



CPA COMMONWEALTH  
PARLIAMENTARY  
ASSOCIATION

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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The Commonwealth  
Parliamentary Association  
promotes **democracy, good  
governance and human  
rights** throughout the  
Commonwealth.

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# INTRODUCTION

## CPA CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to present to you the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Annual Report for 2023. I am delighted to share the strengthening role of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) through its programmes, events and activities and its work in furthering the Association's Strategic Objectives.

Two CPA Executive Committee meetings were held in 2023 to address key governance issues with over 30 Members attending representing 9 CPA Regions and all CPA Officers attending. The first meeting was held in Gibraltar in April 2023 and the second meeting was held in October 2023 ahead of the 66<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Accra, Ghana.

On behalf of the Association, I would like to thank all of the Members of the CPA Coordinating Committee, CPA Executive Committee, all CPA Branches, CPA Headquarters Secretariat and CPA Regional Secretaries for what has been achieved in 2023.

Within the pages of this Annual Report, you will find descriptions of the CPA professional development programmes, seminars and activities work held in 2023,

many of them held in support of our networks – the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), the CPA Small Branches and the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) – as well as individual CPA Branch and Regional events.

CPA is a unique platform of Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff of the Commonwealth and has great potential to effect innovative changes in addressing common concerns.

As Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee, I present this 2023 Annual Report to colleagues on behalf of the Association and its Trustees.



**Hon. Ian Liddell-Grainger, MP**  
Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee  
Member of the Parliament of the United Kingdom

## CPA SECRETARY-GENERAL'S FOREWORD

Looking through this Annual Report for 2023, we can see that it was again a very busy year for the CPA, and it continues to be an exciting time in the CPA's growth and development. Like any organisation that has stood the test of time, it is important to continually adapt to the changing needs of our membership and to demonstrate relevance, added value and good governance.

In 2023, we continued to provide professional development, networking and knowledge sharing for Commonwealth Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. I also had the opportunity to visit several CPA Branches to see for myself the great work that is being done to assist Legislatures in furthering their parliamentary strengthening.

In 2023, the CPA launched more professional development courses through the CPA Parliamentary Academy (Speakers course, SDGs and women's parliamentary caucuses) and more than 600 Commonwealth Parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and international experts examined global issues at the 66<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Ghana.

The CPA continued to connect a diverse array of Parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and international experts across the Commonwealth and supported the three CPA networks - the CPA Small Branches, the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) and the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD).

Four issues of *The Parliamentarian* were published for the membership in 2023 while the CPA's social media channels

have continued to grow in audience share.

The CPA has continued to work closely with a wide range of international partners to deliver its programmes and support parliamentary democracy in the Commonwealth.

Through this 2023 CPA Annual Report and Performance Review, which has been approved by the CPA Executive Committee at its virtual meeting in May 2024, it is confirmed that there are currently no known material, staffing or governance-related matters which have the potential to adversely affect the Association's standing and future viability that need to be brought to the attention of the Members.

The CPA remains dynamic and vibrant because of the high levels of programme activity among the CPA Headquarters Secretariat, our CPA Branches and within each Region. The CPA is particularly grateful to the Members, Clerks and officials that carry out such a wide variety of work on behalf of the organisation across the Commonwealth.



**Stephen Twigg**  
CPA Secretary-General



# 2023 KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS



**200+**

Participants attending CPA Programmes, Seminars and events.

**100+**

Virtual attendees participating in CPA programmes and events in 2023.



Toolkits and Reports published in 2023 including CWP Coordinator's expert dissertation.

**3**

CPA Post-Election Seminars.



CWP Workshop on Gender Champions and CPA Small Branches Disaster Risk Workshop.

**2**

**8**



**3**

CWP Gender Sensitive Parliaments Assessments conducted in Botswana, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape.

**406**

Additional CPA Parliamentary Academy online sign-ups in 2023.

## 2023 IN NUMBERS

**+£170,000**

Raised in additional income from UK FCDO funding, the CPA Parliamentary Academy and other partnerships.

**9,718**

CPA blog views in 2023.

**3**

**2**

Animated videos produced for Anguilla and St Helena in 2023.

**86,941**

Total CPA website views in 2023.

Operational policies introduced on Travel, the Environment and Accessibility in 2023.

**10,107**

Average number of people the CPA Order Paper e-newsletter was sent to in 2023.

**1**

Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference delivered.

**12**  
**9**

Workshops

Governance meetings and Steering Committees

2023: *The Parliamentary CPC Ghana Supplement*:

- 925 digital reads
- 165 downloads
- 8,896 page impressions

CPC website Searches

- 539 Google clicks



66TH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ACCRA, GHANA

**600+**

Conference participants

**3**

CPA Awards presented in 2023.



# CPA STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2022-2025

## 01

Strengthen the capacity and maximise the effectiveness of Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff and enable mutual learning.

## 02

Protect and uphold the independence of Parliaments, the principle of the separation of powers and broader human rights as set out in the Commonwealth Charter through strong, strategic partnerships.

## 03

Persuade the UK Government to implement legislation recognising the CPA as an international, interparliamentary organisation.

## 04

Support Parliaments and Parliamentarians to adapt, innovate and recover from crises such as COVID-19 or natural disasters.

## 05

Support and enable the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), CPA Small Branches and Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) networks to fulfil their strategic objectives.

## 06

Promote the values of the Commonwealth, parliamentary democracy and sustainable development to a wide audience.

### CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

GENDER | SMALL STATES & JURISDICTIONS | TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION  
DISABILITY | SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE | YOUTH

The CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg reflected that: *“At the heart of the Strategic Plan is a pledge to work in partnership with others to deliver our mission. We will strengthen existing partnerships and seek new ones with organisations both within and beyond the Commonwealth. In doing so, we will be guided by our belief in the value of multilateralism and our support for the values enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter and the goals set out by the United Nations in Agenda 2030.”*



# 66<sup>th</sup> COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE, GHANA

The Commonwealth Charter 10 years on: Values and Principles for Parliaments to Uphold



Commonwealth Parliamentarians attended the 66<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference and associated meetings to recognise the Commonwealth's commitment to democracy and met under the conference theme of '*The Commonwealth Charter 10 years on: Values and Principles for Parliaments to Uphold*'. 2023 also marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Commonwealth Charter which outlines the principles and values of the Commonwealth.

The conference, hosted by the Parliament of Ghana and CPA Ghana Branch from 30 September to 6 October 2023 in Accra, Ghana was attended by over 600 Parliamentarians and Parliamentary Clerks representing Parliaments and Legislatures from across the Commonwealth. The CPA Vice-Patron, His Excellency Nana Akufo-Addo, the President of Ghana, urged delegates to work together to uphold democratic principles and the values of the Commonwealth as he

opened the 66<sup>th</sup> CPC. The conference was hosted by the CPA President (2022-2023), Rt Hon. Alban Bagbin, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana. This was the first time that the CPA Ghana Branch hosted the CPA's annual conference and is the 17<sup>th</sup> time that the CPA Africa Region has hosted the CPA's annual conference.

During the 66<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, there were also a number of additional conferences and meetings including: 39<sup>th</sup> CPA Small Branches Conference; meetings of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) and Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) networks; the CPA General Assembly; governance meetings of the CPA Executive Committee; and the 57<sup>th</sup> Society of Clerks-at-the-Table (SoCATT) meeting.

Alongside the substantive conference workshops and the CPA governance meetings (CPA General Assembly and CPA Executive Committee meetings),

CPA President (2022-2023), Rt Hon. Alban Bagbin, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana said: *"Democracy will remain elusive if we are not deliberate in our efforts to ensure the independence of Parliaments. Our Parliaments can be strengthened if we empower our oversight Committees to effectively review government actions, budgets and policies. We can strengthen our Parliaments through civic education programs that inform citizens about their rights and the need to protect parliamentary democracy."*



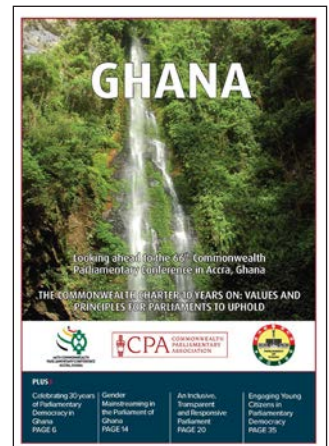




the 66<sup>th</sup> CPC also included the inaugural CPA Emilia Monjowa Lifaka Lecture which highlighted the key role of Parliamentarians in global education.

Key decisions and outcomes from the CPA General Assembly included updates on CPA Status; CPA Secretary-General's appointment for a second term; CPA Membership Report and future subscriptions; budgets and finance reports; new CPC Modalities; endorsing the work of the Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees (CAPAC) and calling for strong and independent Public Accounts Committees (Isle of Man motion); future CPC Conferences; Election of new Regional Representatives on the CPA Executive Committee. The General Assembly also included a topical debate on food security and sustainability in the Commonwealth.

The annual conference also explored a wide range of workshop topics from the threat of terrorism to gender quotas in Parliaments, tackling energy poverty and achieving sustainable trade and economic development to youth engagement and e-Parliaments.



A special supplement to *The Parliamentarian* was published ahead of the 66<sup>th</sup> CPC featuring articles from the Members and parliamentary staff at the Parliament of Ghana.



# WHERE WE WORK: CPA BRANCHES ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH

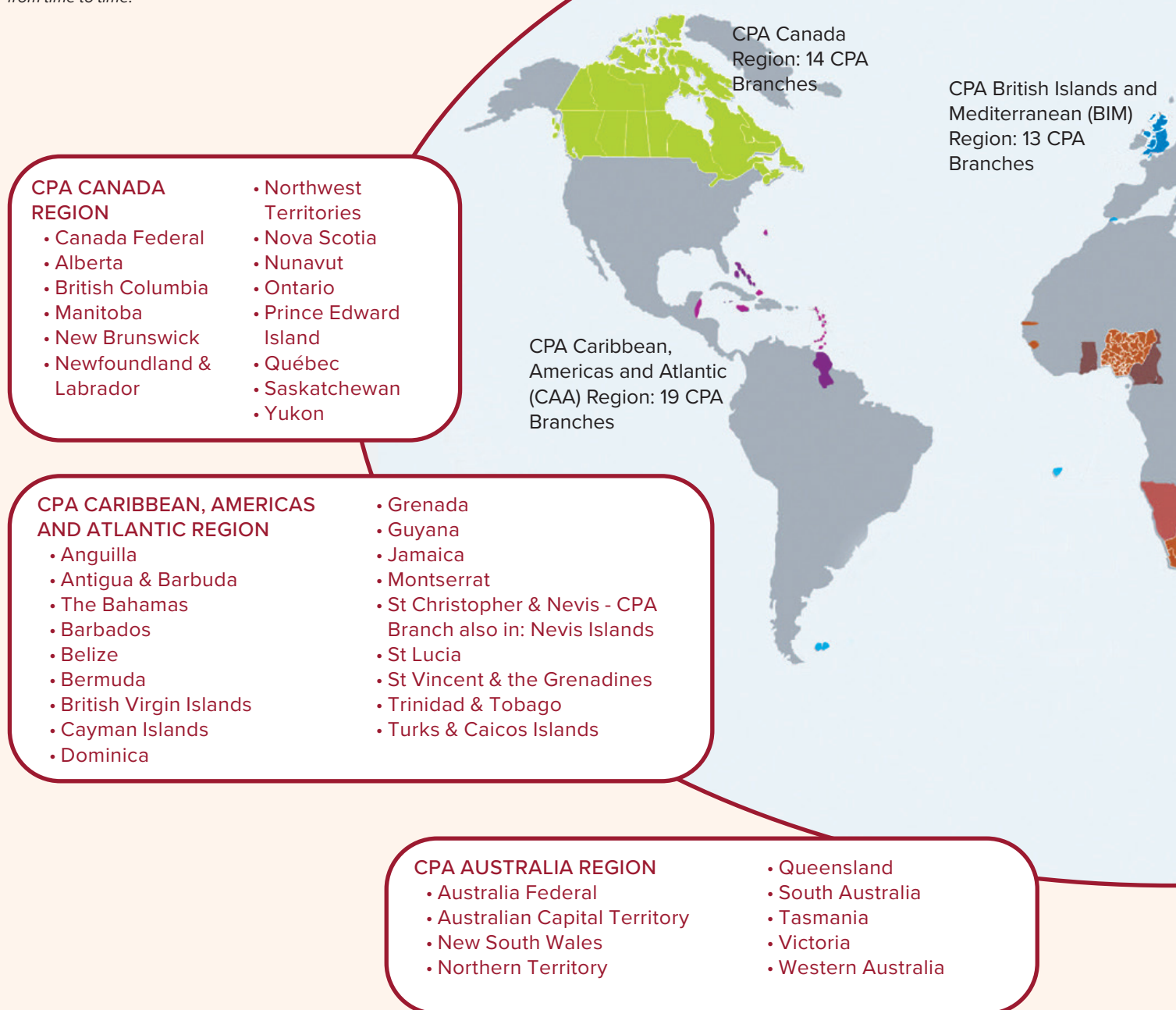
The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) works across the Commonwealth and represents more than 180 Parliaments and Legislatures in 53 out of 56 Commonwealth countries.

