of HRH Prince Michael of Kent, is developing a framework for joint action on road injury prevention aiming to halve road deaths and serious injuries by 2030.

The 53 countries of the Commonwealth record over 210,000 traffic deaths every year but according to World Health Organisation estimates, the number of fatalities exceeds 500,000 when adjusted for under-reporting. Across the Commonwealth levels of road injury differ enormously. Fatality rates in road crashes range from 3 per 100,000 population in the best performing countries to above 20 in the worst. However, in nearly all Commonwealth countries fatal and injury rates are rising rather than falling. This is very disappointing given that road safety is now included in the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals for both health and cities (SDGs 3.6 & 3.11.2). The Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) meeting in London last year reiterated their commitment to achieving the health-related goals of Agenda 2030. Particularly Goal 3, so stronger efforts to tackle the growing scourge of road injury especially among young people is now an urgent necessity.

Parliamentarians across the Commonwealth have a key role to play to reduce the epidemic of road deaths that cause so much avoidable human misery and unnecessary economic loss. We can help to formulate effective national road safety policies and legislation; we can support adequate levels of funding for road injury prevention; we can ensure accountability of governments and public authorities to meet road safety targets and we can engage with the community to help make roads safe for all those we were elected to serve.”

The challenge in many Commonwealth countries today is to apply basic road safety laws; for example, to wear seat belts, use motorcyclo helmets, to prevent drink-driving, and to enforce them effectively. Minimum safety standards are also required for both used and new vehicles. Better road design and management must also prioritise the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists. This is especially important as vulnerable road users including motorcyclists now account for over half of global road traffic deaths. To encourage a new level of Commonwealth commitment to effective road injury prevention the CRSI has brought together a distinguished panel of road safety experts to set out an agenda for action aiming to halve deaths and serious injuries from road crashes by 2030. The CRSI’s report to be released in December 2019 will strongly endorse the World Health Organization’s Save Lives, road safety technical package an evidence-based inventory of priority interventions with a focus on speed management, leadership, infrastructure design and improvement, vehicle safety standards and enforcement of traffic laws and post-crash survival. Experience shows that if countries take decisive action to implement the WHO’s Save Lives recommendations significant injury reduction will follow.

In February 2020, the 2nd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety will be held in Stockholm, Sweden to assess current progress in road safety and set new priorities for 2030. This will be followed by a UN special General Assembly debate on road safety that will adopt a resolution based on the outcome of the Stockholm conference. These important events next year will provide a new mandate for global road safety. But they also give Commonwealth countries an opportunity to reassess their own road injury prevention priorities and take on a global leadership role. The Commonwealth has a justified reputation in promoting effective collaboration as was highlighted at the 2018 CHOGM meeting when the leaders further affirmed the Commonwealth’s convening power as an enabler of experience sharing. Among Commonwealth countries there is considerable road safety expertise and greater scope than ever before to encourage implementation of the policy measures recommended by the CRSI and the WHO. To encourage Commonwealth collaboration on road safety it will be necessary, however, to obtain recognition of the issue by the Commonwealth itself. This will be best secured by including the subject on the agenda of the next CHOGM to be held in June 2020 in Kigali, Rwanda. At last year’s CHOGM in London, the Commonwealth Heads of Government adopted a target to halve incidence of malaria by 2020 and to accelerate global efforts to achieve a 90% reduction by 2030. This, of course, is a welcome and important public health commitment. As a former UK Road Safety Minister, I know how well effective setting targets for casualty reduction can be. That is why I very much hope that at the next CHOGM the leaders will adopt this target to halve road deaths and serious injuries by 2030.

Political leadership in Government and in Parliament is a vital ingredient to successful road safety policies. And this is best achieved when there is a wide basis of parliamentary support across different political parties. One way to encourage this consensus approach to establish All Party Friends Groups. These are typically not official legislative Committees but serve as a focal point to raise awareness of an issue on a non-party basis. A number of such groups dedicated to road safety have been set up, such as the Australian Parliamentary Friends of Road Safety and the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Transport Safety, which I have the honour to chair. I have no doubt that this CHOGM will be an excellent role for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to encourage the growth of similar cross-party initiatives to promote road safety and the exchange of legislative good practice. That could be a timely and strong CPA contribution to the aim to halve road deaths and serious injuries by 2030.

I know that many Parliamentarians see for themselves the tragic loss of life of our constituents in road crashes and the suffering caused to bereaved relatives. Trying to prevent these sad experiences should give us all the incentive we need to call on Governments to make a road injury prevention a priority issue on the agenda of the next CHOGM 2020. We have hope that in the decade ahead we can count on Parliamentarians across the Commonwealth to demonstrate the leadership we need to make all our roads safe.

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New Commonwealth Road Safety Initiative launches to halve road fatalities and serious injuries by 2030

Every year over 210,000 people are killed in road crashes and millions more are seriously injured in Commonwealth countries. Today road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death for children and young people aged 5-29 years. This is a major challenge for Commonwealth countries as over 60% of their populations are under 30. Improved road safety must become a major priority for Commonwealth countries concerned to protect the wellbeing and health of their children and young people.

Road safety in the 53 countries of the Commonwealth is very diverse. Fatality rates in road crashes range from 3 to 35 per 100,000 population. However, in nearly all Commonwealth countries fatality and injury rates are rising rather than falling. In 2015, Commonwealth countries strongly supported the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which include commitments to road safety. Urgent action is now required to ensure that road deaths and serious injuries across the Commonwealth are halved by 2030.

The new Commonwealth Road Safety Initiative (CRSI), hosted by the Towards Zero Foundation (a UK registered charity), under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent (pictured right), was launched in May 2019 in London, UK and will address the action needed to prevent a decade of predictable and preventable death and serious injury on the roads of Commonwealth countries. The CRSI has brought together a distinguished panel of road safety experts to prepare a report of recommendations for Commonwealth countries. Building on established Commonwealth commitments to youth, health, and the SDGs, the CRSI will highlight the importance of:

• setting a Commonwealth target to halve road deaths and serious injuries by 2030;
• prioritising road safety as a key focus issue for child and adolescent health;
• adopting the Safe System Approach to road injury prevention in high, middle, & low-income Commonwealth countries;
• action to promote safer roads, safer vehicles, and safer road users;
• promoting good governance and road safety;
• promoting workplace road safety;
• building multi-sector Commonwealth partnerships for road safety;
• integrating road safety within the Sustainable Development Goals. The CRSI will also be hosting a High-Level Side Event at the 2nd Global Ministerial Conference in Sweden for Ministers and delegations from Commonwealth countries and are also planning to organise a side event at the Rwanda CHOGM in June 2020.

For more information visit www.commonwealthrsi.org
BUILDING A ‘FUTURE-READY’ PARLIAMENTARY WORKFORCE

Professional Development Programme for Parliamentary Staff with McGill University in collaboration with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

Over the last decade, the world has witnessed a rise in a significant number of crises pertaining to acts of terrorism, the rise of populism and the exploitation of power in which democratic institutions and beliefs have been under attack. These experiences have greatly impacted and transformed the work of Parliaments across the world. It is said that it is only by strengthening democracy at home and standing together in defence that democracies can protect their values and preserve their ability to expand freedom globally. Now, more than ever in the Commonwealth, Members of Parliament play an important role in ensuring that Commonwealth values of democracy and good governance amongst others continue to be upheld and are protected against authoritarian regimes that engage in corruption and encroach on civil and human rights. However, this great responsibility cannot be executed effectively without the support of dedicated, well-trained professional parliamentary staff. With the increasing need to safeguard against the gradual erosion of democracy that is taking place across Commonwealth and wider world, upskilling and building the capacity of parliamentary staff has become a necessity.

While the turnover of Members of Parliament is both a natural and necessary element of democracy, high turnover presents a risk of institutional memory loss. Parliamentary staff are the ‘corporate memory’ of Parliament. Building the capacity of staff ensures that the demands and needs of all Members and the Parliament are met. For this reason, it is important that parliamentary staff be provided with professional development opportunities such as: the McGill University School of Continuing Studies programme for parliamentary staff to better meet the needs and challenges of Parliaments in the 21st century.

Experience shows that a tone size fits all approach to parliamentary capacity building programmes does not work. Learning about the first principles underlying Parliament of one country or area is not sufficient since these do not necessarily translate entirely to the context of other countries or regions. To help prepare and sustain parliamentary institutions for the challenges of tomorrow, the McGill staff development programme is aimed at giving parliamentary staff a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Parliaments worldwide and greater insights into the workings of their own Parliament. Completed with the input and close collaboration of senior parliamentary staff from across the Commonwealth, the programme was designed to promote critical thinking and reflection, to encourage participants to challenge ideas and change assumptions, and to translate newly acquired knowledge into action. The objective of the programme is not merely to provide more information or train participants on a specific parliamentary procedure, but to enable them to develop new perspectives and make their own meaning by building on their prior knowledge and experiences, as well as that of their peers from other Parliaments. Learning is not about remembering something new, but about reflecting on past experiences and discovering the ways in which previous experiences relate to what is being taught in order to achieve meaningful learning (Taylor, 2006).

