

The Caribbean, the Americas and the Atlantic (CAA) Region of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Report 2025

1. Data on the number of women representatives Including: Statistics in legislatures, executive, company boards Changes in representation following elections Affirmative Action policies, as they relate to quotas, constitutional, legislative, electoral changes Political Party Reforms and appointments of women within the Party Structures	The data below represent the number of women representatives, as of September 2025. Where no data is shown for the Upper House, the Parliament is unicameral. 1. Anguilla - 21% 2. Antigua and Barbuda - 5.6% (Lower House), 35.3% (Upper House) 3. Barbados - 26.7% (Lower House), 33.3% (Upper House) 4. Belize - 12.5% (Lower House), 36% (Upper House) 5. Bermuda - 22% (Lower House), 63.6% (Upper House) 6. British Virgin Islands - 33% 7. Cayman Islands - 26.3% 8. Dominica - 40.6% 9. Grenada - 40% (Lower House), 30.8% (Upper House) 10. Guyana - 39.9% 11. Jamaica - 30.1% (Lower House), 33.33% (Upper House) 12. Montserrat - 42 % 13. Saint Lucia - 10.5% (Lower House), 54.5% (Upper House) 14. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines - 23% 15. St. Christopher and Nevis - 31.3% 16. The Bahamas - 18% (Lower House), 25% (Upper House) 17. Trinidad and Tobago - 23.8% (Lower House), 25.8% (Upper House) 18. Turks and Caicos Islands - 24%
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	<u>Bermuda</u> Bermuda’s Cabinet, which includes the Premier and Ministers, currently consists of 5 women and 7 men. Before the 2025 Election, the Cabinet had 4 women and 8 men. There are no affirmative action policies or quotas in place for women's representation in the Bermuda Legislature or among election candidates. The two major political parties represented in the Bermuda Legislature (House of Assembly and Senate) have both had women serving in key roles, including as Party Chair and Deputy Chair. Additionally, both parties have previously had women serve as Party Leader. <u>Trinidad and Tobago</u> In Trinidad and Tobago, the President, Prime Minister, and Opposition Leader are all women. Additionally, women hold 31% of ministerial positions in the Cabinet. Currently, there are no legislated gender quotas in the electoral laws or the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore, there are no reserved seats for women in Parliament and no mandatory candidate quotas for political parties. In 2024, Trinidad and Tobago signed a Statement of Intent with the Organisation of American States - Inter-American Commission of Women (OAS-CIM) to promote women’s political participation. However, gender equality is primarily supported through civil society initiatives and political awareness rather than through legislation. While most major political parties nominate women candidates, there are no formal quotas in place.
2. Information on elections that were held this year Including: Data on women Members that won and/or lost seats or appointed to new positions	<u>Anguilla</u> Anguilla’s General Election was held on February 26, 2025. Three women serve in the Anguilla House of Assembly. 1. Ms. Tara Carter, Speaker of the House of Assembly 2. Mrs. Cora Richardson-Hodge, Premier and Minister of Finance 3. Mrs. Shellya Rogers-Webster, Minister of Education, Social Development and Culture

Belize

General Election was held in Belize on March 12, 2025. Following the election, there was no change in Presiding Officers. The Hon. Valerie Woods was reinstated as Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Hon. Carolyn Trench-Sandiford was reinstated as President of the Senate.

The Honourable Tracy Panton became the first woman to serve as Leader of the Opposition in Belize's history. This represents a significant advancement in women's political leadership in Belize.

There was the appointment of one (1) additional Woman Senator, Senator Sheena Pitts, to the Senate. This increased the percentage of women in the composition of the Senate from 29% to 36%.

Bermuda

Bermuda's General Election was held on February 18, 2025. In the Senate, seven women were appointed, including women serving as President of the Senate and Government Leader in the Senate.

In the House of Assembly, eight women were elected (five women were re-elected, while three women were elected for the first time). Two women retired from the House during the election, and one woman lost her seat but was subsequently appointed to the Senate. Additionally, the Deputy Speaker is a female member.

Cayman Islands

General Election was held in the Cayman Islands on April 30, 2025. The following women members were elected:

1. Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly, Opposition Member.
2. Hon. Pearlina McGaw-Lumsden, Deputy Speaker and Opposition Member.
3. Hon. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks is serving her second term and is currently the Minister of Health, Environment & Sustainability.

4. Ms. Heather Bodden is serving her third term and is currently the Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministries of Social Development, Education & Training, and Tourism.
5. Mrs. Julie Hunter, Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministries of Planning, Lands, Agriculture & Infrastructure and Culture & Heritage.

Guyana

Guyana held its General and Regional Elections on September 1, 2025. The 65 Members of the National Assembly were elected from four political parties. A total of 24 women were elected as Members of Parliament: three from A Partnership For National Unity (APNU); one from Forward Guyana Movement (FGM); Twelve from the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C); and eight from We Invest In Nationhood (WIN).