The CPA network extends to over 17,000 Parliamentarians and Parliamentary staff.

The CPA is the only Commonwealth organisation to represent national, state, provincial and territorial Parliaments and Legislatures.

At 31 December 2023, there are 188 eligible CPA Branches\* distributed across the CPA's nine Regions.

*\*Please note: The number of eligible CPA Branches includes all recognised Parliaments and Legislatures in the Commonwealth. At the time of this report, some CPA Branches may be suspended or in abeyance and so the number of current CPA Branches fluctuates from time to time.*





#### CPA INDIA REGION

- India Union - CPA Branches also in: Andhra Pradesh | Arunachal Pradesh | Assam | Bihar | Chhattisgarh | Delhi | Goa | Gujarat | Haryana | Himachal Pradesh | Jammu & Kashmir | Jharkhand | Karnataka | Kerala |

Madhya Pradesh | Maharashtra | Manipur | Meghalaya | Mizoram | Nagaland | Odisha | Puducherry | Punjab | Rajasthan | Sikkim | Tamil Nadu | Telangana | Tripura | Uttarakhand | Uttar Pradesh | West Bengal

#### CPA BRITISH ISLANDS AND MEDITERRANEAN REGION

- Alderney
- Cyprus
- Falkland Islands
- Gibraltar
- Guernsey
- Isle of Man
- Jersey
- Malta
- Northern Ireland
- St Helena
- Scotland
- United Kingdom
- Wales

#### CPA PACIFIC REGION

- Cook Islands
- Fiji
- Kiribati
- Nauru
- New Zealand
- Niue

- Papua New Guinea - CPA Branch also in: Bougainville
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Tonga
- Tuvalu
- Vanuatu

#### CPA SOUTH-EAST ASIA REGION

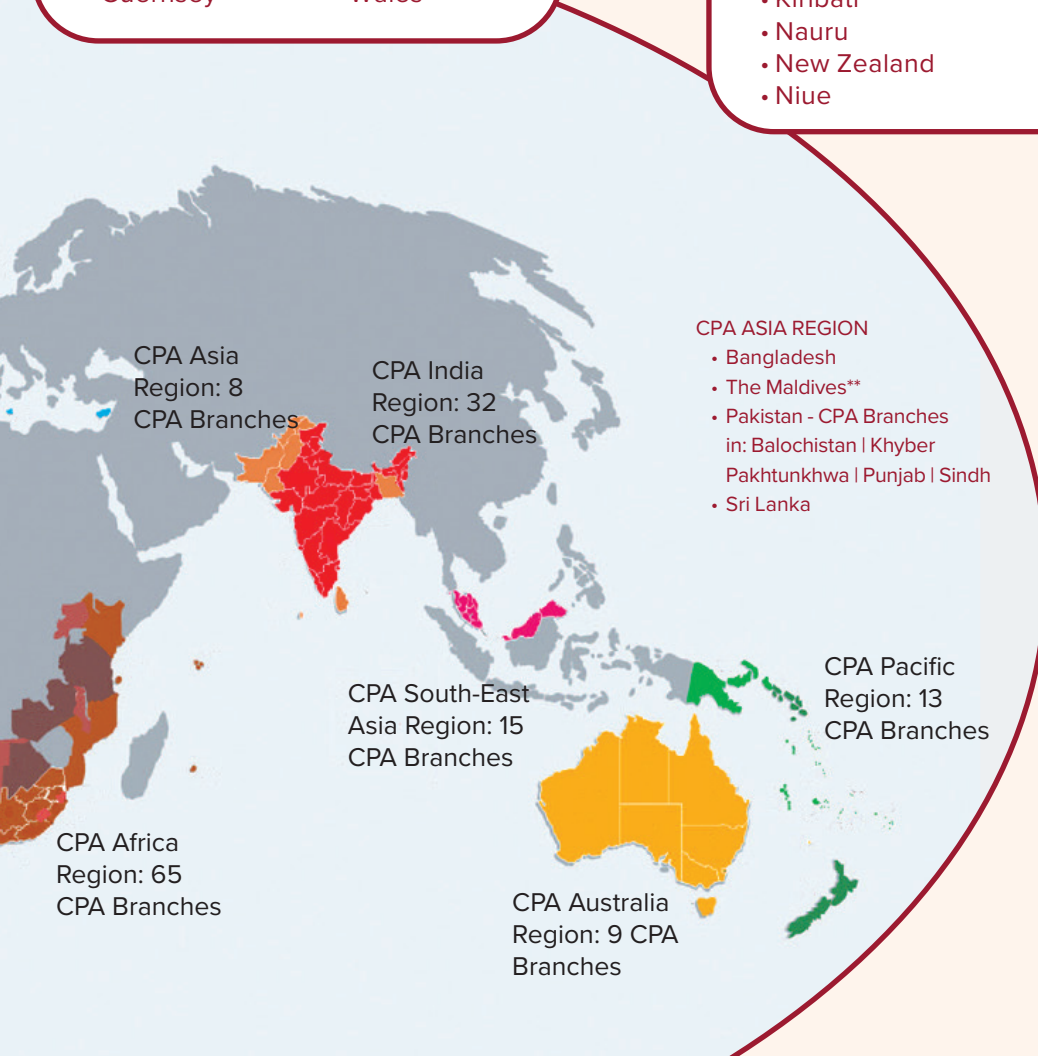
- Malaysia - also CPA Branches in: Johor | Kedah Darulaman | Kelantan | Melaka (Malacca) | Negeri Sembilan | Pahang | Penang | Perak | Perlis | Sabah | Sarawak | Selangor | Terengganu
- Singapore

#### CPA ASIA REGION

- Bangladesh
- The Maldives\*\*
- Pakistan - CPA Branches in: Balochistan | Khyber Pakhtunkhwa | Punjab | Sindh
- Sri Lanka

#### CPA ASIA REGION

- Bangladesh
- The Maldives
- Pakistan - CPA Branches also in: Balochistan | Khyber Pakhtunkhwa | Punjab | Sindh
- Sri Lanka



#### CPA AFRICA REGION

- Botswana
- Cameroon
- Eswatini (Swaziland)
- The Gambia
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Mauritius
- Mozambique

- Namibia
- Nigeria - CPA Branches also in: Abia | Akwa-Ibom | Adamawa | Anambra | Bauchi | Bayelsa | Benue | Borno | Cross River | Delta | Ebonyi | Edo | Ekiti | Enugu | Gombe | Imo | Jigawa | Kaduna | Kano | Katsina | Kebbi

- | Kogi | Kwara | Lagos | Nasarawa | Niger | Ogun | Ondo | Osun | Oyo | Plateau | River State | Sokoto | Taraba | Yobe | Zamfara
- Rwanda
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- South Africa - CPA Branches also in:

- Eastern Cape | Free State | Gauteng | KwaZulu-Natal | Limpopo | Mpumalanga | North-West | Northern Cape | Western Cape
- Tanzania - CPA Branch also in: Zanzibar
- Uganda
- Zambia

# CPA PARLIAMENTARY ACADEMY

The CPA Parliamentary Academy provides online and in-person training opportunities for Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff. The portfolio of parliamentary professional development courses has been developed for the benefit of the CPA's membership with an online learning portal that includes video tutorials and online resources. Members and parliamentary staff can also apply for residency-based workshops each year that complement the online courses.

Visit [www.cpahq.org/parliamentary-academy](http://www.cpahq.org/parliamentary-academy) to find out more and to register your interest.

## CPA PARLIAMENTARY ACADEMY LAUNCHES 3 NEW COURSES IN 2023 FOR SPEAKERS AND PRESIDING OFFICERS, EXAMINING THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUSES

In 2023, the CPA launched three new courses as part of its portfolio of parliamentary professional development courses via the CPA Parliamentary Academy.

The first new course is the **Advanced Course for Speakers and Presiding Officers** which provides a unique opportunity to learn about how to perform these functions as the leaders within their parliamentary institutions. The course is equally beneficial for those who aspire to this role either in the short or long-term and to Deputy Speakers who wish to gain more understanding in their support role.

The course will also be of value to parliamentary staff within Speaker's offices, external parliamentary development specialists or political students.

The second new CPA online course on the '**Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): A Parliament's Role**' provides Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff with knowledge of the UN SDGs. The course examines parliamentary action on three levels of implementation: local/constituency, national and international implementation and features case studies from across the Commonwealth and beyond. The CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg said "*Commonwealth Parliaments have a crucial role to play in the delivery of the SDGs and this new online course with the CPA Parliamentary Academy will provide both Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff with vital information and resources to aid with many different aspects of the SDGs.*"

To mark International Women's Day 2023, the CPA also launched a new online course on '**Effective Women's Parliamentary Caucuses**.' The course offers an introduction to the main methods used to establish and run effective women's parliamentary caucuses, based on the experiences of Parliaments across the Commonwealth and beyond.

These new courses are available to all Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff across the CPA's membership as part of the CPA Parliamentary Academy. Visit [www.cpahq.org/parliamentary-academy](http://www.cpahq.org/parliamentary-academy) to find out more and to register your interest.





# CPA RESIDENCY COURSES

## COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS ATTEND CPA PARLIAMENTARY ACADEMY RESIDENCY PROGRAMMES IN ALBERTA AND SCOTLAND TO ENHANCE THEIR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

In 2023, over 60 Parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth participated in the Residency courses for the CPA Parliamentary Academy in Alberta and Scotland.

The third CPA Advanced Parliamentary Development Residency Programme was hosted by the Alberta Legislative Assembly from 12 to 16 June 2023 in Edmonton, Canada and attended by MPs from a wide range of Commonwealth jurisdictions.

The fourth residency course, focusing on a skills-based model, was held in partnership with the Scottish Parliament from 17 to 20 October 2023 in Edinburgh.

The CPA Parliamentary Academy residency programmes examine how MPs can be better performing legislators and scrutineers. In the first programme, participants were mentored by current and alumni Parliamentarians and Clerks from across the CPA Canada Region including former Presiding Officers and Members at a Federal and Provincial Level.

The second programme examined how Members of Parliament can enhance their soft skills on topics ranging from leadership and strategic thinking to communications and team management. Over five days, the delegates developed universal skills that are applicable both in Parliaments and in many different spheres.

The CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg said: *“For a long time, there has been a prevailing argument that an alternative approach to professional development training is by enhancing soft skills such as communication, planning, time management, etc. Such skills are arguably far more transferable and can support new or experienced Parliamentarians in being better prepared to deal with the many challenges that may arise over the course of their careers, whether in Parliament or outside the parliamentary sphere. The CPA Parliamentary Academy continues to go from strength to strength in promoting mutual learning and best practice.”*

The CPA Residency programmes were attended by Parliamentarians from CPA Branches across the membership including: Alberta, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Australian Capital Territory, Bangladesh, Belize, British Columbia, Cayman Islands, Cyprus, Jamaica, Jersey, Kenya, Kiribati, Malawi, Malta, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, India, Rajasthan, Saint Lucia, Sri Lanka, St Helena, St Kitts and Nevis, Tasmania, Turks and Caicos Islands and Western Australia.