The programme addresses diversity of parliamentary contexts and goes beyond traditional face-to-face ad hoc training by embracing sound adult learning principles, experience-based learning strategies and pedagogical approaches. Participants are motivated to learn and apply what they learn when concepts and activities are relevant, practical and engaging. In support of this, the programme offers parliamentary staff the opportunity to engage in several stimulating discussions on major topical issues that affect many Parliaments across the Commonwealth. The participants’ keen interest in these topics was reflected in their post-course feedback, recommending increasing the amount of time allocated for these sessions to give opportunity for greater dialogue as participants were very interested in sharing their experiences’ (Taylor, 2006).

As part of the programme, parliamentary staff are also introduced to the CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures and learn about the importance of conducting self-assessments and how this practice can enhance the performance and effectiveness of their respective Parliaments. This topic consistently sparks a lot of interest and generates questions from programme participants who, prior to participating on the McGill programme had very little or no knowledge of the CPA Benchmarks. It is also important to mention that parliamentary staff undertaking this programme are privileged to hear from distinguished international experts throughout the duration of the programme, including the former Clerk of the Canadian Senate and Clerk of Parliament, Mr Paul Bélisle; Executive Director of the Centre for parliamentary staff development programme in Canada enhances skills for Commonwealth Parliaments

Parliamentary staff from 14 Commonwealth Parliaments have undertaken a staff development programme at McGill University, Montreal, Canada which has been organised by McGill University’s School of Continuing Studies in collaboration with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Created in response to the voiced needs of parliamentary staff, Programme Coordinator, Professor Rick Stapenhurst from McGill University officially opened the residency seminar and described the programme as ‘a unique tool that builds on the skills and capacity of senior parliamentary staff to help them better serve their Parliaments’.

Originally founded by the World Bank and McGill University in collaboration with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and other international partners, this intensive professional development programme includes a one-week residency seminar followed by expert–moderated online courses and is attended by senior parliamentary staff from across the Commonwealth. The programme offers parliamentary staff the opportunity to obtain a Professional Development Certificate in Parliamentary Management and covers a diverse range of topics including: Parliamentary Administration, Parliamentary Research and IT, Parliamentary Committees, Public Financial Management and Corporate Management of Parliaments.

Keynote speakers at the programme included Professor Rick Stapenhurst; former Clerk of the Canadian Senate and Clerk of the Parliaments, Mr Paul Bélisle; Executive Director of the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA), Dr Rashed Draman; and Executive Director of the Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Training (CPST) in Kenya, Professor Nyokabi Kamau. The CPST organised the 1986 CPA Parliamentary Staff Development programme with the Parliament of Kenya in Naivasha, Nakuru County, Kenya which was attended by 15 parliamentary staff from CPA Branches. The following CPA Branches represented in the programme this year funded by the CPA Headquarters Secretariat: Australian Capital Territory; Bangladesh; Bela; Cook Islands; Manipur; Northern Territory; Ontario; Scotland; Sierra Leone; Trinidad and Tobago; and Western Cape. The CPA Pakistan, Nigeria (Federal) and Kenya Branches self-funded their participants on this year’s programme.

*11 participants were funded by the CPA Headquarters Secretariat and * were funded by individual CPA Branches (Kenya, Nigeria Federal and Pakistan). Please contact the CPA or McGill about future programmes.

Participant presentations (framed topics) as well as in-class and online discussions are some of the key components to the programme - allow participants to reflect and share their experiences and engage in self-examination. Such construction of narratives with peers and instructor is another important factor in the learning that ensues” (Taylor, 2006), because “narratives allow us to construct – in conscious memory – our knowledge, sensations, feelings and behaviours supporting underlying neural networks” (Cazesnakos, 2002). The McGill and CPA programme participants often report that discussions with their peers are some of their most valuable learning experiences.
“Since 2012, over 150 participants with parliamentary experience ranging from five to twenty years from over 40 countries have completed the McGill University’s Professional Development Programme. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Headquarters Secretariat has successfully funded 34 parliamentary staff from Commonwealth Parliaments on this programme since 2017.”

The writing-to-learn approach is another form of narrative, which is used in the programme through written assignments, online discussions, and the final research paper at the end of each course. Writing is a powerful tool for self-discovery and reflection as it allows one to describe and capture thought in a more precise and concrete form and is a further step in to the “process of integration, … assessment and recalibration of perception” (Taylor, 2006). Therefore, one-on-one mentorship is an integral and unique part of McGill’s programme for parliamentary staff. At the beginning of the programme, each participant is assigned to a mentor (one of the programme instructors), who accompanies, encourages, motivates, and guides the mentee throughout the duration of the programme and beyond. Since 2012, over 150 participants with parliamentary experience ranging from five to twenty years from over 40 countries have completed the McGill University’s Professional Development Programme. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Headquarters Secretariat has successfully funded 34 parliamentary staff from Commonwealth Parliaments on this programme since 2017. Parliamentary staff who participate in this programme have the benefit of developing their knowledge and skills whilst learning from many rich and diverse cultures that make up the modern Commonwealth.

The CPA is an international organisation with over 17,000 parliamentary staff from some of the world’s largest and smallest Parliaments and Legislatures. These assemblies form part of the Association’s 180 Branches. The parliamentary staff currently participating in the 2019 cohort of the programme through CPA’s sponsorship represent diverse Parliaments from eight out of the nine CPA Regions. In the fulfilment of the tenth value listed in the Commonwealth Charter, the CPA recognises the importance of … promoting education, learning and sharing cultures and is committed to bringing parliamentary staff and partners together to exchange ideas in order to better implement and advance good practices across the Commonwealth. Drawn from the survey of the past programme participants conducted by McGill University, here are some examples of improvements implemented by participants in their Parliaments following programme completion:

- A structure for the Committee Secretariat division.
- Data sharing systems, public engagement initiatives (virtual tour of Assembly).
- Improved quality of research work.
- Introduced a Code of Conduct for Parliamentary Staff.
- Managed to link Parliamentary Committees to Researchers.
- Developed a Draft Communication Strategy for the National Assembly.
- Introduced an orientation/training programme for new Directors at the Assembly. The programme has since been extended to managers and supervisors.
- Alumni from the programme opened new horizons for us to make our parliamentary practices more innovative. Last but not least, the brilliant moderators and wonderful mentors made this programme excellent and more effective."

When asked “How did you see the programme having an impact in making your institution more efficient and effective?” a participant answered the following:

- “I have a strong believe in learning and development for staff so when you give staff regardless of their level these opportunities for learning and development particularly practical learning and development, you’re going to strengthen your organisation, you’re going to build that knowledge and that capacity and give your organisation a better opportunity going forward to do better.”

Further Reading:

References:
1  Freedom in the World (2019)
2  Global Parliamentary Report—Parliamentary oversight Parliament’s power to hold government to account (IPU, 2017)
3  Charter of the Commonwealth (2013)

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Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Canada Region meet in Nova Scotia to discuss inclusion and supporting women entrepreneurs

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Canada Regional meetings took place from 12 to 16 July 2019 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The CWP Canada Regional Chair, Hon. Laura Ross, MLA (Saskatchewan) chaired the meeting which took place ahead of the 57th CPA Canada Regional Conference in Nova Scotia later the same week. Delegates to the CWP Canada Regional Conference were hosted by Hon. Suzanne Lohnes-Croft, MLA, Deputy Speaker of the Nova Scotia Legislature and CWP Nova Scotia Branch Representative.

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Canada Region held an outreach programme for Members visiting local businesses and organisations as well as a regional meeting and workshop sessions. Workshop topics included women entrepreneurs and supporting them in business; the six signature traits of inclusive leadership; and ‘Inclusion Is Not Just A Buzz Word’. The meetings provided Members with the opportunity to hear about activities over the previous year, and to think about priorities for the upcoming year.

The CWP Canada Chair gave her report emphasising the importance of the CWP Canada Regional Steering Committee continuing their efforts to promote CWP in Canada on a variety of platforms, including social media. The importance of continuing to build ties with other groups who promote the role of women in Legislative Assemblies was also emphasised.

The CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan (who was attending the CPA Canada Regional Conference) congratulated the CWP Canada Regional Chair, Hon. Laura Ross, MLA on the excellent work of the CWP Canada Region in promoting greater female inclusion in Parliament. The CPA Canada Regional Chair also presented the CWP She Should Run! booklet, a framework campaign for schools to encourage young women’s political participation, to the CPA Vice-Chairperson and the CPA Secretary-General at the regional conference.

Focus on encouraging young women into leadership positions for Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians in the Australia Region

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Australia Region have held the latest event in their highly successful ‘Stepping-Up’ programme aimed at encouraging young women to aim for leadership positions. On 17 June 2019, the CWP Representative at the Parliament of New South Wales, Jenny Akkinson, MP hosted the ‘Stepping-Up: Young Women’s Leadership’ Workshop, the second workshop to be held at the Parliament of New South Wales since the CWP-initiated program was launched in May 2016.

Members of the New South Wales Parliament nominated 55 young women considering a career in politics to participate and Hon. Leslie Williams, MP, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of New South Wales, welcomed participants to the Members’ Dining Room. Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, MLC; Ms Stephi Cooke, MP; Ms Felicity Wilson, MP; Hon. Ms Abigail Boyd, MLC; and Hon. Rose Jackson, MLC all provided informative insights for the young women at the event into their political journeys during the ‘Pathways to Politics’ panel discussions.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians in Queensland celebrate the first women elected to the Legislative Assembly

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) at the Parliament of Queensland have celebrated the 90th anniversary of the election of the first women Member of the Queensland Legislative Assembly, Irene Longman.