The Clerk of the National Assembly is awaiting the Proclamation from His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Arfaan Ali to convene the first sitting of the National Assembly. At this Sitting, the newly elected Members of Parliament will take the Oath of Office and a Speaker will be elected.

Jamaica

Jamaica's General Election was held on September 3, 2025.

Montserrat

Montserrat's General Election was held on October 24, 2024. The Hon. Marjorie Smith was elected as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Saint Christopher and Nevis

There are five women serving in the Legislature:

- Hon. Lanein Blanchette, Speaker of the National Assembly
- Hon. Latoya Jones, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly and Senator Opposite
- Hon. Marsha Henderson, Elected Representative on the Government Bench

- Hon. Dr. Joyelle Clarke, Appointed Senator and Minister on the Government Bench
- Hon. Isalean Phillip, Appointed Senator and Minister on the Government Bench

The following women members also serve in the Executive:

- Hon. Marsha Henderson, Elected Representative on the Government Bench
- Hon. Dr. Joyelle Clarke, Appointed Senator and Minister on the Government Bench
- Hon. Isalean Phillip, Appointed Senator and Minister on the Government Bench

Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago's General Election was held on April 28, 2025.

Political Parties:

- Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar remains leader of the United National Congress (UNC), and in 2025 led the Coalition of Interests (UNC + COP + PEP + et cetera.).
- Mrs. Penelope Beckles-Robinson became the first female political leader of the People's National Movement (PNM).
- Ms. Mickela Panday ran as leader of the Patriotic Front.

Women Members who won seats:

- Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar (UNC) was re-elected as Prime Minister.
- Mrs. Penelope Beckles (PNM) was elect Opposition Leader, the first female in this role.
- 8 other women also won seats in the House of Representatives, contributing to a total of 10 women in Parliament (24.4% of the House): Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar (Siparia); Ms. Aiyana Ali (Princes Town); Ms. Khadijah Ameen (St. Augustine); Mrs. Penelope Beckles-Robinson (Arima); Ms. Michelle Benjamin (Moruga/Tableland); Ms. Vandana Mohit (Chaguanas

	East); Ms. Jearlean John (Couva North); Ms. Shivanna Sam (Cumuto/Manzanilla); Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis (Trincity/Maloney); and Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly (St. Ann’s East). <u>Turks and Caicos Islands</u> General Election was held in the Turks and Caicos Islands on February 7, 2025.
3. Status of the CWP in regional constitutions Including: Updates in Regional Constitutional changes and/or challenges where applicable	• The CAA Regional CWP has a draft constitution, which will be considered by the Steering Committee for onward passage through the Executive Committee before it can be tabled at the 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the CAA for adoption. • Proposed changes will address the quorum for meetings of the Steering Committee, definitions and the composition of the Steering Committee for compliance with the system of rotation established by the Regional Executive Committee and the Regional Secretariat. • On September 6, 2025, the CWP CAA Regional Steering Committee met and agreed to meet monthly to complete consideration of the Constitution. <u>Belize</u> In Belize, the Women’s Parliamentary Caucus has been formally included in the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives (Standing Committee) and the Senate (Sessional Select Committee). <u>Trinidad and Tobago</u> The Trinidad and Tobago government has appointed a seven-member advisory committee to formulate terms of reference for a National Consultation on Constitutional Reform. This initiative aims to engage citizens and stakeholders in discussions about potential constitutional changes, including those related to gender equality. Additionally, Trinidad and Tobago has made significant strides in women's political participation. As of November 2023, the country was one of only two in the Caribbean to meet the 30% gender quota for women Parliamentarians, as recommended by the Beijing Platform for Action.

4. CWP Regional Structure Including: Updates on changes and/or challenges to Regional CWP Structures	• In March 2025, Hon. Rochelle Forde, Speaker of the House of Assembly of the Parliament of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, assumed the role of Chairperson of the CWP CAA Regional Steering Committee. • The following Branches were also nominated to serve on the Committee: Group A (Guyana and Jamaica); Group B (Dominica and Saint Lucia); and Group C (Cayman Islands and Turks and Caicos Islands). • Additionally, the Hon. Valerie Woods, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of Belize, was nominated as an ex officio member of the Committee.
5. Regional Budget for CWP Activities Including: Updates on changes and/or challenges to Regional CPA Budgets where applicable	The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) receives regional funding through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) to support activities promoting women’s political participation. In 2025, each of the nine CPA Regions, including the Caribbean, can access up to £10,000 GBP for projects such as training, advocacy, and networking. However, limited funding and economic challenges sometimes restrict the scale of these initiatives. Despite these constraints, the funds remain vital for advancing gender equality in parliamentary leadership across the region. • In the Cayman Islands, funding for CWPs is provided via an annual grant from the Government, which is controlled by the Cayman Islands Branch Executive Committee. • In Belize, the implementation of CWP activities as a line item in the parliamentary budgetary allocation will be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC).
6. Regional Conference – What role did CWP play? Including: Updates on changes and/or challenges to	• The CWP CAA 15th Regional Conference was held on September 6 and 7, 2025, in The Bahamas. Ms. Benite Dibateza, Gender Lead, CPA Headquarters, presented on the topic “Empowering Women in Politics: Strategies for Establishing an All Women’s Caucus and Engaging Non-Elected Women Leaders”. • Women Parliamentarians from several CAA Branches will be attending the 68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC), which will be held from October 5 – 12, 2025, in Bridgetown, Barbados, under the theme “The Commonwealth: A