Above: Delegates at the CPA Parliamentary Academy Residency in October 2023 hosted by the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh.



Above: Delegates at the CPA Parliamentary Academy Residency in June 2023 hosted by the Alberta Legislative Assembly in Edmonton, Canada.

The CPA Residency programme provides an extension of the CPA Parliamentary Academy, the CPA's portfolio of online courses, training and resources specifically for Parliamentarians and parliamentary officials.

The CPA Parliamentary Academy was designed with expertise from experts across the Commonwealth. The residency courses are intended to complement the online courses, providing face-to-face interactive learning and knowledge-sharing at a more advanced level.

For more information about the CPA Parliamentary Academy visit [www.cpahq.org/parliamentary-academy](http://www.cpahq.org/parliamentary-academy) or email [hq.sec@cpahq.org](mailto:hq.sec@cpahq.org).



# CPA POST-ELECTION SEMINARS

The CPA Post-Election Seminar is a flagship programme of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. For over 25 years, the CPA has conducted numerous Post-Election Seminars for Commonwealth Parliaments aimed at building the capacity of newly elected Parliamentarians so that they function efficiently and effectively in the performance of their democratic duties and serves as a refresher course for returning Parliamentarians. They usually take place a few months after a general election and are delivered by senior, highly experienced Parliamentarians and parliamentary officials from throughout the Commonwealth.

## CPA POST-ELECTION SEMINARS STRENGTHEN KNOWLEDGE OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE FOR MPs IN KENYA, TONGA AND DOMINICA

In 2023, the CPA held three Post-Election Seminars for Members of Parliament aimed at strengthening their knowledge of parliamentary practice and procedure, as well as exposing Members to experts drawn from across the Commonwealth.

The first Post-Election Seminar was co-hosted with the Parliament of Kenya and was attended by newly elected and returning Members of the National Assembly and Senators in Mombasa, Kenya, from 30 January to 2 February 2023. Parallel training programmes with Members and Senators took place with learning from colleagues and experts in a range of discussions designed to examine the core elements of democratic governance. The theme of the seminar was *'Equipping the 21<sup>st</sup> century legislator for effective service delivery'*. Opening the seminar, the President of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. Dr William S. Ruto, EGH, said: *"A democratic government is underpinned by a representative Assembly. The robustness of our democracy, effectiveness of government, viability of the state and the feasibility of development depend, to a considerable extent, to the existence and effective functioning of a strong Parliament."* Parliamentary experts from the Parliaments of Australia, Canada and South Africa provided a Commonwealth perspective at the seminar as well as the CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg and Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Kenya, Hon. Mohammed Ibrahim.



At the CPA Post-Election Seminar from 21 to 23 March 2023, Parliamentarians from Tonga, Tuvalu and Fiji examined the core elements of democratic governance and identified examples of best practice from Tonga, the Pacific and the wider Commonwealth. Lord Fakafanua, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Tonga, said: *"This seminar is valuable and opportune as there is never an expiration date on the importance of capacity building, institutional strengthen and professional development for both new and veteran MPs. We have constitutional mandates, roles, duties, and responsibilities that we must adhere to."*



A hybrid CPA Post-Election Seminar was held on 7 and 8 June 2023 for the House of Assembly of Dominica with in-person and virtual participation. The programme covered topics including the role of Committee Systems, technological innovation in Parliaments, public outreach and engagement, media relations, engagement with civil society, equality and diversity and much more. The Speaker of the House of Assembly of Dominica, Hon. Joseph Isaac said *“It is my hope that all of you will help in the process of building a more robust, stronger democratic nation through your leadership at the constituency and national level. Parliament is a space where we can have fruitful debate, honest debate, well-researched debate, but debate with respect and tolerance.”*

During the hybrid seminar, Members heard from global parliamentary experts in Canada, the UK, Saint Lucia, South Africa, McGill University and ParlAmericas.



## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES

### SEYCHELLES PARLIAMENTARY LEADERSHIP WORK WITH THE CPA TO ESTABLISH A MORE INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENT

Senior Members and officials of the National Assembly of the Seychelles, along with officials from the Government of Seychelles, benefitted from a workshop delivered by the CPA Headquarters from 23 to 24 January 2023. The National Assembly Council of Seychelles, headed by the Speaker, Hon. Roger Mancienne, MP and including the Deputy Speaker, Leader of Government Business, Leader of the Opposition, Whips and senior officials participated in the workshop, which was held at the National History Museum, Victoria, Mahé.

The workshop, which was funded under the auspices of the CPA Small Branches Regional Initiative Fund (RIF), provided an in-depth opportunity for the National Assembly to consider the financial, administrative and legal ramifications of establishing a National Assembly Service and National Assembly Commission; with the ultimate aim of increasing and strengthening the independence of the National Assembly from the Executive. The National Assembly Services Bill 2022, which forms the basis of the programme, was built upon the Model Law for Independent Parliaments published by the CPA in 2020. The workshop was delivered with the support and contributions of Huw Williams, Clerk's Office at The Scottish Parliament and Matthew Salik, Head of Programmes at the CPA.



### ANGUILLA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ENDORSES NEW CODE OF CONDUCT AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS

The Anguilla House of Assembly passed a motion approving a new Code of Conduct and Register of Interests for Members on 28 March 2023. The Code of Conduct and Register of Interests were developed by the Administration Committee of the House with support from the CPA through a Technical Assistance Programme.

The programme followed the self-assessment of the Assembly against the CPA's Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures which recommended the development of a Code of Conduct. Other activities included a review of the Standing Orders, a Governance, Organisational and Administrative review and the development of outreach and educational resources for the House of Assembly. Hon. Barbara Webster-Bourne, Speaker of the Anguilla House of Assembly, said: *“We are appreciative of the partnership that we have forged over the years with the CPA Headquarters. The technical expertise provided by Tom Duncan of the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly and the spirit in which it was delivered were an integral part of the process and its success.”*



# CPA BENCHMARKS FOR DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATURES

The CPA's Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures provide a framework for excellence in Commonwealth parliamentary and legislative practice. The CPA Benchmarks, which were adopted by the CPA's 180 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures, provide a minimum standard and a guide on how a Parliament should be constituted and how it should function. They play an important role in developing the effectiveness of parliamentary institutions.

## COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTS UNDERTAKE CPA BENCHMARKS ASSESSMENTS TO FOCUS ON PARLIAMENTARY STRENGTHENING AND REFORM

The CPA's 'Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures' provide a framework for excellence in Commonwealth parliamentary and legislative practice and were updated in 2018 to include the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG16 on strong and sustainable democratic institutions. The CPA Benchmarks were endorsed by 54 Commonwealth Member Countries at the time and the CPA's membership of almost 180 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures.

Since 2018, a number of Commonwealth jurisdictions have undertaken CPA Benchmark assessments including: South Africa, Malaysia, Belize, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, St Lucia, Grenada, The Gambia, Ghana, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Anguilla, KwaZulu Natal and Western Cape, St Helena, Montserrat, Cayman Islands and Malawi. The following jurisdictions have also conducted partial self-assessments independently: Queensland, Isle of Man, Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and Jersey.

In 2023, the CPA embarked on the Good Governance Project with funding from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to further promote parliamentary democracy and good governance across the Commonwealth. Through the project, the CPA was able to deliver further CPA Benchmarks assessments in Namibia, Tonga, Fiji, Maldives, Kiribati, Lesotho and Samoa. In addition, the CPA was also able to secure funding from the British High Commission in Botswana to support the first joint CPA Benchmarks assessment and CWP Gender-Sensitive Parliament assessment for the Parliament of Botswana to support the development of their Strategic Plan.

By supporting Parliaments to undertake CPA Benchmark assessments to produce outcomes reports and accompanying recommendations, these institutions and their leadership have been able to identify clear roadmaps for effective and targeted reforms. The CPA is able to support these Parliaments to fulfil these recommendations through CPA Technical Assistance Programmes, which could involve updating the rules of procedures, training for Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff or developing corporate policies. These project outputs will strengthen parliamentary institutions for improved good governance.

During the CPA Benchmarks assessment, CPA officials hold a series of meetings with the Speaker, Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff, as well as a wide range of other stakeholders including Government officials, the Attorney General, Auditor-General and Electoral officials, trade unions, local media and civil society groups.

Outcomes from recent CPA Benchmarks assessments have included the National Assembly of Kenya translating their Standing Orders into Kiswahili and the publishing of an e-newsletter to increase public outreach. In Belize, following a CPA Benchmarks assessment, the House of Representatives developed a new Code of Conduct, updated their Standing Orders and established a Women's Parliamentary Caucus, demonstrating the valuable use of the CPA Benchmarks across the Commonwealth.

The CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg, said: "Effective Parliaments are the cornerstone of good governance and the CPA works to ensure that Legislatures can function to their maximum potential. Self-assessment against to the CPA Benchmarks ensures that Parliaments can vigorously scrutinise their practices and procedures to become better performing Legislatures. In addition, the CPA Benchmarks assessments have strengthened public outreach, engagement and confidence."

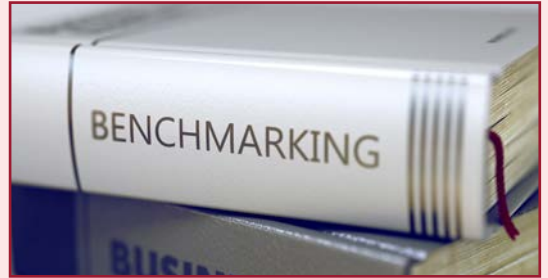




## NEW EVALUATION OF THE CPA BENCHMARKS FOR DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATURES ENSURE THEY REMAIN RELEVANT FOR COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTS

In 2023, a Evaluation Review was undertaken of the CPA Recommended Benchmarks Programme covering the period of 2018 to 2022. The recommendations following this review aim to ensure that the CPA Benchmarks are fit for purpose in the longer-term and are appropriately tailored for the needs of the CPA's member Parliaments, whilst ensuring they remain a robust set of standards to strengthen parliamentary institutions.

In addition, the CPA is developing a set of 'Advanced CPA Benchmarks' to complement the existing CPA Benchmarks. These Advanced Benchmarks will be more aspirational and include a greater emphasis on areas such as accessibility for internal and external parliamentary stakeholders; gender sensitivity and inclusivity; effective and appropriate use of technology and innovation; robust security (both physical and cyber); institutional commitment(s) to sustainability; and prioritisation of well-being and mental health.



## 2023 COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

### SPEAKER OF ZAMBIA RECEIVES COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIAN OF THE YEAR 2023 AWARD

The Commonwealth Parliamentarian of the Year 2023 Awards were announced at the 66<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Ghana. Hon. Nelly Mutti, MP, Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia was announced as the recipient of the 2023 Commonwealth Parliamentarian of the Year Award in recognition of her parliamentary service and her commitment to transparency in parliamentary processes. The nomination also emphasised the Speaker's contributions to upholding the rule of law and her dedication to ensuring the citizens of Zambia have quick and easy access to information. The Speaker of Zambia said in her acceptance speech: *"It is humbling for me*



*to emerge as the winner of the award from among the 180 Legislatures in the Commonwealth. I wish to dedicate this award to the over 3,000 women Parliamentarians of the Commonwealth, as we strive collectively to change the narrative in our Parliaments by ensuring that course for gender parity is attained in all our national and sub-national Legislatures."*

Hon. Ntombi Lentheng Mekingwe, MPL, Speaker of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature in South Africa was awarded the 2023 Parliamentary Equality and Diversity Award in recognition of her parliamentary service and her commitment to gender mainstreaming and the promotion of women's empowerment, youth, LGBT+ and elderly citizens in Gauteng. Hon. Myrna Driedger, MLA, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba in Canada was awarded the 2023 Parliamentarian Life-time Achievement Award in recognition of her parliamentary service and her commitment and contributions to the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) network, particularly in the CPA Canada Region. Hon. Tanya August-Hanson, MLC, Member of the Isle of Man Legislative Council was awarded the 2023 New Parliamentarian Award in recognition of her contributions to promoting parliamentary democracy and engagement amongst young people.