Irene Longman was elected on 11th May 1929 to represent the seat of Bulimba and held the seat until 1932. Irene was one of the first trained kindergarten teachers in Queensland. She had a long career in early childhood education. At age fifty-two, Irene was nominated to run for the state seat of Bulimba as a National Party candidate. She was an experienced organiser as a member of the Queensland Women’s Electoral League and as President of the Queensland branch of the National Council of Women (1920 – 1924).

Current and past women Members of the Queensland Parliament were joined by Hon. Curtis Pitt, MP, current Speaker of the Queensland Legislative Assembly to celebrate the anniversary.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic Region takes place in Trinidad and Tobago on theme of ‘Women in Leadership’

Commonwealth Parliamentarians from across the region met for the 12th Regional Conference of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic Region hosted by the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago on 13 and 14 July 2019.

The 12th CWP Caribbean Regional Conference was chaired by Hon. Jeannine Giraudy-McIntyre, MP, President of the Senate of St Lucia and Chair of the Regional CWP and saw updates on the activities of the CWP across the region. At the CWP Regional Conference, delegates heard from experts at two training sessions on gender-based budgeting and on gender-based harassment.

Amidst the attendees at the CWP Regional Conference were: Hon. Shirley Osborne, MLA, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Montserrat; Hon. Bridgit Annisette-George, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives at the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago; Hon. Senator Alcina Williams-Grant, President of the Senate of Antigua and Barbuda; and Hon. Laura Tucker-Longworth, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Belize.

The 12th CWP Caribbean Regional Conference was held in Trinidad and Tobago ahead of the 44th CPA Regional Conference of the Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region.

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For more images of CWP activities and events please visit www.cpahq.org/cpahq/flickr.
Commonwealth Parliamentarians focus on gender sensitive scrutiny of legislation at Westminster Workshop

Forty Commonwealth Parliamentarians from 25 Legislatures from all CPA Regions attended the Westminster Workshop on Gender Sensitive Scrutiny hosted by the CPA UK Branch from 17 to 19 June 2019 for a full programme of shared learning on gender sensitive scrutiny of legislation and budgets.

The programme was designed to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise between Legislatures and focus on how individual Parliamentarians can become leaders in their own Parliaments. Over the course of the three-day programme, the delegates engaged with a variety of speakers including other Parliamentarians, academics and experts in civil society. The conversations were rich and diverse, bringing together many different view points and approaches on how to ensure legislation and budgets are properly scrutinised through a gender sensitive lens.

The CPA UK Branch was delighted to welcome Amelia Kinahoi Siamomua, Head of Gender at the Commonwealth Secretariat, who gave the keynote speech in which she spoke about the Commonwealth Charter which recognises gender equality as one of its key principles. She spoke about the importance of ensuring that no citizen of the Commonwealth gets left behind and that all Parliamentarians must be aware of the implications of legislation they work with. She highlighted that it is vitally important as a ‘Connected Commonwealth’ to share learnings as well as challenges.

The programme enabled delegates to explore different methods of scrutinising legislation and budgets through Committee inquiries and by engaging with civil society groups. A recurring theme of the session discussions focussed on increasing the representation of women and minority groups in Commonwealth Parliaments to ensure that gender sensitive scrutiny is robustly facilitated and at all levels of government departments and agencies to delineate how their policies impacted women.

Rt Hon. Maria Miller, MP spoke about her role as the first and only Chair of the UK Parliament’s Women and Equalities Select Committee. The Committee selects laws to scrutinise and produces reports which the UK Government must respond to. This work also forces these issues up the news agenda.

Kate Faragher of Bespoke Skills spoke about the importance of preparation, effective questioning and teamwork when addressing witnesses during Committee sessions. Delegates explored the best approaches to asking questions, including using clear and specific language, and ordering questions and follow up questions effectively.

Rt Hon. Nicky Morgan, MP spoke about her role as the Chair of the UK Parliament’s Treasury Select Committee which scrutinises expenditure, administration and policy of the Treasury, Revenue and Customs, and associated public bodies in the UK, including the Bank of England.

On the final day, the programme included an interactive Committee exercise which allowed the delegates to practice their techniques for questioning witnesses at committee inquiries. Hon. Fatoumatta Njai, MP of The Gambia chaired the proceedings and delegates volunteered as Committee Members to question the witnesses about measures to protect employees from sexual harassment in the workplace.

The final session of the Workshop explored knowledge gained and shared. Key messages from delegates included establishing Women and Equalities Committees, working closely with colleagues to establish gender sensitive scrutiny of legislation and budgets, and commissioning Gender Sensitive Audits in their respective Legislatures.

To find out more about the Westminster Workshop on Gender Sensitive Scrutiny, please visit www.uk-cpa.org or email haligahe@parliament.uk.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Asia Region discuss impediments and challenges facing women in politics at 5th CPA Asia Regional Conference in Pakistan

A seminar for Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) has been held for women Members at the 5th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Asia Regional Conference. The regional conference was held from 29 July to 2 August 2019 in Islamabad, Pakistan. The seminar was attended by the Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan, Hon. Asad Qaiser and the Chairperson of the CPA International Executive Committee, Hon. Emilia Liaka, MP, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon.

Delegates discussed the challenges and impediments against women in politics in the region and a wide range of connected topics including the male dominant party structures; general seats versus reserved seats for women; and prioritising women issues as national issues. Hon. Dr Fehmida Mirza, Federal Minister of Pakistan and CPA Asia Regional Representative on the CPA International Executive Committee spoke about the role of women in Pakistan in politics and her experiences as both a Speaker and Minister in Pakistan.

Hon. Munaza Hassan, MNA, CPA steering Committee Member for Asia Region spoke about the work of the Pakistan Women’s Parliamentary Caucus; Hon. Sheen Mazed, Pakistan’s Minister for Human Rights spoke about women’s empowerment; and Hon. Jalia Bintu, MP spoke about her experience as a women Member of the Parliament of Uganda.

Ahead of the CWP Asia Region seminar, a specially convened meeting of the Pakistan Women’s Parliamentary Caucus was held with senior delegates and was also attended by the former Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Chairperson, Hon. Dr Dato’ Noraini Ahmad, MP (Malaysia) and former CWP Chairperson and current CPA President Designate, Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians recognised in Bermuda

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) from the CPA Bermuda, Montserrat and Trinidad & Tobago Branches together with parliamentary staff and staff members from the CPA Headquarters Secretariat gathered in the margins of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar in Bermuda in May 2019 to recognise that the Parliament of Bermuda now has 25% women Members of Parliament following its most recent elections, up from 19.4% in previous elections.

Election successes of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians in Pakistan

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) from the CPA Pakistan Branch, Montserrat and Trinidad & Tobago Branches together with parliamentary staff and staff members from the CPA Headquarters Secretariat gathered in the margins of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar in Bermuda in May 2019 to recognise that the Parliament of Bermuda now has 25% women Members of Parliament following its most recent elections, up from 19.4% in previous elections.
**NEWS AND LEGISLATION FROM COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTS**

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**Electoral Legislation Amendment (Modernisation and Other Measures) Act 2019**

The legislation amends the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 to make completion of a qualification checklist compulsory in relation to candidate nominations, and makes other changes.

During the 45th Parliament (2016-2019), a number of Senators and Members had to resign their position because they had dual citizenship which is in breach of section 44 of the Constitution. If a person has dual citizenship, then they ‘shall be incapable of being chosen or of sitting as a Senator or a Member of the House of Representatives.’ It has always been an individual candidate’s responsibility to ensure that they are compliant with this section of the Constitution.

The Special Minister of State, Hon. Alex Hawke, MP, explained that the legislation makes a number of changes to the Electoral Act to ‘include an obligation for persons wishing to nominate as candidates in elections to provide information, in the form of a checklist, relevant to their eligibility under section 44 of the Constitution.’ Mr Hawke stated that the legislation will ‘make completing the checklist a mandatory requirement for all candidates at the next federal election. The checklist is consistent with the form previously established by regulations and used at the recent by-elections. Information provided in the checklist is also consistent with the form used by current Senators and Members of Parliament which is published on the respective parliamentary citizenship registers.’