holding a regular CWP meeting at CPA Regional Conferences Updates on Regional CWP activities	Global Partner.” The Conference will feature the 9th Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference, where CWP will lead sessions on women’s political participation and set strategic priorities for gender-sensitive parliaments.
7. CPA International Executive Committee – does your region have a female Member? Including: Updates on changes to Regional Representatives to the CPA International Executive Committee	The CAA Region has three female representatives on the CPA International Executive Committee: 1. Sen. the Hon. Dr. Dessima Williams, President of the Senate of the Parliament of Grenada 2. Hon. Valerie Woods, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of Belize and CPA Small Branches Chairperson 3. Hon. Rochelle Forde, Speaker of the House of Assembly of the Parliament of Saint Vincent & the Grenadines and Chairperson of the CWP CAA Regional Steering Committee
8. Initiatives linked to CWP Thematic Priorities undertaken by Parliaments and/or Regions Including: Legislation, resources, Inter-organizational strategies, Intra-Ministerial and Civil Society Cooperation	• The 15th CWP CAA Regional Conference was held on September 6 and 7, 2025, in The Bahamas, in the margins of the 47th Regional Conference. Plenary sessions included presentations on W.A.Y.S. – Women and Aspiring Youth in Service in Democracy – Youth and Women in Regional Governance; Gender Responsive Budgeting; Empowering Women in Politics: Strategies for Establishing an All-Women’s Caucus and Engaging Non-Elected Women Leaders; and Legislative Scrutiny from a Gender Perspective. • In Belize, the following initiatives were undertaken: 1. Formation of the Women’s Parliamentary Caucus as a Joint Special Committee of the National Assembly. 2. Adoption of the National Gender Policy. 3. Passage of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act and establishment of the National Women’s Commission as a statutory body.

and all other strategies.	4. House motion condemning domestic violence and the posthumous pardon of Nora Parham. - The following initiatives were undertaken by Trinidad and Tobago: - YES Leadership Programme by Women Parliamentarians of Trinidad and Tobago (WPTT): A 6 - 8 weeks training/mentorship programme targeting young women (18 - 29 years), providing workshops on leadership, media engagement, parliamentary procedure, advocacy, research, et cetera. - The Parliament signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with WPTT, which formalized cooperation on public education, mentoring of young women, raising awareness about existing legislation relevant to gender equality, et cetera. - Co-organising of the Caribbean Parliamentary Workshop: “Making the Work of Parliaments Responsive to the Needs of Women and Men”, in collaboration with CWP, ParlAmericas, and United Nation (UN) Women. The workshop focused on improving legislative and oversight processes to be gender-responsive, workplace practices inside parliaments, and constituency engagement.
9. The Contribution of women parliamentarians to The Parliamentarian journal article	Hon. Valerie Woods, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of Belize has made numerous submissions to the Parliamentarian Journal.

10. Other Including, for example: Strategies to Overcome Gender Inequality Education Gender Quotas Leadership programmes Childcare Mechanisms to prevent political violence Equal access to Party resources Coordination with other like-minded Women's organizations	<u>Belize</u> • Hosting of human rights and CEDAW awareness forums and training on anti-human trafficking for parliamentarians • Partnership with UNICEF and UN Women to build capacity and develop a strategic work plan for the Caucus. <u>Cayman Islands</u> • Proposing to establish a Commonwealth Women's Association (Cayman Islands). The process should commence before the end of this year. <u>Saint Christopher and Nevis</u> The Saint Christopher and Nevis Government's policy work on gender equality continues via the development of a National Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan. The National Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan (GEPAP) proposes the following for Saint Christopher and Nevis: • To establish temporary special measures (quotas) for parliamentary and party representation. • To encourage parties to integrate gender equality in their internal rules/manifestos. • To set internal gender ratio targets within party leadership/candidate lists. • To provide leadership training and support for women in parties/politics. • To strengthen oversight, monitoring, and evaluation (MER) for political gender metrics. • To propose legislative reforms/constitutional review. • To promote collaboration among parties and civil society. <u>Trinidad and Tobago</u> In 2023, the Trinidad and Tobago Branch formulated the Women Parliamentarians of Trinidad & Tobago (WPTT) to: mentor young women; increase leadership access; and promote internal party reform. In addition, the WPTT launched the YES Leadership Programme to train future women leaders.
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Any Additional Comments: The main challenge for the CAA Region is obtaining updates and feedback from the Branches to the Secretariat. This is crucial for regularly updating activities and data related to the CWP for each Branch, which will help in generating timely reports.