As part of the CPA's mission to strengthen parliamentary democracy through the promotion of good governance and sharing best practice, the awards were launched in 2022 to recognise and highlight inspirational and active Parliamentarians for excelling in their field. The 2023 Awards were presented by Hon. Kate Doust, MLC, from the Parliament of Western Australia, who was the recipient of the first CPA Parliamentarian of the Year Award in 2022, and the CPA Chairperson, Hon. Ian Liddell-Grainger, MP (United Kingdom).



# PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS

The CPA works across a number of cross-cutting themes in our parliamentary strengthening and development work including parliamentary standards, independent Model Law, the separation of powers, the rule of law and human rights.

The CPA is a member of the Commonwealth Latimer House Principles Working Group and seeks to champion its principles of the separation of powers between the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary to ensure effective governance and democracy. The rule of law is a fundamental principle upon which the Commonwealth is built. On the international stage, it is fundamental to peace and stability. Working to ensure this basic principle is the essence of the work of the CPA to promote the rule of law across all its programmatic work. Mainstreaming the rule of law is, therefore, a key task for the CPA. With the establishment of the CPA Working Group on Human Rights, the CPA Headquarters also supports work to progress and strengthen the role of Parliamentarians on human rights.

## CPA JOINS EVENTS TO MARK 20 YEARS OF THE COMMONWEALTH LATIMER HOUSE PRINCIPLES

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association 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 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.

**Commonwealth Rule of Law Seminar Series:** Commonwealth Parliamentarians joined a wide range of stakeholders from across the Commonwealth for a seminar to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Commonwealth Latimer House Principles held by the Rule of Law Division at the Commonwealth Secretariat. The panel discussion examined the critical importance of adhering to the principles whilst also reflecting on their relevancy in modern democracies given existing threats to good governance. The Speaker of the House of Representatives at the Parliament of Malaysia, H.E. Johari bin Abdul, represented the CPA at the webinar and spoke about the importance of the independence of Parliaments in the wider context of the separation of powers and holding the Executive to account. The Speaker also spoke about increasing the representation of women in Parliament and engaging with young people and the wider public. The Minister of Legal and Constitutional Affairs of Jamaica, Hon. Marlene Malahoo-Forte, KC, MP, spoke about the role of the Executive and the Legislature in upholding democracy and democratic participation.



**66<sup>th</sup> CPC Workshop on the separation of powers:** The President of the Senate of Malaysia, Senator H.E. Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar outlined the role of Malaysia's three branches of government and stressed the need for the re-enactment of the *Parliamentary Service Act* at a workshop on the 20 years of the Commonwealth Latimer House Principles at the 66<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Malaysia. Panellists also included the President of the Senate of Trinidad and Tobago, Senator Hon. Nigel de Freitas; the President of the Senate of Australia, Senator Hon. Sue Lines; and Professor Hakeem Yusuf, Professor of Global Law at Derby University.



# RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

Through its research, publications and knowledge sharing approach, the CPA seeks to capture and disseminate the diverse experiences of parliamentary democracy from across the Commonwealth. Through the sharing of ideas and practices, the CPA is able to expand its comparative knowledge on parliamentary strengthening recognising the diverse challenges that many Commonwealth jurisdictions face. In 2023, the CPA continued to develop its diverse publications and toolkits, which although are primarily intended for Parliamentarians, are also beneficial to policymakers, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Research Service (CPRS) also offers Parliaments and Parliamentarians a research service to supplement those available to Parliament on a range of specialist subjects. The CPA is able to provide CPA Branches with access to the wider CPA network and collate responses for the original CPA Branch who have made the enquiry.

## ‘TRANSITIONING TO NEW PARLIAMENTS’: NEW CPA TOOLKIT PROVIDES SUPPORT TO PARLIAMENTS FOR ELECTION PLANNING

Elections are a common feature of democratic Parliaments across the globe. Their frequency and impact will vary, depending on constitutional arrangements and political circumstances, but for all parliamentary administrations, large and small, across the Commonwealth and the wider world, elections represent a regular challenge. Parliaments, and in particular parliamentary administrative teams, must be ready to welcome new and returning Members of Parliament following each election and to support them in carrying out their parliamentary functions.

In 2023, the CPA launched a new **Handbook for Parliaments in Election Planning** to assist Legislatures in planning for an election and the influx of Members of Parliament that follows. The purpose of this Handbook is to support Parliaments by suggesting approaches and sharing examples of best practice from across the Commonwealth. It is primarily intended for use by the parliamentary officials who are tasked with planning for their next election, but it may also be of interest to Members of Parliament, especially those charged with overseeing their House Services or Administrations, who wish to ensure that election planning in their Parliament reflects good practice.

Introducing the CPA toolkit, the CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg, said: “One of the greatest challenges for a Parliament is managing the transition from one Parliament to the next following a General Election. For over twenty-five years, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association has been at the forefront of supporting Parliaments to train thousands of newly elected Members of Parliament as part of its CPA Post-Election Seminars. This new Handbook has been developed to broaden and augment that Post-Election support, by supporting the institution of Parliament to effectively transition from one Parliament to another.”

This latest resource has been developed for the benefit of the CPA’s member Branches, but also the wider community of Parliaments outside of the Commonwealth. The publication draws upon contemporary research, established best practices and relevant case studies/examples from more than 30 Commonwealth jurisdictions, including: Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Cyprus, Western Cape, New Zealand, Alberta, Kiribati, St Lucia, Guernsey, Scotland, Nigeria, Kenya, Australia, Tanzania, South Africa, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Jersey, Manitoba, Victoria, Canada, Nova Scotia, Sierra Leone, India, Queensland, New South Wales, Belize and Saskatchewan.

The new CPA Handbook for Parliaments in Election Planning is available to download on the CPA website [www.cpahq.org](http://www.cpahq.org).



# PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) works closely with a wide range of partners to deliver its programme work aimed at **strengthening the institution of Parliament, supporting and promoting parliamentary democracy and the political values of the Commonwealth.**

Working with partner organisations allows for not only greater institutional support (direct support) aimed at supporting Commonwealth Legislatures but also thematic support (issue-based support) for the purpose of promoting specific policy goals, such as **gender equality, environmental protection and climate change reduction, disability rights, education, trade and human rights.**



CPA programmes are delivered in partnership with CPA Branches and international organisations including **international parliamentary associations**, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union; other **international bodies**, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women, as well as Commonwealth organisations and universities.

Partnering with organisations that share similar values, aims and objectives leads to better information sharing, less duplication and lower programme costs as well as **an agenda that extends beyond Parliament to include the wider political system.**

There is however further scope for international partnerships to develop and if you are interested in working with the CPA Headquarters Secretariat then please contact us at [hq.sec@cpahq.org](mailto:hq.sec@cpahq.org)



## COMMONWEALTH MPs TO BENEFIT FROM TWO NEW PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND PARLIAMENTARY STRENGTHENING

In 2023, the CPA and the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) network signed a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The partnership will help to further both organisations' key objectives in the areas of gender equality and the eradication of discriminatory laws, particularly towards achieving UN Sustainable Development Goal 5.

UN Women Executive Director, Ms Sima Sami Bahous, said: "Globally, more than 2.5 billion women and girls are affected by unequal laws or a lack of legal protection. This partnership with CPA is a strategic opportunity for the achievement of our shared goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as making progress toward equality in law for women and girls by 2030."

The CPA also signed a new partnership agreement with the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) to provide Parliamentarians across the CPA Asia Region – which includes Pakistan (national and provincial Legislatures), Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and The Maldives - with greater training and development opportunities, including programmes on parliamentary strengthening. The partnership will help to further both organisation's key objectives in areas of parliamentary strengthening, particularly towards achieving UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 on building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

## INTERNATIONAL DAYS AND CPA CAMPAIGNS

In 2023, the CPA membership marked a number of International Days including International Day of Parliamentarism (World Parliament Day), International Women's Day, International Day of Democracy, International Education Day, International Day of Disabled Persons and UN Human Rights Day with events and activities in Commonwealth Parliaments and social media campaigns to raise awareness.

## CPA CELEBRATES COMMONWEALTH DAY 2023 ACROSS ITS 180 PARLIAMENTS AND LEGISLATURES

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association celebrated Commonwealth Day on Monday 13 March 2023 across the CPA's nine Regions and around 180 Parliaments and Legislatures. This year's theme was 'Forging a sustainable and peaceful common future' which combined the active commitment of the Commonwealth to support the promotion of peace, prosperity and sustainability, especially through climate action, to secure a better future for young people and to improve the lives of all Commonwealth citizens.

This was the first Commonwealth Day presided over by His Majesty King Charles III as the Head of the Commonwealth at the multi-faith Commonwealth Service at Westminster Abbey in London where he joined Members of the Royal Family, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, representatives of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, High Commissioners, dignitaries and over 600 schoolchildren. As the Head of the Commonwealth, The King spoke of the diversity of the Commonwealth and its shared political values in strengthening democratic governance.

Commonwealth Day 2023 also marked the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Commonwealth Charter which seeks to reflect the shared values of the Commonwealth's nations and citizens and its anniversary provides an opportunity to reflect on its progress and to ask if it meets the diverse needs of the Commonwealth's citizens. 2023 was also designated the 'Commonwealth Year of Youth' and so Commonwealth Day also focused on delivering opportunities for young people to connect with the Parliaments, governments and institutions of the Commonwealth. The CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg said: "This Commonwealth Day, we celebrate the work of Parliamentarians with young people in their communities. More than 60% of the Commonwealth's 2.5 billion people are aged under 30. Education and outreach are of vital importance to Commonwealth Parliaments – especially with young people." Commonwealth Day is celebrated annually on the second Monday of March.





# GENDER

In 2023, the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) network continued to provide capacity building for Parliaments and building awareness for all Parliamentarians, male and female, to include a gender perspective in all aspects of their role. The CWP network also continued to assist Parliaments in becoming gender-sensitive institutions.



## COMMONWEALTH WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS AIM TO FURTHER GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUAL REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENTS IN 2023

Women Parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth met at the 66<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Accra, Ghana in October 2023. Discussions took place on **women's representation in Parliaments, gender sensitisation and quotas** amongst a wide range of topics. This was also the first CPA annual conference since **the introduction of new measures aiming to ensure equal gender representation** resulting in a 60/40 male/female gender ratio. The CWP Chairperson, Hon. Dr Zainab Gimba, MP (Nigeria) opened the CWP Business meeting and pledged to renew the effort to increase women's representation. Delegates also debated the time to be allocated for future CWP meetings. Delegates also heard from UN Women highlighting gender-responsive legislation, discriminatory laws, successful reforms and how they were achieved.



The CWP Chairperson highlighted **the positive impact of women's leadership at the 13<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting** in The Bahamas in August 2023 and met with the President of the Senate of The Bahamas to discuss the issues that women in politics face and opportunities for collaboration with the CWP network. The CWP Chairperson also led a delegation on a visit to the Parliament of Botswana to discuss women's political participation and representation in July 2023.

The CWP network held **its second 'Champions for Gender Equality' Workshop in Tanzania to promote equal representation in Commonwealth Parliaments with Members from 17 different jurisdictions** in December 2023. The workshop was designed to equip male and female MPs with skills and resources to take action on gender equality to strengthen their roles as gender champions in their respective Parliaments. The CWP Chairperson said: "As we pursue this mandate together, it is vital that we act as gender champions throughout our time in Parliament, whilst also encouraging those around us to join us in this noble cause. Whilst we all share the same ambitions to see more women in Parliament and positions of leadership, we also have our own contexts and journeys to share with each other."

The **importance of women's engagement in parliamentary leadership was underscored at a CWP Regional Seminar hosted by the Parliament of Jamaica**. Women Parliamentarians from the CPA Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic Region met under the theme of *'Empowering Women in Politics and Parliament: Inspiring Leadership, Driving Change'* in July 2023. The event was supported through a funding grant from the CWP Regional Strengthening Funds.

The CWP Coordinator supported the **KwaZulu-Natal Legislature and the Western Cape Provincial Parliament to undertaking gender self-assessments** using the CWP Gender Sensitisation Guidelines.