The Shadow Minister for Finance, Dr Jim Chalmers, MP, commented that ‘as Members here would very well assess, the issue of section 44 eligibility has plagued this Parliament. In May last year, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, JSCEM, issued its report on these eligibility issues. The Committee recommended the Australian Government investigate measures and strategies to mitigate the impact of section 44 on this Parliament, particularly when such confusion and chaos was taking hold. Importantly, the Committee noted that the power of the Parliament and the High Court in these matters should be respected.’ Dr Chalmers stated that ‘a checklist used to be voluntary, allowing candidates to provide information where they believed it was appropriate. Schedule 1 of this Bill seeks to enforce that checklist as a compulsory requirement for every person nominating as a federal candidate. This compulsory requirement is not just important for administrative purposes but also ensures that the Australian public can have faith that, regardless of their choice of candidate, these issues have been squared away in some capacity by the time people get to the polls. Where answers are not provided to the required questions, the nomination would be invalid. Similarly, where more than one answer is provided to a required question, that nomination would also be invalid.’ Dr Chalmers explained that ‘completing this checklist does not automatically guarantee a candidate is eligible for federal office. The Parliament and the judiciary rightly remain paramount in these cases for important constitutional reasons. But what this compulsory checklist does ensure is that all candidates for federal office consider their circumstances carefully and provide evidence where ambiguity exists. Providing deliberately false or misleading information will rightly attract a penalty under the Criminal Code, where either a maximum penalty of imprisonment for 12 months or a fine of $12,600, or both simultaneously, can apply.’

**Parliamentary Service Amendment (Post-election Report) Act 2019**

The legislation amends the the Parliamentary Service Act 1999 to change the deadline for publishing the post-election report of election commitments, from before the end of 30 days after the end of the caretaker period for a general election to the later of either 20 days after the end of the caretaker period for the general election to which the report relates or 7 days before the first sitting day of either or both Houses of the Parliament after the general election to which the report relates. The post-election report is prepared and published by the Parliamentary Service Office and the Special Minister of State, Dr Andrew Leigh, MP, noted that Labor will support the legislation. Dr Leigh commented that ‘it has been Labor that has led the way on medium-term costings, recognising that for many policies, it’s important to understand the implications not just over the four years but also over the decade. This is particularly true with grandfathered reforms, such as Labor’s changes to capital gains and negative gearing, where the impact over the 10 years is materially different from the impact over four years. It’s important, too, when we’re thinking about long-term policies and the issues typically raised in the Intergenerational report, that we aren’t simply confined to thinking about fiscal costs over a four-year window.’

In relation to the PBO, Dr Leigh stated that it ‘is an equal status coster to the Treasury, a point sometimes missed by those opposed. Labor established it. We are proud of the institution it’s become. It’s helped the Parliament and the public develop a deeper understanding of the budgetary impacts on policies being considered. Its independence and focus on transparency has improved the information and data available to the public. The PBO also produces regular reports on important fiscal issues, which should be a key component of the budget process. It has a strong influence on the public debate on budget sustainability and ensure that the public has a strong voice of who is bearing the heavy lifting for fiscal changes.’
The Prime Minister, Hon. Scott Morrison, MP, and his Coalition Liberal/National Government, has come from behind to win the Australia Federal Election on May 2019. Mr Morrison was not expected to win and he himself called his victory a miracle. During the past six years the Coalition was dogged by infighting and internal dissent. Mr Morrison was elected as Leader in August 2018 replacing the then Prime Minister, Hon. Malcolm Turnbull who was removed in an ugly leadership contest. Mr Morrison was the third Coalition Prime Minister in Australia in just over five years.

The polls heavily favoured the Labor Party. Labor Party lost in its effort to win. Mr Turnbull stated that he would run a campaign full of fairness and respect for the Australian people. Mr Abbott has held for six years his seat that he was probably a veiled reference to the former Prime Minister, Hon. Malcolm Turnbull who immediately quit his seat when he lost the support of his party. Mr Morrison said he always believed in miracles and claimed the victory for the ‘quiet Australians’.

He stated tonight is about every single Australian who depends on their Government to put them first. That is exactly what we are going to do. Our Government will come together with the people of Australia to get back to work. That is our task and that is my undertaking to Australians from one end of the country to the other. I said I was going to burn for you and I am – every single day.

In politics, there is no prize for coming second. For the first time, we will be the Leader of the Opposition which he has held for six years. His dreams of becoming Prime Minister were over.

In contrast, Mr Morrison’s successful leadership and management of the campaign has strengthened his position and his party. His victory, although narrow, is one of the most impressive in Liberal Party history.

In election news, the former Australian Prime Minister, Hon. Tony Abbott, MP, lost his blue-ribbon Liberal seat of Warringah to former Opposition Leader, Ms Sussan Ley. Ms Sussan Ley campaigned on being economically conservative and socially progressive. Mr Abbott has held Warringah since 1994 but fell out of favour with his electorate on policies such as same-sex marriage and action on climate change. Mr Abbott, in conceding defeat, said he would rather be a lesser than a quitter, which was probably a veiled reference to the former Prime Minister, Hon. Malcolm Turnbull who immediately quit his seat when he lost the support of his party in August 2018.

The billionaire Clive Palmer formed the United Australia Party and spent an estimated AUD$60 million on campaign advertising but failed to win a seat anywhere. However, the preferences from his 3.3% of the national vote helped the coalition government to be re-elected. For the new 46th Parliament, the House of Representatives chamber increased to 151 seats from 150 under the 45th Parliament. At the start of the 45th Parliament in 2016, the distribution of seats was Liberal/National Coalition 76, Labor 69, one Green and four independents. In the new parliament, the Coalition slightly increased its majority to 77 seats, Labor 68, one Green and five independent Members.

The Senate of the 46th Parliament comprises 35 Coalition, 26 Labor, nine Australian Greens, two Palmer United and one One Nation, two Centre Alliance, one Independent and one Jacqui Lambie Network. The Government is expected to win the Senate and will need 39 votes to pass legislation.

Albanese becomes new Leader of the Opposition

Hon. Anthony Albanese, MP, became the Leader of the Opposition, Shadow Treasurer, after Mr Shorten’s decision to step down. Mr Albanese was first elected to the New South Wales inner metropolitan seat of Grayndler in 1986. He is a Bachelor of Economics from Sydney University, during the Rudd/Gillard Governments, he was as Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Health and Minister for the Environment. Mr Albanese was appointed to lead the new Ministry on the day of the Coalition’s victory, with a mission to see more Australians return to work and get on with the job of delivering for all Australians as they go about their own lives, pursuing their goals and aspirations for themselves, their families and their communities.

Mr Morrison stated that ‘the economic team will be supported by Hon. Michael Sukkar, MP, as Assistant Treasurer and Senator Hon. Mathias Cormann remaining as Minister for Finance. Mr Morrison noted that ‘the economic team will also be supported by Hon. Michael Sukkar, MP, as Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Housing to implement our First Home Loan Deposit Scheme, as well as delivering more affordable housing and Senator Hon. Jane Hume taking on the role of Assistant Minister for Superannuation, Financial Services and Technology.’

Mr Morrison noted that the Ministry maintains record representation of women in the Cabinet, including Senator Hon. Kristina Keneally as Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs; Senator Hon. Bridget McKenzie as the first female Minister for Agriculture; Senator Hon. Michaelia Cash as Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business; Senator Hon. Linda Reynolds as Minister for Defence; Senator Hon.Anne Ruston as Minister for Families and Social Services; and Hon. Karen Andrews, MP, as Minister for Industry, Science and Technology. National Party Member, Hon. Michael McCormack, MP, remains the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development.

Shortly after the Federal Election, the Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Michael McCormack, MP, announced his new Ministry. Mr Morrison stated that ‘Australians have re-elected our Government to get back to work and get on with the job of delivering for all Australians as they go about their own lives, pursuing their goals and aspirations for themselves, their families and their communities. My Government’s new Ministry will be tasked with delivering our commitments as the Coalition maintains record representation of women in the Cabinet, including Senator Hon. Kristina Keneally as Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs. Former Prime Minister Scott Morrison is known for his experience dealing with the country through the uncertain times and global economic headwinds. They will be supported by Hon. Alex Hawke, MP, as Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Senator Hon. Simon Birmingham as Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, helping drive our Pacific ‘step up’ agenda.

In relation to the environment and climate, Mr Morrison stated that ‘Hon. Susan Ley, MP, will return to Cabinet as Minister for Environment and Energy with a focus on practical and local environmental outcomes as well as waste reduction and recycling. Hon. Emerson, MP, Hon. Trevor Evans, MP, Hon. Angus Taylor, MP, will continue as Minister for Energy and his portfolio will take on Emissions Reduction to ensure we have a strong focus on lowering Australians’ power bills and meeting our 2030 emissions targets. Mr Warren Entsch, MP, will also serve as Special Envoy for the Great Barrier Reef.’

Mr Morrison stated that ‘a key focus for all of my Ministers and their Departments will be lifting performance on government service delivery. This will include congestion busting on regulatory and bureaucratic roadblocks and make the best use of technology and better integrating service delivery across portfolios. The goal is to make it easier to deal with and access the Government services Australians rely on.’

In relation to national security, Mr Morrison commented that ‘our experienced Foreign Affairs and National Security Ministers will continue to deliver the best outcomes for Australia. Former Prime Ministers Tony Abbott and Malcolm Turnbull, as well as Minister for Foreign Affairs, former Army Reserves Brigadier Senator Hon. Linda Reynolds as Minister for Defence, Senator Peter Dutton, MP, as Minister for Home Affairs and Senator Hon. Simon Birmingham as Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment will help guide our country through the uncertain times and global economic headwinds. They will be supported by Hon. Alex Hawke, MP, as Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Assistant Minister for Defence helping drive our Pacific “step up” agenda.’

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The Education Amendment Bill (No 2) The Education Amendment Bill (No 2), introduced on 13 September 2018, amends the Education Act 1989, the Education Act 1984, and the Education (Update) Amendment Act 2017 and clarifies the functions, duties, and powers of specified education entities. At the Bill’s Second Reading, the Minister explained that those who still require starting age to include four-year-olds … requires the Education Amendment Bill (No 2), which, as we have heard, this is an issue that’s been well researched in the past.” Ms Gozit Ghahraman, MP (Greens) explained: “The expedited process that we’ve taken has been appropriate in ascertaining members of the public, who actually were shocked that we were in a community where this type of military-style weapon was so easy to obtain, that actually change is coming and it’s being done now.” However, Mr David Seymour, MP (Leader, ACT) said: “Urge caution. I urge public consultation. I urge that we do our job as a Parliament and truly honour the victims of this tragedy by defending our democracy and our due process of public consultation and parliamentary scrutiny and making good laws, because if gun control is important, it’s important to do it right.”

Arms (Prohibited Firearms, Magazines, and Parts) Amendment Bill The Arms (Prohibited Firearms, Magazines, and Parts) Amendment Bill was introduced to the New Zealand Parliament following the 15th March 2019 terrorist attack at Al Noor and Linwood mosques in Christchurch, an act of violence that resulted in the deaths of 51 people. The legislation, which by leave of the House was passed within an expedited time frame, aims to remove semi-automatic firearms from circulation and use by the general population in New Zealand … by prohibiting semi-automatic firearms, magazines, and parts that can be used to assemble prohibited firearms.” The Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Jacinda Ardern, MP (Labour) had announced within days of the attack that the country’s gun laws would change, and she commented at the Bill’s Third Reading: “I could not fathom how weapons that could cause such destruction and large-scale death could have been obtained legally in this country. I could not fathom that.” Members from across the House noted that the changes were “long overdue” “a long time coming” and “needed for many years” References were made also to the unsuccessful attempts at gun law reform in New Zealand following the Aramoana massacre, in 1999.

The Finance and Expenditure Committee, which worked within a shortened report-back period of seven days, received more than 13,000 submissions and heard oral evidence from 22 submitters. Mr Mark Patterson, MP (NZ First) said: “There has been some criticism of the process. It has been very truncated, but as we have heard, this is an issue that’s been well researched in the past.” Ms Gozit Ghahraman, MP (Greens) explained: “The expedited process that we’ve taken has been appropriate in ascertaining members of the public, who actually were shocked that we were in a community where this type of military-style weapon was so easy to obtain, that actually change is coming and it’s being done now.” However, Mr David Seymour, MP (Leader, ACT) said: “Urge caution. I urge public consultation. I urge that we do our job as a Parliament and truly honour the victims of this tragedy by defending our democracy and our due process of public consultation and parliamentary scrutiny and making good laws, because if gun control is important, it’s important to do it right.”

The Bill includes changes in what will be the first tranches of a wide review of New Zealand’s gun laws. It provides an amnesty period for firearms to be surrendered to licensed dealers or to the police. This will tie in with a Government buy-back scheme. The Prime Minister explained that those who still require weapons for legitimate purposes, such as for hunting or for pest control “have told us what is in fair and legitimate use, and they have told us that they, by and large, with very few exceptions, support what we are doing here today.” A proposed amendment in the name of Opposition police spokesperson, Mr Chris Bishop, MP (National) was ruled out of order. The amendment would have created an exemption for competitors in international target-shooting sports. The National Party still hopes to see this reviewed in the next phase of the gun laws process. Mr Ian McKenzie, MP (National) commented that the Government’s buy-back scheme should accept illegally obtained weapons. “This reflects recent events in New Zealand – and there will be many more of them as a result of this – out of circulation.”

The Minister of Police, Hon. Stuart Nash, MP (Labour) explained that the Bill’s way on an Arms Amendment Bill (No 2), which will make further amendments to the Arms Act and is expected to be brought forward in Parliament in June 2019. He said: “That Bill will address some long-dated questions around a gun register, the licensing regime, the system of licencing, the fit and proper person test, storage requirements, and penalties, amongst other matters.” The Bill was passed with 119 votes to 1 and received the Royal Assent on 11 April 2019. A Royal commission of inquiry has been established to investigate the events leading up to the Christchurch attacks.

The Bill’s sponsor, Mr Bayly, MP (National) said: “It’s great that the Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Jacinda Ardern, MP (Labour) still support what we are doing here today.” The National Party still opposes what we are doing here today.” The National Party still opposes.”

The Bill is an important first step in addressing the sell-off of military-style weapons that could cause such destruction and large-scale death could have been obtained legally in this country. I could not fathom that.” Members from across the House noted that the changes were “long overdue” “a long time coming” and “needed for many years” References were made also to the unsuccessful attempts at gun law reform in New Zealand following the Aramoana massacre, in 1999.

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The Aridation Amendment Bill The Aridation Amendment Bill, a Member’s Bill in the name of Mr Andrew Bayly, MP (National), to improve laws relating to arbitration proceedings and to bring them closer to international legislation, passed its Third Reading on 1 May 2019 with unanimous support in the House. The Bill’s amendments to the Aridation Act 1996 include: giving arbitration clauses in contracts the same effect as arbitration agreements; defining the grounds for setting aside an arbitral award; and confirming the consequence of failing to raise a timely objection to an arbitral tribunal’s jurisdiction. Given the technical nature of the Bill, the Justice Committee received independent advice from legal experts, including from recently retired High Court judge, Hon. Paul Heath, QC. The Select Committee Chair, Mr Raymond Hui, MP, about that said otherwise that they were “not only honouring the sector but also getting some of the fundamental principles right, because, as Chief Justice, Rt Hon. Sirian Elias stated in his letter to the Justice Committee, this Bill, although a Member’s Bill, did touch upon some important issues dealing directly with a court context.” The Bill enjoyed broad support across the House, with Members agreeing that it was important to provide an alternative to the court system. “Arbitration is usually quicker, it’s usually less expensive, it’s usually more satisfactory, it’s usually more less conciliatory,” said Mr Michael Wood, MP (Labour). Mr Duncan Webb, MP (Labour) highlighted also that “the court system absolutely do not work for everyone. Sometimes they don’t work because of the complexity and size of disputes which arbitrations – as Mr Bayly noted – relate to, but also for a whole lot of other disputes which may be smaller and require more simple procedures.”

Other Members of the Bill’s need to remove any opportunities “to game the system” through this Bill. Mr Chris Penk, MP (National) stated: “I am of course concerned about the number of submitters asked that provision for the Bill in the name of Ms Andrew Bayly, MP (National), to improve laws relating to arbitration proceedings and to bring them closer to international legislation, passed its Third Reading on 1 May 2019 with unanimous support in the House. The Bill’s amendments to the Aridation Act 1996 include: giving arbitration clauses in contracts the same effect as arbitration agreements; defining the grounds for setting aside an arbitral award; and confirming the consequence of failing to raise a timely objection to an arbitral tribunal’s jurisdiction. Given the technical nature of the Bill, the Justice Committee received independent advice from legal experts, including from recently retired High Court judge, Hon. Paul Heath, QC. The Select Committee Chair, Mr Raymond Hui, MP, about that said otherwise that they were “not only honouring the sector but also getting some of the fundamental principles right, because, as Chief Justice, Rt Hon. Sirian Elias stated in his letter to the Justice Committee, this Bill, although a Member’s Bill, did touch upon some important issues dealing directly with a court context.” The Bill enjoyed broad support across the House, with Members agreeing that it was important to provide an alternative to the court system. “Arbitration is usually quicker, it’s usually less expensive, it’s usually more satisfactory, it’s usually more less conciliatory,” said Mr Michael Wood, MP (Labour). Mr Duncan Webb, MP (Labour) highlighted also that “the court system absolutely do not work for everyone. Sometimes they don’t work because of the complexity and size of disputes which arbitrations – as Mr Bayly noted – relate to, but also for a whole lot of other disputes which may be smaller and require more simple procedures.”

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Uganda Finance Minister Presents Budget and Targets Increasing Wealth and Improving Livelihoods of Ugandans

In May 2019, the Parliament of Uganda considered, debated and passed five Budget bills, in preparation for the eventual approval of the national budget and presentation of the budget speech for the financial year 2019/2020. The Bills included: the Excise Duty (Amendment) Bill, 2019; the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2019; the Tax Procedures Code (Amendment) Bill, 2019; the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2019; the Stamp Duty (Amendment) Bill, 2019; the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2019. These Bills were presented to the House on 28 March 2019. The Bills, which are presented and passed every year, make alterations in taxes and provide government with avenues to raise revenue required to fund the national budget. The Appropriation Bill provides for how government will spend collected funds.

Unlike the years before the Public Finance Management Act 2015 came into effect, Parliament and Legislators now have a more direct involvement in the preparation of the national Budget as well as the contents of the Budget speech. The Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Hon. Matia Kasaija presented the national Budget for the financial year 2019/2020 on 13 June 2019, on the same day his counterparts in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Tanzania.