To mark International Women's Day 2023, the CWP network also launched a new online course on **'Effective Women's Parliamentary Caucuses.'** The course offers an introduction to the main methods used to establish and run effective women's parliamentary caucuses, based on the experiences of Parliaments across the Commonwealth and beyond.



# DISABILITY

In 2023, the CPA continued to recognise the need to increase representation of persons with disabilities in political institutions. The

Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities

(CPwD) network has been established to facilitate activities and programmes to champion and increase the representation of persons with disabilities in Commonwealth Parliaments and to work towards the mainstreaming of disability considerations in all CPA activities and programmes.



## COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS HIGHLIGHT LOCAL PROJECTS WORKING WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN GHANA

The Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) network, led by the CPwD Chairperson, Hon. Laura Kanushu, MP (Uganda), highlighted the work of local projects working with persons with disabilities during the 66<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Ghana in October 2023. The CPwD Chairperson, accompanied by the Regional Champions of the network and the CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg, went to the Accra Rehabilitation Centre in the West Ridge area of Ghana's capital city, Accra, to see their work. The Centre runs vocational courses in visual art, leatherwork, masonry, carpentry, cosmetology, tailoring, needle work and rural craft to provide people with a variety of disabilities with employable skills.



The CPwD Chairperson said: “Grassroots OPDs [organisations of persons with disabilities] are of vital importance to empowering people with disabilities globally. Any Parliamentarian, with or without a disability, must engage with such bodies to develop their understanding of how they can represent the disability community of their jurisdiction. This activity provided an excellent opportunity for the CPwD’s board to learn more about the work of OPDs in the 66<sup>th</sup> CPC’s host jurisdiction in Ghana and we will take back what we have learnt for our work as Parliamentarians across the Commonwealth.”

The CPwD Regional Champions also met during the 66<sup>th</sup> CPC to review the last year’s activities and set the agenda for the network for the year ahead. In 2023, the CPwD Capital Investment Fund increased its total budget allocation to £60,000, meaning more CPA Branches could bid for grants to become more accessible. To date, applications have been received from Montserrat, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Yukon, St Helena and Scotland. CPwD Regional Champions were also briefed on what projects are planned for 2024, such as an update to the CPA’s Disability Inclusive Communications Guidelines.





# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The international community has made commitments on sustainable development and tackling climate change. These commitments are important tools for Parliamentarians in their work. In 2023, the CPA has continued to support our Members so that they can be effective advocates for sustainable development in their Parliaments. We have worked in partnership with international organisations working in this important sphere.

The CPA re-committed its pledge to ensure CPA operations are more environmentally sustainable including the use of virtual meetings where possible to reduce air travel, a reduction in the number of physical publications and printed materials and a reinforcement of our paperless policy for governance meetings.

## COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS AND GLOBAL EXPERTS LAUNCH NEW SDGs COURSE FOR PARLIAMENTS IN MARGINS OF UN SDGs SUMMIT

The CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg joined Parliamentarians and global experts to launch a new CPA Parliamentary Academy online course on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the crucial role of Parliaments as institutions in implementing them. The launch event took place at the GF23 Global Futures Conference in the margins of the 2023 UN SDGs Summit in New York.

The UN SDGs Summit in September 2023 marked the half-way point to the deadline set for achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The CPA Secretary-General said: “The CPA is committed to fostering the values of the Commonwealth and the UN SDGs across our membership and beyond. Whilst our work relates particularly to SDG16, focusing on peace, justice and strong institutions, we are also committed to supporting Parliaments and Parliamentarians to play an active role in the delivery of all SDGs in their own jurisdictions, regionally and on an international level.” The Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan, Hon. Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, spoke at the SDGs course launch to explain the importance of Parliaments’ role in their implementation and representatives from the Commonwealth Secretariat, Parliamentarians for the Global Goals (PfGG), Parliamentarians for Global Action, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women also attended the launch event.

The CPA Secretariat also hosted a webinar for Parliamentarians, parliamentary officials and external stakeholders to look at the future of the SDGs. The webinar was chaired by the CPA Secretary General and included remote panellists representing the Parliament of Wales, Parliament of Fiji, UNDP, Commonwealth Youth Council, and the Centre for Global Development. 45 people participated in the webinar from seven CPA Regions.



## MONITORING EFFECTIVE CLIMATE CHANGE LAWS

Around the world, over 1,000 laws related to climate change have been passed by Legislatures in at least 170 countries. These laws are captured in the ‘Climate Change Laws of the World Database’ maintained by the Grantham Research Institute at the London School of Economics. The database reveals a variety of legal designs that respond to the common threat of climate change, while accounting for context specific challenges and different traditions of governance. The CPA Headquarters worked with the Institute to publish a number of articles and blogs in 2023 to share the research with a wider audience across the CPA’s membership. Comparative analyses of climate laws enable knowledge and exchange between actors involved in climate law-making. One CPA article shared innovations in Climate Change Acts from Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria which was included in background reading to examine developments in climate legislation in Africa ahead of the 66<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Ghana.





# SMALL STATES AND JURISDICTIONS

The CPA Small Branches network represents small jurisdictions of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to identify their particular requirements



in parliamentary strengthening, development and cooperation. CPA Small Branches are classified as jurisdictions (national and sub-national) with populations of under 1 million inhabitants. In 2023, the network continued to deliver on its strategic priorities including climate change, sustainable economic development, connectivity and innovation, financial scrutiny and human rights.

## DISASTER RISK DECISION-MAKING ON THE AGENDA FOR COMMONWEALTH POLITICIANS AT CPA WORKSHOP FOR SMALL PARLIAMENTS

In May 2023, the CPA Small Branches Network, in collaboration with the Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience, Durham University, successfully conducted a three-day workshop on Disaster Risk Management in Small Jurisdictions. The workshop was attended by 22 Parliamentarians from 13 small Parliaments and served as a platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration with experts. Sessions covered democratic accountability, cross-jurisdiction support, resource mobilisation and the crucial role of accurate and timely data and research in disaster risk management. Workshop participants enhanced their understanding of disaster risk management and discussed strategies and action plans for effective management in their respective jurisdictions. Members from the Cayman Islands, Fiji, Isle of Man, Sikkim (India), Tonga and Turks & Caicos Islands presented on their experiences of recent disasters affecting their jurisdictions. Lord Fakafanua, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Tonga, gave a compelling testimony on the impact of the 2022 Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha’apai volcanic eruption and tsunami.



## FOCUS ON ENSURING GREATER SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE SMALLEST JURISDICTIONS AT 39<sup>th</sup> CPA SMALL BRANCHES CONFERENCE IN GHANA

Commonwealth Parliamentarians met at the 39<sup>th</sup> CPA Small Branches Conference to examine the unique challenges they face in mobilising resources for greater sustainability. The conference discussed strategies to meet the unique developmental needs of the CPA’s smallest Legislatures through key thematic workshops that helped to build parliamentary capacity.

The CPA Small Branches Chairperson, Joy Burch, MLA, Speaker of the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly said: “The CPA Small Branches Conference helps to build capacities for the small Parliaments



of the Commonwealth and create greater and more constant opportunities for the sharing of knowledge and cooperation across the CPA Small Branches network.” The CPA Small Branches network highlighted the importance of tackling climate change and disaster risk management for the Commonwealth, especially its 31 small and developing states which are often the least polluting but the first casualties of climate change. In the margins of the conference, the CPA Small Branches Steering Committee met to discuss the strategic direction for the network.



# YOUTH

Youth engagement and education are central to our values. In 2023, our work included the Commonwealth Youth Parliament (CYP), the development of educational resources and outreach programmes. These programmes aimed to increase awareness of the important work done by the CPA in promoting democratic governance across the Commonwealth and connecting Parliamentarians with young people in schools, colleges and universities to inspire the next generation of young leaders.

## CPA PROMOTES EDUCATION AND OUTREACH FOR COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN 2023

2023 was designated the 'Commonwealth Year of Youth' and so the CPA focused on delivering opportunities for young people to connect with the Parliaments of the Commonwealth. The CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg said: *"More than 60% of the Commonwealth's 2.5 billion people are aged under 30. Education and outreach are of vital importance to Commonwealth Parliaments – especially with young people."* During a visit to Tonga, the CPA Secretary-General visited two local schools to speak to students about the work of the CPA and the Commonwealth.



**Inaugural Lifaka Lecture:** The inaugural CPA Emilia Monjowa Lifaka Lecture highlighted the key role of Commonwealth Parliamentarians in global education. The CPA



Lifaka Lecture took place in the margins of the 66<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Ghana in October 2023. The Lecture has been established in memory of Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, the late Chairperson of the CPA International Executive Committee and Deputy Speaker of Cameroon. The keynote address was given by Betty Abeng, Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth Education Trust, who spoke about the importance of education for all Commonwealth citizens and the key objective of achieving UN SDG 4 on ensuring *"inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"*. About 260 million children are not in school across the world, undermining efforts to achieve the 17

SDGs. Other speakers included Dr Leslie Casey-Hayford, Director of Associates for Change, West Africa, Hon. Mary Muyali Boya, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon and Hon. Peter Nortsu-Kotoe, MP (Ghana). The inaugural CPA Lifaka Lecture was also supported by the International Parliamentary Network for Education (IPNED) who spoke to conference delegates about their campaign for universal school meals.

**Education resources:** In 2023, the CPA supported the Anguilla House of Assembly with a new educational video for schools aimed at helping students to learn about democracy and the work of the Legislature. The Speaker of the Anguilla House of Assembly, Hon. Barbara Webster-Bourne, said: *"If we are to strengthen our democratic systems, our young people as the inheritors of these systems must be educated about those systems and the values that hold them together."* The Speaker also expressed her *"sincerest appreciation to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Secretariat for their ongoing commitment to the Anguilla House of Assembly."* The video project was part of an ongoing CPA Technical Assistance Programme.





# TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

In 2023, the CPA continued to draw on the lessons learnt in recent years in the development of technology and innovation in order to support our membership and to deliver on our strategic priorities. The CPA Headquarters employs a wide range of innovative techniques and virtual opportunities to share best practice across our programmes, governance and support the membership. However, we also recognise the digital divide within our membership and the wider Commonwealth and therefore provide additional support and technical assistance programmes.

## COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS DISCUSS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND DISINFORMATION CHALLENGES AT CPA DIGITAL CONFERENCE

From 4 to 6 December 2023, the CPA hosted an online Conference on ‘AI, Disinformation and Parliament: Ensuring the Integrity of our Digital Democracy’. The Conference aimed to raise awareness among Parliamentarians about the latest developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and synthetic media, such as deepfakes, and their implications for democracies and public discourse.

The Conference featured panel discussions, roundtables, dialogues, explainers and Q&As with experts in the field, covering topics such as the core concepts of disinformation, AI and synthetic media, the threat landscape and the strategies to combat disinformation, and the legislative environment and policies to ensure the integrity of digital democracies. Reflecting on the Conference, the CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg, said: “The conference was a valuable opportunity for Parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth to learn from experts and each other about the latest developments and challenges in AI and synthetic media, and their impact on our democracies and public discourse. I believe that legislators have a vital role to play in ensuring the integrity of our digital democracies, and I hope that the Conference will inspire them to take action and collaborate with key actors in this field.”

The Conference came ahead of the launch of the CPA’s new ‘Parliamentary Handbook on Disinformation, Artificial Intelligence and Synthetic Media’. The handbook, co-produced with the Organization of American States (OAS), provides a comprehensive overview of disinformation, including its different forms and the various techniques used to spread it. It also covers the basics of AI and synthetic media, including their potential applications and implications for democracy, within and beyond the electoral cycle.



### 66<sup>th</sup> CPC Workshop examines e-Parliaments and new technologies for Parliaments

The CPA held a workshop for delegates at the 66<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference focused on how e-Parliaments would promote public engagement, enhance Parliaments’ legitimacy, transparency and accountability, and how to best include marginalised groups. Parliamentarians from Trinidad and Tobago, New South Wales and



Malaysia outlined the need for making Parliaments more accessible, particularly to persons with disabilities, and the need to mitigate the risk involved in integrating technology into the work of Parliament. During the COVID-19 pandemic, E-Parliaments helped to enhance public engagement in parliamentary processes through digital methods. However, there continues to be a number of challenges for Parliaments regarding the best way to engage the public and in measuring and evaluating these activities. The workshop intimated that, although the role of technology is essential in promoting democracy, there are notable challenges such as the digital divide in society and data protection and privacy rights.