Previously, after the Budget speech, the Parliament of Uganda would meet to consider the vote on account, to approve funds to allow for the withdrawal of money from the Consolidated Fund Account for the purposes of meeting the expenditure necessary to carry on services of government, before the consideration, approval and coming into effect of the Appropriation Act. With this system, the Budget bills would be introduced in Parliament after the presentation of the Budget speech in June of the year. This old system meant that figures, projections and proposals of the Government in the Budget speech were new to not only the Parliamentarians but also to the country.

The Public Finance Management Act changed the Budget cycle and provided for more involvement of Parliamentarians in the Budget making process. Members now have a direct input into what gets into the national Budget, as figures and tax proposals are considered and approved beforehand. The Act among others provides for fiscal and macroeconomic management; the Charter of Fiscal Responsibility; the Budget Framework Paper; the roles of the Minister of Finance and Secretary to the Treasury in the budgeting process; virements, multiyear expenditure, supplementary budgets and excess expenditure.

Further, the Act provides for bank account management, management of expenditure commitments, the raising of loans by the Minister, management of government debt, authority to receive monetary grants and assets management. It also establishes accounting standards and Audit Committees.

The Bill/Act was introduced in an effort to improve public financial management and was meant to consolidate all laws related to the management of public finances, including the Budget Act, 2001 and the Public Finance and Accountability Act, 2003. The law also meant that the parliamentary calendar would require adjustment to make provision for scrutinising the Ministerial policy statements and the Budget figures during the period before 1st July.

The Act also requires the Minister of Finance to present to Parliament a Charter of Fiscal Responsibility, three months after the first sitting of a new Parliament and after the general elections, for parliamentary approval. This Charter provides a statement indicating the measurable objectives for fiscal policy for a period of not less than the next three financial years and should be consistent with the National Development Plan. On 13 June 2019, the Minister of Finance, Hon. Matia Kasaija, on behalf of the President of Uganda presented to the Uganda Parliament the national Budget under the theme: ‘Industrialization for Job Creation and Shared Prosperity’.

**Highlights of the Budget speech**

Uganda's economy has recovered and picked up momentum, growing at over 6% per annum over the last two years. With the progress in economic growth, average incomes of Ugandans have increased to US$825 per person in financial year 2018/19, compared to US$800 in 2017/18, notwithstanding the increase in the population size to 39 million Ugandans.

The quality of Uganda’s labour force has dramatically improved, with the proportion of the labour force with tertiary education increasing from 7.5% in 2013 to 13.6% in 2017. In addition, the annual growth in formal employment has averaged 8.8% between 2010 and 2017, higher than the average growth of the economy during the same period. The structure of the economy has changed. The share of industry in the economy is now 21% compared to 11.3% in 1986. Services have increased to 48.7% from 32% over the same period. In contrast, the share of agriculture has reduced from over 50% in 1986 to 22% in financial year 2018/19.

Export performance has been excellent, with diversification leading to non-traditional cash crops earning Uganda US$2.84 billion last financial year, compared to the traditional cash crops, which earned US$0.79 billion.

Trade with East Africa Community partners has significantly improved, generating a surplus of US$557 million last year.

Left and above right: The Uganda Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Hon. Matia Kasaija, MP (also Member of Parliament for Buyanja in Kibale district) presents the national Budget for financial year 2019/2020 to the Parliament of Uganda, 13 June 2019.
Outside 10 Downing Street on the morning of 24 May 2019, Rt Hon. Theresa May, MP announced that she would be standing down as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. In her speech, she said that “I have done everything I can to convince MPs to back [the Government's negotiated Withdrawal Agreement for leaving the EU]. Sadly, I have not been able to do so. I wish I could be more persuasive, even when the odds against success seemed high. But it is now clear to me that it is in the best interests of the country for a new Prime Minister to lead that effort.”

In the previous six weeks, talks took place between the Government and the Opposition Labour Party to find a possible compromise that could lead to a revised Withdrawal Agreement being put before the House of Commons. However, these talks ended without an agreement. On 21 May 2019, Mrs May delivered a speech on a ‘new Brexit deal’, which most notably announced that the Withdrawal Agreement Bill would include a requirement for the House of Commons to vote on whether to hold a second referendum. She faced opposition from MPs across the House following the speech and the Leader of the House of Commons, Rt Hon. Andrea Leadsom, MP, resigned from the cabinet.

Following speculation of a rule change within the 1922 Committee of Conservative backbenchers to permit another confidence vote within a year (following the previous confidence vote held in December 2018), Mrs May announced her resignation and formally stepped down as leader of the Conservative Party on Friday 7 June 2019. To select a new leader, the Parliamentary Conservative Party vote in a series of ballots to whittle down the nominated candidates until only two remain. The final two candidates then face an election amongst the Conservative Party membership. In this contest, which began in June 2019, ten candidates stood in the first round. After another four rounds of voting, the final two contenders, Rt Hon. Boris Johnson, MP and Rt Hon. Jeremy Hunt, MP, faced an election among the party membership to be the next Conservative leader and therefore, the UK Prime Minister.

Whilst this election amongst the Conservative Party membership takes place, Theresa May remained Prime Minister. The next Conservative Party leader was announced the week commencing 22 July 2019 after which Theresa May resigned, and the new leader, Rt Hon. Boris Johnson MP was invited to form a Government by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

**Prorogation of the UK Parliament**

The UK Parliament is now in one of its longest parliamentary sessions in history. On 7 May 2019, the current session became the longest session by sitting days since the English Civil War (1642-51), beating the record and sitting for 395 days. The 2017-19 session is unusual for crossing three calendar years. The 2017-19 session was established by the Government to ensure there was adequate time to pass Brexit-related legislation following the 2017 General Election, departing from the usual twelve-month cycle. Except for dissolution, which ends a Parliament and precedes a General Election, a parliamentary session can only be ended by prorogation.

The origin of prorogation lies within the United Kingdom’s monarchical system, in which it is a Royal prerogative to prorogue Parliament. Although prorogation remains a Royal prerogative, it is exercised by the Crown on advice of the Privy Council. In modern practice, the decision to prorogue the UK Parliament is taken by the Government of the day, given the politically neutral role of the UK’s constitutional monarchy today.

Prorogation ends the proceedings in both Houses of Parliament in the United Kingdom. This can include that primary legislation which has not completed its passage in Parliament falls, except in cases where the House of Commons has agreed to ‘carry-over’ a Bill to allow proceedings on it to continue in the next session. All other parliamentary business before either House also falls. Parliament cannot formally meet; questions cannot be tabled, and new business cannot formally meet during prorogation. The Government cannot pass any primary legislation, including approval for further (financial) supply.

As a result of the Parliament Acts 1911 and 1949, should the House of Lords reject a Bill passed by the House of Commons, a new session can enable a UK Government to reintroduce the same Bill, and (provided that a year has elapsed since its Second Reading in the Commons) it can become an Act of Parliament without the consent of the Upper House.

At the end of prorogation in the United Kingdom, the new parliamentary session begins with the State Opening of Parliament. The Queen formally opens Parliament and delivers the Queen’s Speech in the House of Lords chamber. This Speech is written by the UK Government and sets out their legislative agenda for the forthcoming session. Both Houses will begin debating the Speech later that sitting day.

**Opposition Day debate: taking control of the Parliamentary timetable**

For an Opposition Day debate, which took place in the House of Commons on 12 June 2019, the Leader of the Opposition, Rt Hon. Jeremy Corbyn, MP, tabled a Business of the House motion. The motion would suspend Standing Order No. 14(7) (which provides that government business shall have precedence) and provide that precedence shall be given to a motion relating to the Business of the House in connection with matters relating to the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union. In its passage through the House of Commons and the House of Lords, the motion was given precedence to any motion from an individual MP over Government business, and section 1(c) states that it is for … Mr Speaker to decide whether that motion is brought before the House over other motions. In essence, sections 1(b) and 1(c) say that an individual MP and the Speaker two Members of the House - can override Government business.”

Tim Loughton, MP (Con) supported the Secretary of State, asking him: “Did my Right Hon. Friend hear anything in the 30-minute speech by the Right Hon. and learned Member for Holborn and St Pancras (Sir Keir Starmer), or can he see anything in the motion, that remotely gives a positive or constructive solution or way forward to the Brexit impasse, rather than just more of what Members do not want?” At the end of the debate, the motion was divided on 319 votes to 288. Unlike Sir Oliver Letwin’s amendment to a Business motion in March 2019, this attempt to give precedence to backbench business failed.

**Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Bill**

The Bill was introduced into the House of Commons on 8 May 2019 and establishes the statutory bodies that will be responsible for the works for the restoration and renewal of buildings within the Parliamentary estate. This was instigated by resolutions passed by the House of Commons and House of Lords in January and February 2018 respectively, which stated that work should commence on the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster. The resolution stated that “immediate steps should be taken” to establish a shadow Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority to manage the project. This Bill establishes them as statutory bodies and enables them to take on the responsibility for delivering this historic project. The Bill allows Parliament to have a clear role in approving the design, cost and timing of the Restoration and Renewal project. The Sponsor Body will fund the Delivery Authority and hold it to account.

The Bill has completed its passage through the House of Commons and is now progressing through the House of Lords. Meanwhile progress has been made on the Restoration and Renewal programme and the related Northern Estate programme, which includes the relocation of the House of Commons into a temporary chamber for the duration of the project in a renovated Richmond House – previously the occupied by the Department of Health.
On 20 June 2019, the House of Commons adjourned, followed by the Senate of Canada on 21 June. The Canadian Parliament will likely resume sitting following the 43rd Federal Election. Under the Canada Elections Act, the election is scheduled to take place on 21 October 2019.

**Legislation**

Before adjourning for the summer, 24 Government Bills were presented to the House of Commons. Some of these Bills were:

- S-203, Ending the Captivity of Whales and Dolphins Act, which bans keeping and breeding cetaceans - including whales, dolphins and porpoises - in captivity. The Bill also bans using such animals for entertainment.
- C-91, Indigenous Languages Act, which aims to reclaim, revitalize, strengthen and maintain Indigenous languages in Canada. The Bill also recognizes Indigenous language rights as Aboriginal rights protected under section 35 of Canada’s Constitution Act, 1982.
- Bill C-92, An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, which affirms that Indigenous people have jurisdiction over child and family services in their communities.
- C-93, An Act to provide no-cost, expedited record suspensions for simple possession of cannabis, which provides no-cost record suspensions for people who in the past have received a simple marijuana possession conviction.
- Bill C-83, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and another Act, which makes a number of changes to the criminal justice system, including banning the use of solitary confinement.
- C-48, Oil Tanker Moratorium Act, which bans tanker traffic off the northern coast of British Columbia.
- C-59, An Act respecting national security matters, which sets out a wide range of national security and oversight reforms. Namely, the Bill establishes the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency and sets out its composition, mandate and powers. Furthermore, it enact the Intelligence Commissioner Act, which outlines the duties and functions of the Intelligence Commissioner.
- 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, which makes considerable changes to environmental assessments and regulations.

**Committee Activity**

Committees were very active throughout May and June 2019, presenting over 120 reports in the House of Commons. Some of these reports included:

- Taking Action to End Online Hate (Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights)
- Clean Growth and Climate Change in Canada: How Can Canada Can Lead Internationally (Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development)
- Democratic Strain and Climate Change in Europe; Responding to the Challenges Facing Liberal Democracies (Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development)
- Improving Diversity and Inclusion in the Canadian Armed Forces (Standing Committee on National Defence)
- A Parallel Debating Chamber for Canada’s House of Commons (Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs)
- A Lifetime of Dedication: Helping Senior Women Benefit from their Lifelong Contributions to Canadian Society today (Standing Committee on the Status of Women)
- Aquatic Invasive Species: A National Priority (Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans)
- The Health of LGBTOIA2 Communities in Canada (Standing Committee on Health)
- Regulations Respecting the Non-Attendance of Members by Reason of Maternity or Care for a New-Born or Newly-Adopted Child (Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs)
- Statutory Review of the Copyright Act (Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology)
- Shifting Paradigms, (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage)
- Medical Cannabis and Veterans’ Well-Being (Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs)
- Northern Lights: A Wake-Up Call for the Future of Canada (Special Committee on the Arctic)
- Sexual Harassment and Violence in the Canadian Armed Forces (Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence)
- Venezuela: An Uncertain Transition (Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade)
- How did we get here? A concise, unvarnished account of the history of the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and Canada (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples)

**Changes in the House of Commons**

On 17 June 2019, the House of Commons passed a motion put forward by Environment and Climate Change Minister, Hon. Catherine McKenna, MP, declaring that Canada is in a "national climate emergency which requires, as a response, that Canada commit to meeting its national emissions target under the Paris Agreement."

**Sergeant-at-Arms**

On 4 July 2019, the Canadian Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Justin Trudeau, MP, appointed Patrick McDonell as the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons. The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for many aspects of the operation of the Chamber of the House of Commons, performs ceremonial functions and works closely with the Director of the Parliamentary Protective Service.

Specifically, the Commissioner determined that her use of her title in door-to-door canvassing, recorded telephone calls, and letters of endorsement for her husband’s campaign for municipal councilor contravened the Code.

**Motion on climate emergency**

On 17 June 2019, the House of Commons passed a motion put forward by Environment and Climate Change Minister, Hon. Catherine McKenna, MP, declaring that Canada is in a "national climate emergency which requires, as a response, that Canada commit to meeting its national emissions target under the Paris Agreement."

**Conflict of Interest**

On 10 July 2019, Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, Mario Dion found that Anita Vanderheiden, MP contravened the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons, after serving in the Senate of Canada since 2012. As of 10 July 2019, the standings in the Senate were: independent Senators Group 59, Conservative Party of Canada 30, Liberal Party of Canada 9, Non-affiliated 6; there is also one vacancy.
In the General Elections held in April-May 2019 to constitute the 17th Lok Sabha, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured 303 seats out of 542 seats for which elections were held. Elections for one parliamentary constituency had been cancelled by the Election Commission. The BJP with 303 seats surpassed its previous record of 282 seats in 2014. This is the first time that a non-Congress party has come to power at the centre for the second term consecutively. The Congress Party won 52 seats as against 44 in the previous Lok Sabha. The total strength of BJP-led coalition, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is 351 seats as against its previous tally of 336. The United Progress Alliance led by Congress (UPA) has secured 90 seats. A record 78 women candidates have been elected to the Lok Sabha as against 62 in the previous one. The House has 265 first time Members. The 16th Lok Sabha was dissolved by the President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind on 24 June 2019 on the recommendation of the Union Council of Ministers. The President also accepted the resignation of the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi and his Council of Ministers the same day and requested the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers to continue till the new Government assumes office. On 25 May 2019, the Election Commission of India submitted a copy of the Notification issued by it in the Official Gazette containing the names of Members elected to the House of the people to the President of India. With the issue of such notification the House is deemed to be duly constituted. A new Council of Ministers headed by the Leader of the BJP Parliamentary Party, Shri Narendra Modi was sworn in by the President of India on 30 June 2019 at Rashtrapati Bhawan. The first session of the newly constituted Lok Sabha commenced on 17 June 2019. The House met at 11 o’clock with the playing of the National Anthem and the national flag stood in silence for a short while to mark the solemn occasion of the first sitting of the new Lok Sabha. Dr Vineendra Singh, a senior Member of Lok Sabha, who was appointed as pro tem Speaker and administered the oath in the morning of 17 June by the President of India. The Speaker pro tem signed the Roll of Members at the commencement of the sitting and took his seat in the House. The Speaker pro tem congratulated and welcomed all the Members who have been elected to the Lok Sabha and expressed hope that the Members will help the Chair in maintaining the high tradition of the House, thereby strengthening the edifice and the roots of democratic polity.

The Speaker pro tem of Lok Sabha, Shri Om Birla, MP, Speaker of the Lok Sabha requested Members to raise such issues that are relevant to the Government of the country and are connected to such issues with a sense of responsibility, taking full care of Member’s sentiments. He said that Members must have divergent views and ideology, their policies too may be divergent, but all have come to this House to make the nation prosperous and progressive. Effort should be made to maintain decorum in the House and set a precedent for others across the globe. He assured to carry out the solemn responsibility entrusted upon him and expected cooperation from all in running the House in an impartial and unprejudiced manner. The speaker said it is his responsibility to protect the concerns of everyone without having any regard to their numbers.

On 20 June 2019, Shri Om Birla, MP was unanimously elected as the Speaker of the House. There were 13 motions before the House proposing the name of Shri Om Birla for the office of Speaker of Lok Sabha. The motion moved by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi and seconded by the Defence Minister, Shri Raj Nath Singh was unanimously adopted and Shri Om Birla was chosen as Speaker. The pro tem Speaker then invited Shri Om Birla to occupy the Chair. The Prime Minister and the Leaders of some parties congratulated Shri Om Birla to the Chair. The Leaders of parties in Parliament including the Prime Minister felicitated Shri Birla on his election as Speaker.

The Lok Sabha Speaker, Shri Om Birla thanked all the parties for reposing their faith in him in taking up the challenging job. He believed that in view of the mandate, the accountability of the Government has grown far more this time and expected the Government to act with maximum accountability, transparency and openness. The Speaker is inspired by the basic spirit of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas aur Sabka Vishwas. The Government, in order to pave the way for the golden future of New India, has resolved to make rural India strong and empower urban India; to enable the entrepreneurial India attain new heights; to make all systems transparent and enhance the prestige of honest countrymen further; to build infrastructure for the 21st century and mobilize all resources for creation of a powerful India. The Government has already taken many decisions aimed at the welfare of farmers, soldiers, students, entrepreneurs, women and other sections of society and has also started implementing them. The President listed various initiatives of the Government in areas like health, education, infrastructure, housing, sanitation, water conservation, fisheries, agriculture, etc. The President said the government accords the top most priority to national security and effective steps are being taken to tackle terrorism and naxalism. 1 The idea of New India will be realized by the year 2022. In the New India farmers’ income will be doubled; every poor will have a pucca (concrete) roof over his head; every poor will have access to clean fuel; every poor will have electricity connection; no poor will be compelled to defecate in the open; every poor will have access to medical facilities; every village in the country will be connected by roads; river Ganga will flow uninterrupted; and pollution free; India will be close to becoming a US$5 trillion economy; India will be progressing towards world’s three largest economies; an Indian will witness the power of open space, entirely on the strength of indigenous resources; and India will provide leadership to global development with a new zeal and confidence.