# CPA REGIONAL CONFERENCES IN 2023

## 59<sup>th</sup> CPA CANADA REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN SASKATCHEWAN



Over 60 Commonwealth Parliamentarians and Parliamentary Clerks recommitted to increasing parliamentary strengthening at 59<sup>th</sup> CPA Canada Regional Conference in Regina, Saskatchewan from 22 to 29 July 2023. Hon. Randy Weekes, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan welcomed delegates from Members of the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Legislatures of the Region. Workshop sessions discussed freedom of expression and cyber-violence, the use of social media and its effects on political engagement, women in the

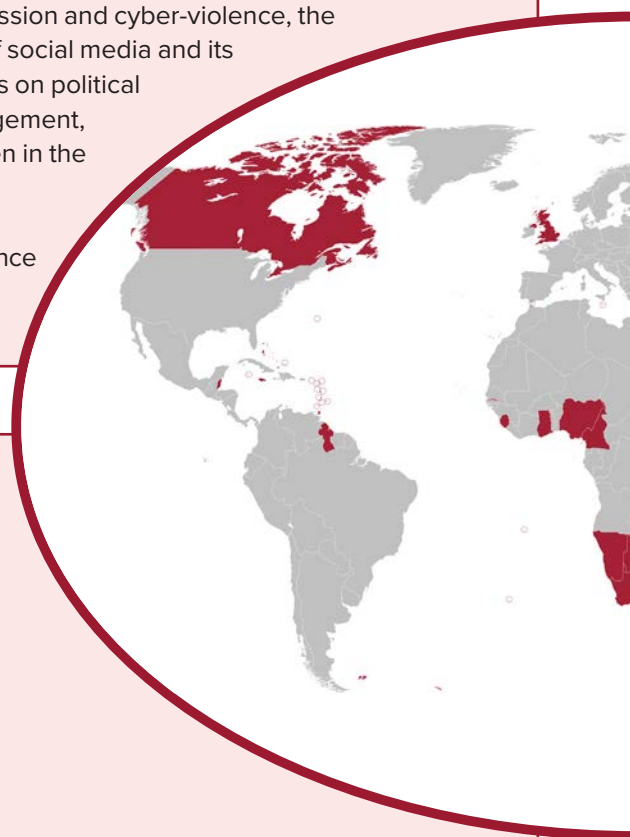
economy and an examination of harassment in the workplace practices.

Delegates also visited the First Nations University of Canada. The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Canada Regional Conference also took place focusing on inspiring leadership for women in political life.

## TURKS & CAICOS ISLANDS HOST 45<sup>th</sup> CPA CARIBBEAN, AMERICAS AND ATLANTIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE



The House of Assembly of the Turks and Caicos Islands hosted the 45<sup>th</sup> CPA Caribbean, the Americas and the Atlantic (CAA) Regional Conference in Providenciales from 21 to 28 July 2023. The Regional Conference brought together Parliamentarians and Clerks for discussions on the theme of *'Building a resilient region in the face of global challenges'*. Sessions covered topics including disaster preparedness, biodiversity and climate change. Hon. Gordon Burton, MHA, Speaker of Turks and Caicos Legislative Assembly, spoke about how the CPA gives Caribbean nations a voice on the international stage, saying: *"We are small island states in the Caribbean but together we have a voice that can resonate throughout the Commonwealth and impact decisions made on a global scale."* During the week, the CAA Region of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) network also hosted their 13<sup>th</sup> Conference and young people from across the region took part in the 16<sup>th</sup> CPA CAA Regional Youth Parliament. The Youth Parliament mirrored the structure of the Turks and Caicos Islands House of Assembly and delegates debated a motion based on the main theme of the Conference.





## 52<sup>nd</sup> CPA BRITISH ISLANDS AND MEDITERRANEAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE



Commonwealth Speakers, Members and parliamentary staff attended the 52<sup>nd</sup> CPA BIM Regional Conference at the UK Parliament on 26 and 27 April 2023 focusing on the theme of '*Inclusive and Sustainable Parliaments*'. Delegates heard from panellists on topics of gender representation, disability inclusion, workplace equality networks, parliamentary standards and the climate emergency. The keynote speaker was Rt Hon. Karen Bradley, MP, Chair of the UK House of Commons Procedure Committee who spoke about practice and procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic and the introduction of proxy voting.

## 9<sup>th</sup> CPA INDIA REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN RAJASTHAN

Members of Parliament from the federal and state level in India met for the 9<sup>th</sup> CPA India Regional Conference in Udaipur, Rajasthan from 21 to 22 August 2023. The Regional Conference brought together Commonwealth Members

to share their experiences of parliamentary democracy on a theme of '*Strengthening democracy and good governance in the digital age*'. The CPA India



Region Chairperson, Hon. Om Birla, MP, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha of India spoke about India as the largest functioning democracy in the world and said that Legislatures must embrace new technology to ensure that public engagement remains high and there is active participation in democracy. During the Regional Conference, delegates examined how Parliamentarians can be more effective and efficient at encouraging good governance through digital empowerment and the role of Members of Parliament in strengthening India through its democratic institutions.

## 40<sup>th</sup> CPA AUSTRALIA AND PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN QUEENSLAND

Commonwealth Parliamentarians from across two CPA Regions came together to discuss the importance of youth engagement in Parliaments at the 40<sup>th</sup> CPA Australia and Pacific Regional Conference in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia from 1 to 3 November 2023. The CPA Australia Regional

Chairperson, Hon. Curtis Pitt, MP, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland welcomed delegates and was followed by a keynote presentation by Ms Talei Elu, 2023 Queensland Young Australian of the Year, who spoke of her experiences and thoughts on the Regional Conference theme of '*Representation for the Future: Young People and Parliaments*'.

Regional Conference presentations included engaging young people with Parliamentary Committees; voting rights for 16 and 17 year olds; the benefits of youth participation and representation in Parliaments; resilience measures against sea level rise as the impact of climate change is an area of key concern to young people; and representation and participation amongst young people.



# CPA BRANCH VISITS IN 2023

## CPA ISLE OF MAN BRANCH



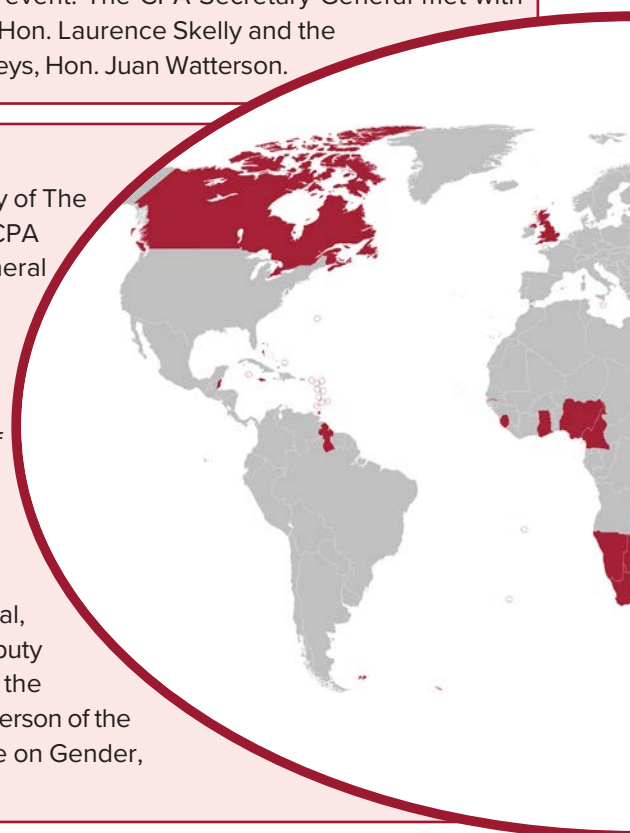
The CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg, visited the Isle of Man in July 2023 to take part in the Annual Tynwald Day celebrations. The CPA Secretary-General joined Members and parliamentary staff of the House of Keys and the Legislative Council, to celebrate the National Day of the Isle of Man. Usually celebrated on 5<sup>th</sup> July every year, the ancient Tynwald Day has been celebrated for over 1,000 years and involves a sitting of the Tynwald (Parliament) where a number of acts were promulgated as per the Isle of Man's Statutes. Members of Parliament from Jersey, Guernsey, Wales, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland also attended the event. The CPA Secretary-General met with the President of Tynwald, Hon. Laurence Skelly and the Speaker of the House of Keys, Hon. Juan Watterson.

## CPA GAMBIA BRANCH

The CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg visited the National Assembly of The Gambia in May 2023, the first visit by a CPA Secretary-General since the CPA Gambia Branch re-joined the Association in 2019. The CPA Secretary-General was received by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Rt Hon. Fabakary Tombong Jatta and the Clerk of the National Assembly, Mr Momodou A. Sise and the Deputy Clerk Legal & Procedural Matters, Kalipha M. M. Mbye. They discussed a range of topics, including international cooperation across the Commonwealth and professional development for Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff.



The CPA Secretary-General, who was accompanied by the CPA Deputy-Secretary-General, Jarvis Matiya, met with the Deputy Majority Leader of the House, the Minority Leader and the Chairperson of the National Assembly Committee on Gender, Children and Welfare.



## CPA WALES BRANCH



The CPA Secretary-General Stephen Twigg met Members and parliamentary staff from the Welsh Parliament (Senedd) on 20 June 2023. During the visit, the CPA Secretary-General was welcomed to Parliament by the Llywydd (Presiding Officer), Elin Jones MS, the Deputy Presiding Officer, David Rees MS and the Clerk of Parliament, Manon Antoniazzi. At a meeting with Members of the CPA Wales Branch Executive Committee, the CPA Secretary-General answered questions on the legal status of the CPA and the upcoming 66<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Accra, Ghana. During a tour of the Senedd building in Cardiff, opened in 2006, the CPA Secretary-General heard about its many sustainability features, including a rainwater harvesting system and a biomass boiler, and Commonwealth connections, such as the funnel and canopy made of Canadian cedar wood and the parliamentary mace gifted by the Parliament of New South Wales.





## CPA CYPRUS BRANCH



and observed Plenary Session of the Cyprus House of Representatives.

The CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg visited the Parliament of Cyprus in May 2023 where he was received by the President of the House of Representatives, Ms Annita Demetriou. They discussed a wide range of topics, including international cooperation across the Commonwealth and professional development for Members of Parliament. The CPA Secretary-General also met with Cypriot Members of Parliament who attended the 65<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in Canada and CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Conference in the UK. The CPA Secretary-General also toured the historical Cyprus Archaeological Museum

## CPA SINGAPORE BRANCH

The CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg visited the Parliament of Singapore in January 2023 and was received by the then Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Mr Tan Chuan, MP at Parliament House where they discussed a range of topics, including parliamentary practice and procedure in Singapore and across the Commonwealth. He also met with MPs who attended the 65<sup>th</sup> CPC and toured Parliament House.



## CPA SRI LANKA BRANCH

The CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg visited the Parliament of Sri Lanka in January 2023 and was received by the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Mahinda Yapa Abeywardana, MP at Parliament House where they discussed a range of topics. The CPA Secretary-General was also received by the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe. During his visit, the CPA Secretary-General met with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Education, the Leader of the Opposition, as well as other MPs. He also met with the CPA Sri Lanka Branch Secretary, Mr Dhammika Dasanayake, Secretary-General of the Parliament of Sri Lanka. The CPA Sri Lanka Branch became the Secretariat for the CPA Asia Region in 2023.



## CPA NEW ZEALAND BRANCH

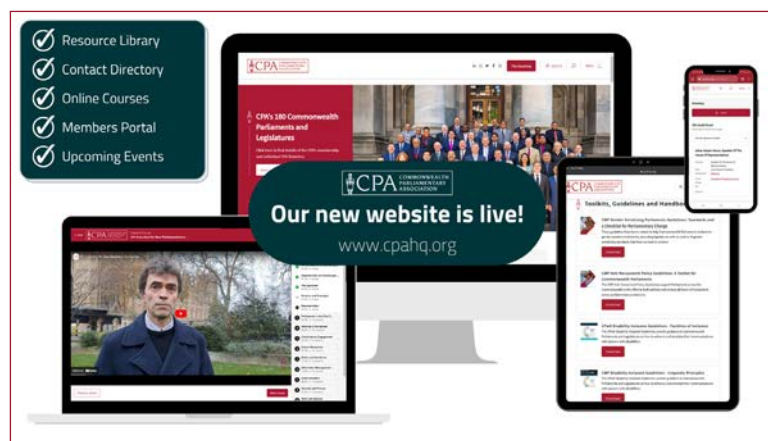
The CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg, visited the New Zealand Parliament in March 2023. In his first visit to New Zealand, the CPA Secretary-General was greeted by a Mihi whakatau (Māori welcome) to Parliament and formally welcomed by Rt Hon Adrian Rurawhe, Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives, before Question Time in the Chamber. He met with the Speaker to discuss opportunities for further collaboration between the CPA and the New Zealand Parliament. The CPA Secretary-General met with Hon. Gerry Brownlee, Father of the House of Representatives and Pacific Regional Representative on the CPA International Executive Committee; David Wilson, Clerk of the House; and Hon. Anahila Kanongata'a Suisiiki MP to discuss womens representation. He also spoke to young people at an interactive workshop with Victoria University students.



# COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLISHING

In 2023, our Communications activities continued to enhance the visibility and reach of the CPA, both within our membership, the parliamentary strengthening community and other key stakeholders. We use a wide range of Communications channels and content including e-Comms, print, audio-visual and online.

## CPA website and social media



In 2023, the CPA website continued to be the main digital platform for our membership. The website includes a wide range of **resources, information and online learning opportunities** for Commonwealth Parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and the wider public. The website also includes the **CPA's online learning portal** through the CPA Parliamentary Academy. The website offers access to the **online editions of *The Parliamentarian*, blog articles and the CPA library** featuring toolkits, booklets, guides and resources on many different aspects of parliamentary development and research produced by the CPA and its partners. The CPA social media channels

(Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube for video content) have continued to be a popular source of information for CPA Members and Branches.



In 2023, CPA Facebook posts reached 117,699 people with a 56.3% increase on interactions and increased to 5,896 followers.



In 2023, the CPA Instagram page reached 4,560 people – a 21.8% increase on the previous year.



In 2023, the CPA's Twitter page increased direct Followers from 9,841 to 10,804 – a 9.8% increase.



In 2023, the CPA's LinkedIn page increased followers by 48% and gained 99,483-page impressions (up 54.3% on previous year).

## CPA Blog

In 2023, we published a series of blog articles on the CPA website. **The blog articles are contributed by Members, parliamentary staff, experts and CPA staff.** The blog creates a **hub of policy examples, resources and information sharing for Members and parliamentary staff.** In this reporting period of 2023, 17 CPA blog articles/series = 9,718 views (3.43% of the total on the CPA website).

- Thematic blogs were featured on **international humanitarian law, disaster resilience and climate change legislation with the Grantham Institute.**
- Case studies written by **Commonwealth MPs and parliamentary staff** included setting up a Women's Parliamentary Caucus and conducting an accessibility audit.
- Feature articles on **Commonwealth Parliaments' clock towers, eight people behind the scenes in Parliaments and the youngest Speakers in the Commonwealth.**
- Signposting to parliamentary journals providing **international research** on Parliaments.





## The Parliamentary

**1** The *Parliamentarian* is the **quarterly flagship journal** of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Journal of Commonwealth Parliaments. The Journal is distributed to Members of Parliament, Parliamentary staff and individual subscribers across the Commonwealth and International Organisations.

**2** In 2023, **around 3,500 print copies per issue** were sent to CPA Branches, Members and subscribers. The digital edition had on **average around 4,000 digital reads per issue**.

**3** The Editorial Advisory Board for *The Parliamentary* advises the CPA Secretary-General and the Editor on the publication's future direction and editorial content. Members of Editorial Advisory Board represent the diversity of the Commonwealth, its nine Regions, CWP and youth contributors and the board met several times virtually in 2023.

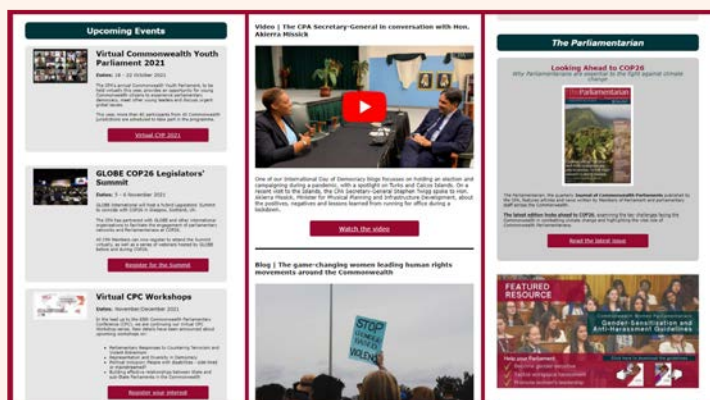


## CPA Order Paper e-newsletter

In 2023, the quarterly *CPA Order Paper*, an email newsletter for the CPA membership reached around 10,000 contacts per issue. We have significantly increased the number of individual Member contact details on our database with many Parliaments providing details for all of their individual Members.

- **Over 1,200 people** have now used the **online sign-up option** to opt-in to receiving CPA emails direct to their inbox.
- The open rate for the CPA Order Paper has risen from **an average of 23.5% in 2021 to 31.0% in 2023**. The industry average is around 25%.

In 2023, bi-annual e-newsletters for the CPA's networks - the CPA Small Branches, the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) and the Commonwealth Parliamentarians (CPwD) Order Paper - were sent to connect with key stakeholders and update the membership on the network's activities.



# CPA GOVERNANCE

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is governed by a CPA Executive Committee which acts as the board of trustees for the Association and determines its strategy and overall management. Day-to-day management is undertaken by the CPA Secretary-General. The Co-ordinating Committee is responsible for overseeing urgent decision-making on behalf of the CPA Executive Committee in between meetings. The CPA Executive Committee is responsible for its overall management. Members of the CPA Executive Committee serve a three-year term, with a third of the Members retiring each year and a third of Members nominated must be women. In 2023, the CPA Executive Committee met twice (Gibraltar in April 2023 and Accra, Ghana in October 2023) and reported to the CPA General Assembly held on 5 October 2023.

## CPA Status

Whilst the CPA is currently established as a UK charity, it has long been the opinion of the CPA membership that the organisation should hold a legal status comparable to that of an international, inter-parliamentary organisation. Tremendous efforts have been made by both CPA international and the CPA UK Branch in 2023 to achieve this desired status through UK legislation and the 'Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and International Committee of the Red Cross (Status) Bill', was introduced by Rt Hon. Dame Maria Miller, MP and is progressing through the UK Parliament in 2024.

## CPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEET IN GIBRALTAR

The CPA Executive Committee met for their Mid-Year Meeting in Gibraltar to discuss key governance issues and planning for the year ahead. Speakers and Members of Parliament from across the Commonwealth joined both in-person and via video link to discuss matters including the CPA's



legal status, financial reporting and future activities. The two-day meeting, hosted by the Gibraltar Parliament, took place from 18 to 19 April 2023. The CPA Executive Committee was due to have been held in Gibraltar in recent years, but the in-person meeting had been postponed due to the COVID-19 global pandemic and travel restrictions in place at the time. The Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee Hon. Ian Liddell-Grainger, MP (UK) and the CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg attended the meetings and updated Members on recent activities.

The Speaker of the Gibraltar Parliament and CPA Gibraltar Branch President, Hon. Melvyn Farrell, JP, MP, and the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Hon. Fabian Picardo, KC, both welcomed parliamentary colleagues. The Speaker said: *"The CPA is a forum through which we are able to share our innovations, experiences and best practices in our Parliament and where we can learn from other Legislatures on delivering parliamentary democracy and good governance for our citizens."* The CPA Gibraltar Branch was established in 1951 and is a member of the CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Region as well as the CPA Small Branches network. The CPA Gibraltar Branch has hosted the CPA Executive Committee previously in 1969, 1987 and 2000 and most recently hosted the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Conference in October 2022.



The CPA Executive Committee comprises 38 Members representing the nine regions of the CPA - Africa; Asia; Australia; British Islands and Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic; India; Pacific; South-East Asia as well as the Officers of the Association (CPA President, CPA Vice-President, Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee, CPA Vice-Chairperson, CPA Treasurer and the Chairpersons of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), the CPA Small Branches and the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD)).



# CPA SECRETARIAT

## CPA Headquarters staff

In 2023, the staff at the CPA Headquarters Secretariat continued in their commitment to support the work of Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff across the CPA's membership. A staff member on a one-year secondment from the Parliament of South Africa completed her role and an Archives Intern through King's College London worked on research projects as part of their course. The CPA Headquarters Secretariat also continued to benefit from different Learning and Development (L&D) opportunities and professional development training during the year. A full list of staff can be found at [www.cpahq.org](http://www.cpahq.org).



## Corporate Effectiveness and Efficiency

*Risk Management:* The Trustees are responsible for risk management. Risks identified by the CPA Headquarters are reviewed, assessed and appropriate action incorporated as part of operational delivery. During 2023, the main risks and uncertainties facing the CPA were:

- restricted opportunities to grow or diversify income.
- significant reliance on membership fees, and the timely payment of subscriptions.
- ensuring that membership remains a worthwhile proposition for the CPA's Branches.
- investment in the infra-structure that helps ensure the CPA Secretariat is run efficiently and is pro-active in communications with its membership.
- new or unexpected pressures on the CPA Secretariat or Programme costs.
- governance, given the CPA's status as a UK Charity with both UK and international Trustees.

Appropriate systems and/or actions have been developed or undertaken to identify and mitigate risk. These systems or actions include:

- expanding the CPA's revenue streams by reviewing its membership categories.
- maximising the CPA's investment returns within an agreed risk appetite framework.
- actively seeking hosts for the CPA's events to achieve a reduced cost burden on reserves.
- financial governance-related policies (i.e. use of credit cards, funding policy to support branch programme delivery, cash handling, etc).
- a programme of internal audit of the CPA's governance, risks, controls and performance management arrangements.
- Audit Subcommittee oversight.
- staff handbook detailing HR policies, practices and procedures.
- business and financial risk management plan (risk register) which details the nature of risk (i.e. external, fraud, governance, operational, liquidity and security) likelihood of occurrence, controls in place and the risk holder.
- appropriate insurance cover (management liability: Trustees' liability, employment practices liability and legal liability; office cover: employer's liability, public liability, business interruption, and office contents; health and life).
- establishment of an expert group to consider options for longer term organisational status.

## HOW IS THE CPA ORGANISED?

**CPA General Assembly:** Representing all CPA Branches at the annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference



**CPA Executive Committee:** CPA Officers and 30 Regional Representatives from all nine regions



**CPA Co-ordinating Committee:** CPA Chairperson; Vice-Chairperson; Treasurer; Chairpersons of CPA Small Branches, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) and Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD).



**CPA Secretary-General & CPA Headquarters Secretariat**



# 2023 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

**Financial Review:** The total revenue for 2023 was £3,106,893 (2022: £2,789,705). Of this, the CPA's core funding streams were from Branch Membership fees (88%) and financial investments (10%) with a small amount coming from other sources such as partnership income, subscriptions for *The Parliamentarian* and advertising income. Total revenue increased by £317,188 compared to the previous year, an increase of 11%. Membership fee rates in 2023 increased by £131,635, an increase of 5% from 2022. This was due to 16 sub-national CPA Branches choosing to increase their delegations by one, as approved at the CPA General Assembly in Halifax.

The CPA continued to deliver of a wide range of programmes and Governance meetings, not only physically, but also in a hybrid and fully virtual format. Total operating costs during the reporting period were £3,214,698 (2022: £2,967,424), made up of direct charitable activities totalling £3,165,606 (98%) and the additional costs of raising funds totalling £49,092 (2%).