The Lok Sabha had a two day discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President’s Address on 24-25 June 2019. Moving the motion in the Lok Sabha, the Minister of State for Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, Shri Pratap Chandra Sarangi highlighted the success of several developmental initiatives and schemes by the Modi-led Government. The highlight of the session was the positive atmosphere created as a result of the direct transfer of benefits of various schemes to the targeted people. He said the President’s address is a reflection of the conviction and commitment of the Modi Government.

Securing the motion, Dr Heena Gavit (BJP) said all sections of society have voted for the Prime Minister in large numbers and the vote is a positive vote, pro-incumbency vote.

Initiating the discussion, Congress Party Leader in Lok Sabha, Shri Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury alleged that the NDA Government has only renamed the schemes launched by the earlier UPA Government. He also accused the Government on issues of economy and unemployment. Elaborating the various achievements made during the Congress Government period, he said the Congress rule brought green revolution to increase food grain production and also the Food Security Act. Shri T R Baalu (DMK) accused the Government of not delivering on the promises made by it during 2014 general elections. Professor Sougata Roy (TMC) raised the incidents of allegations and setbacks of the Modi-led Government. He highlighted the negative atmosphere created as a result of the direct transfer of benefits of various schemes to the targeted people. He said the Prime Minister’s address is a reflection of the conviction and commitment of the Modi Government.
It is the first in Trinidad and Tobago history to be formed in the Caribbean or the wider Commonwealth. Trinidad and Tobago’s Attorney-General, Faris Al-Rawi has led the decision of High Court Judge, Justice Jacqueline Wilson who had refused to grant an injunction to stop the parliamentary debate on the Privileges Committee’s report on immunity and privileges allegations against Oropouche East MP, Dr Roodal Moonilal.

The Attorney-General noted that the decision protected the immunity and privileges of the Parliament as enshrined under the Constitution. “It is an important decision because it says that Parliament can regulate its own practices, processes and Members. If Parliament cannot hold itself accountable under the Constitution, we are going to invite chaos into our equalities,” the Attorney-General said. The Attorney-General claimed that it would have set a legal precedent which would have allowed Parliamentarians to mount legal challenges to frustrate the work of the Committee. “That would have respected the democratic process,” he said.

The Opposition United National Congress (UNC) and Tobago United National Congress (TUNC) said that the decision was a victory for them as the Prime Minister’s cabinet ministers will now have to be present in Parliament to answer questions.

The Minister for National Security, Fitzgerald Hinds, said that the government had to ensure that people are not being trafficked or engaged in illegal activities.

The Venezuelan Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago, Carlos Perez had initially said that Venezuelans, who come to Trinidad and Tobago, are not paying taxes or contributing to the local economy. He also expressed the view that some Venezuelans are contributing to crime in the country.

In mid-June 2019, the Ministry of National Security announced that all Venezuelans coming to Trinidad and Tobago would have to acquire visas to visit from the Embassy of Trinidad and Tobago in Caracas, the Venezuelan capital. The Opposition United National Congress, led by former Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister, Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, was critical of the action, saying that it will lead to a disaster for the country.
Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Steering Committee and CPA Regional Secretaries

**Patrons**
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
Head of the Commonwealth

**President**
Hon. Alexandra Mendès, MP
(2017-2019)*
Vice-Chairperson of the CPA
Deputy Speaker, Cameroon
Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP
(2017-2019)
Chairperson of the CPA
Speaker of the House of Representatives, Trinidad & Tobago
Hon. Bridgid Annsitte-George, MP
(2017-2020)

**Vice-President**
Hon. Dr Lal Chand Ukrani, MPA
(2015-2019*)
Treasurer
Pakistan
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Uttarakhand
Shri Premchand Aggarwal, MLA
(2015-2019*)
Assembly, Assam
Hon. Leona Roberts, MLA
(2017-2020)
Assembly, Uttarakhand

**Vacant**

**Regional Representatives**

**Africa**
- South Africa
  - Hon. Russell Paul Wortley, MLC
  - South Australia
  - (2015-2019*)
  - Also CPA Vice-Chairperson
- Kenya
  - Hon. John Ajaka, MLC
  - President of the Legislative Council, New South Wales
  - (2016-2019)
- Namibia
  - Hon. Bruce Atkinson, MLC
  - Victoria
  - (2017-2020)
- Somalia
  - Hon. Kevin Murphy, MHA
  - Speaker of the House of Assembly, Nova Scotia
  - (2017-2020)
- Zimbabwe
  - Hon. Lazarous C. Chungu, MP
  - Australia
  - (2016-2019)
- Cameroon
  - Hon. Dr Makail Mulu, MP
  - Kenya
  - (2017-2020)
- Nigeria
  - Hon. Dr Fehmida Mirza, MP
  - Pakistan
  - (2016-2019)
- Sichuan, China
  - Hon. Bernad Songa
  - Sichuan
  - (2017-2020)
- Zambia
  - Hon. Imran Ahmad, MP
  - Bangladesh
  - (2015-2019*)
  - United Kingdom
  - Dr Roberto Blackman-Woods, MP
  - (2017-2020)
- Lebanon
  - Hon. Leona Roberts, MLA
  - Falkland Islands
  - (2017-2020)
- Sri Lanka
  - Hon. Dato’ Noraini Ahmad, MP
  - Malaysia
  - (2016-2019)
- Pakistan
  - Hon. Dato’ Noraini Ahmad, MP
  - Deputy Speaker, Malaysia
  - (2015-2019*)
- United Kingdom
  - Hon. Stuart McMillan, MSP
  - Scotland (stand-by Branch for Northern Ireland)
  - (2016-2019)
- India
  - Shri Premchand Aggarwal, MLA
  - Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Uttarakhand
  - (2016-2019)
  - Hon. Shri Hiten Goswami, MLA
  - Singapore
  - (2017-2020)

**Asia**
- India
  - Hon. Shri Feroze Varun Gandhi, MP
  - Lok Sabha, India
  - (2015-2019*)
  - Hon. Shri Hiten Goswami, MLA
  - Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Assam
  - (2017-2020)
- South-East Asia
  - Shri Feroze Varun Gandhi, MP
  - Lok Sabha, India
  - (2015-2019*)
  - Hon. Shri Hiten Goswami, MLA
  - Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Assam
  - (2017-2020)
- Australia
  - Hon. Russell Paul Wortley, MLC
  - South Australia
  - (2015-2019*)
  - Also CPA Vice-Chairperson
- Malaysia
  - Hon. Dato’ Noraini Ahmad, MP
  - Deputy Speaker, Malaysia
  - (2015-2019*)
  - Hon. Shri Feroze Varun Gandhi, MP
  - Lok Sabha, India
  - (2015-2019*)
- Pakistan
  - Speaker of the House of Representatives, Quetta
  - Shri Feroze Varun Gandhi, MP
  - Lok Sabha, India
  - (2015-2019*)
- Bangladesh
  - Hon. Dr Mohammad Mostafa Kamal, MP
  - Speaker of the House of Parliament, Dhaka
  - (2017-2020)
- Fiji
  - Hon. Abdul Rasheed, MPA
  - Speaker of the House of Representatives, Suva
  - (2017-2020)
- India
  - Hon. Shri Feroze Varun Gandhi, MP
  - Lok Sabha, India
  - (2015-2019*)
  - Hon. Shri Hiten Goswami, MLA
  - Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Assam
  - (2017-2020)
- Indonesia
  - Hon. Hafidz Mustafa, MP
  - Speaker of the People’s Representative Council
  - (2017-2020)
- Sri Lanka
  - Hon. Dr Lal Chand Ukrani, MPA
  - Speaker of the House of Parliament, Colombo
  - (2017-2020)
- Pakistan
  - Hon. Dato’ Noraini Ahmad, MP
  - Deputy Speaker, Malaysia
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  - Lok Sabha, India
  - (2015-2019*)
- Australia
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  - South Australia
  - (2015-2019*)
  - Also CPA Vice-Chairperson
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  - Deputy Speaker, Malaysia
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  - (2015-2019*)
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  - Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Assam
  - (2017-2020)
- Indonesia
  - Hon. Hafidz Mustafa, MP
  - Speaker of the People’s Representative Council
  - (2017-2020)
- Sri Lanka
  - Hon. Dr Lal Chand Ukrani, MPA
  - Speaker of the House of Parliament, Colombo
  - (2017-2020)
- Pakistan
  - Speaker of the House of Representatives, Quetta
  - Shri Feroze Varun Gandhi, MP
  - Lok Sabha, India
  - (2015-2019*)
- Bangladesh
  - Hon. Dr Mohammad Mostafa Kamal, MP
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- Fiji
  - Hon. Abdul Rasheed, MPA
  - Speaker of the House of Representatives, Suva
  - (2017-2020)
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  - Lok Sabha, India
  - (2015-2019*)
  - Hon. Shri Hiten Goswami, MLA
  - Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Assam
  - (2017-2020)
- Indonesia
  - Hon. Hafidz Mustafa, MP
  - Speaker of the People’s Representative Council
  - (2017-2020)
- Sri Lanka
  - Hon. Dr Lal Chand Ukrani, MPA
  - Speaker of the House of Parliament, Colombo
  - (2017-2020)
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