At the end of 2023, the CPA's unrestricted reserves amounted to £3,295,327 with free reserves, after deducting the value of tangible assets, amounting to £3,275,996 which is in excess of the target in the reserves policy. Income from investments increased by £117,588 to £306,095. The continued war in Ukraine and other macro-economic factors have prolonged the market uncertainty on our investment portfolios, although there were gains for 2023 compared to losses in 2022.

In addition to the General Reserves, the Working Capital Trust Fund and the Conference Assistance Trust Fund (managed by Trustees under separate Trust Deeds) had total funds of £7,353,125. Income from each Trust Fund is used for the benefit of the Members in support of the wider objectives of the Association.

**Trustees:** The CPA is governed by a Board of Trustees, working through the CPA Executive Committee, who are responsible for the annual financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards. The law applicable to charities in England and Wales, requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the finances (income and expenditure) for that period. The CPA General Assembly elects new Trustees on the advice of the Regions of the CPA for a three-year period. All Trustees are unpaid. The CPA Headquarters Secretariat organises induction sessions for new Trustees.

**Financial Strategy:** The Trustees agreed on the CPA financial strategy in South Africa in August 2013. Trustees have kept the strategy under review and in particular to ensure that it meets the wider strategic objectives of the CPA. The CPA Strategic Plan for 2023-2025 has further reinforced and informed the existing Financial Strategy.

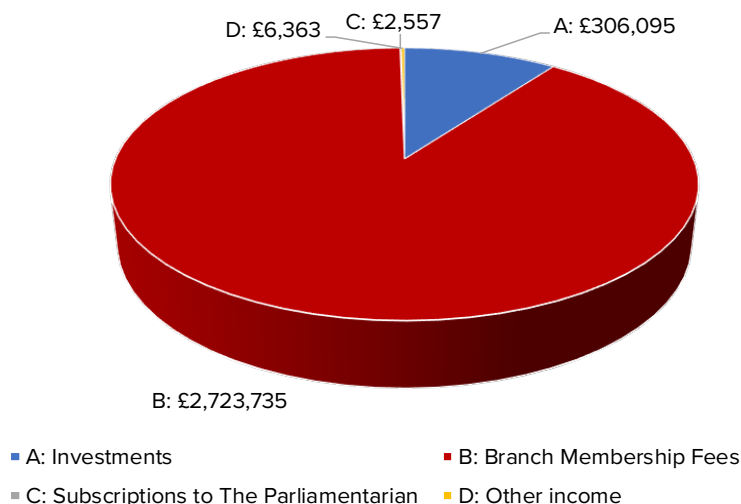
**Investment Policy:** The CPA has investments in two trust funds under the guidance and supervision of the funds' Trustees. Under the trust deeds, the funds' Trustees are mandated as the CPA Secretary-General, the Association's Treasurer and another member of the CPA who is not a member of the CPA Executive Committee. The purposes of these funds are to promote knowledge and education about the constitutional Legislatures within a parliamentary democratic framework, arrange study group meetings, seminars and conferences, and provide facilities for the exchange of visits between Members of CPA Branches.

The CPA Executive Committee approved this annual report at their virtual meeting on 8 May 2024 with the financial statements signed on behalf of the CPA Executive Committee by Hon. Ian Liddell-Grainger, MP, Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee and Stephen Twigg, CPA Secretary-General. An Independent Auditor's Report was conducted by Buzzacott LLP and presented to the Trustees of the CPA (CPA Executive Committee).

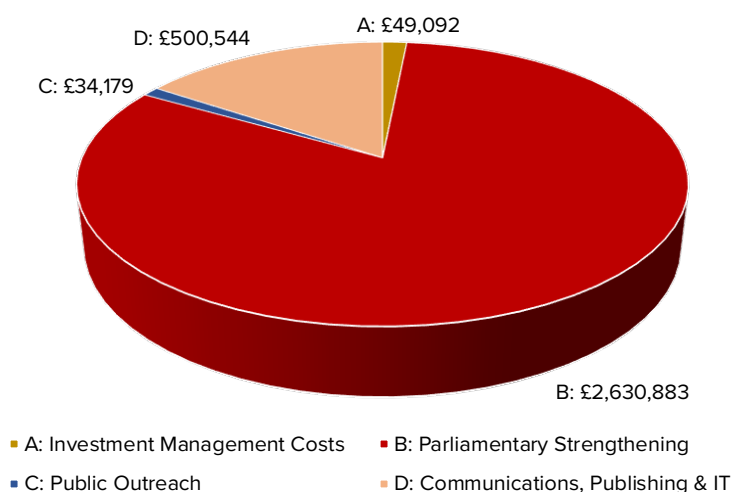




### 2023 Income



### 2023 Expenditure\*



A copy of the 2023 financial statement and accounts for the CPA Headquarters is available on the CPA website [www.cpahq.org](http://www.cpahq.org) or by request via email to [finance@cpahq.org](mailto:finance@cpahq.org).

## Professional Advisers

- **External Auditors** - Buzzacott LLP, 130 Wood Street, London, EC2V 6DL, United Kingdom E: [enquiries@buzzacott.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@buzzacott.co.uk)
- **Internal Auditors** - Sayer Vincent LLP, Invicta House, 108-114 Golden Lane, London EC1Y 0TL, United Kingdom
- **Bank** - National Westminster Bank plc, Victoria Branch, 169 Victoria Street, London SW1E 5NA, United Kingdom
- **Investment Managers** - Close Brothers Asset Management, 10 Exchange Square, Primrose Street, London, EC2AR 2BY, United Kingdom
- **Legal Advisers** - Bates Wells & Braithwaite London LLP, 10 Queen Street Place, London, EC4R 1BE, United Kingdom  
Russell Cooke LLP, 2 Putney Hill, London SW15 6AB

## Trustees of CPA Trust Funds

Hon. Shri Anurag Sharma, MP,  
Lok Sabha, Parliament of India  
CPA Treasurer  
(appointed August 2022)

Deputy Lyndon Trott  
Guernsey States Assembly  
Trustee  
(appointed August 2020)

Stephen Twigg  
CPA Secretary-General  
(appointed August 2020)



## APPENDIX: CPA OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN 2023

### Patron and Vice-Patron

Patron: Vacant

Vice-Patron (2023-2024): Vacant - awaiting nomination from New South Wales.

### Executive Committee Members

The following were Members of the CPA Executive Committee as at 31 December 2023:

#### Officers:

- **CPA President:** Hon. Ben Franklin, MLC, President of the Legislative Council, Parliament of New South Wales, 2023 - to date
- **CPA Vice-President:** Vacant, 2023 - to date
- **Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee:** Hon. Ian Liddell-Grainger, MP, United Kingdom 2022 - to date (*Acting from April 2021*)
- **CPA Vice-Chairperson:** Hon. Arthur Holder, Speaker of the House of Assembly of Barbados, 2023 - to date
- **Treasurer:** Shri Anurag Sharma, MP, Lok Sabha, India Union, 2022 - to date
- **Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Chairperson:** Hon. Dr Zainab Gimba, MP, Nigeria, 2022 - to date.
- **CPA Small Branches Chairperson:** Joy Burch, MLA, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Australian Capital Territory, 2022 - to date (*Acting from February 2021*)
- **Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPWD) Chairperson:** Hon. Laura Kanushu Opori, MP, Uganda, 2022 - to date

#### Regional Representatives:

##### CPA Africa Region

- Hon. Osei Kyei Mensah Bonsu, MP, Ghana, 2019 - to date\*
- Rt Hon. Dr Abass Bundu, MP, Speaker, Sierra Leone, 2019 - to date\*
- Hon. Solomon Lechesa Tsenoli, MP, Deputy Speaker, South Africa – 2022 – to date
- Hon. Raymond Nkhata, MP, Malawi, 2022 - to date
- 2 Vacant positions

##### CPA Asia Region

- Hon. Mahinda Yapa Abeywardana, MP, Speaker, Sri Lanka, 2019 - to date\*
- Hon. Kazi Nabil Ahmed, MP, Bangladesh 2022 - to date
- 1 Vacant position

##### CPA Australia Region

- Senator Hon. Sue Lines, Senate President, Australia, 2019 to date (term started by another Member)
- Hon. Mark Shelton, MP, Speaker, Tasmania, 2022 - to date
- Hon. Curtis Pitt, MP, Speaker, Queensland, 2023 - to date

##### CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Region

- Hon. Chris Elmore, MP, United Kingdom, 2019 - to date\* (term started by another Member)
- Hon. Stuart McMillan, MSP, Scotland, 2022 – to date
- Deputy Mary Le Hegarat Jersey, 2023 - to date

##### CPA Canada Region

- Hon. Terry Duguid, MP, Canada Federal, 2019 - to date\* (term started by another Member)
- Hon. Donna Skelly, MPP, Deputy Speaker, Ontario, 2022 - to date (term started by another Member)
- Hon. Raj Chouhan, MLA, Speaker, British Columbia, 2023 - to date

##### CPA Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic Region

- Hon. Gordon J. Burton, MHA, Speaker, Turks and Caicos, 2019 - to date\* (term started by another Member)
- Hon. Arthur Holder, Speaker, Barbados, 2022 – to date\*
- Senator Hon. Dr Dessima D. Williams, President of the Senate, Grenada, 2023 - to date

##### CPA India Region

- Hon. Shri Uday Pratap Singh, MP, Lok Sabha, Parliament of India, India Union, 2019 - to date\* (term started by another Member)
- Smt. Ritu Khanduri Bhushan, MLA, Speaker, Uttarakhand, 2022 - to date
- Shri Biswajit Daimary, MLA, Speaker, Assam, 2023 – to date

##### CPA Pacific Region

- Rt Hon. Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu, MP, Speaker, Fiji, 2019 - to date\* (term started by another Member)
- Hon. Carmel Sepuloni, MP, New Zealand, 2022 – to date (term started by another Member)
- Hon. Dulcie Tei, MP Tonga, 2023 - to date

##### CPA South-East Asia Region

- Hon. Dr Dato' Noraini Ahmad, MP, Malaysia, 2019 - to date\* (term started by another Member)
- Hon. Dato' Law Choo Kiang, MLA, Speaker, Penang, 2022 - to date
- Hon. Mohd Fahmi Aliman, MP, Singapore, 2023 – to date

*\* The names of the Members serving on the CPA Executive Committee are listed as at 31 December 2023. Some Members' terms were extended as no CPA General Assembly was held in 2018, 2020 and 2021.*





## Former Officers and Former Members of the Executive Committee (Regional Representatives) during 2023

The following includes those who served during the year, but their term had ended when the 2023 Annual Report was approved:

- **Vice-Patron (2023):** His Excellency Nana Akufo-Addo, The President of Ghana.
- **CPA President (2022-2023):** Rt Hon. Alban Bagbin, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana
- **CPA Vice-President (2023):** Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox, MLC, President of the New South Wales Legislative Council

### CPA Africa Region

- Hon. Dr Makali Mulu, MP, Kenya (2017-2023)
- Rt Hon. Sephiri Enoch Motanyane, MP, Speaker, Lesotho (2016-2023)

### CPA Asia Region

- Hon. Dr Lal Chand Ukrani, MPA, Sindh (2017-2023)

### CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Region

- Hon. Leona Roberts, MLA, Falkland Islands (2017-2023)

### CPA Canada Region

- Hon. Randy Weekes, MLA, Speaker, Saskatchewan (2017-2023)
- Hon. Ted Arnott, MPP, Speaker, Ontario (2022-2023)

### CPA Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic Region

- Hon. Claudius J. Francis, MP, Speaker, Saint Lucia (2019-2023)

### CPA India Region

- Shri Premchand Aggarwal, MLA, Speaker, Uttarakhand (2017-2023)

### CPA Pacific Region

- Hon. Therese Kaetavara, MHR, Deputy Speaker, Bougainville (2017-2023)
- Hon. Gerry Brownlee, MP, New Zealand (2022-2023)

### CPA South-East Asia Region

- Hon. Mr Lim Biow Chuan, MP, Deputy Speaker, Singapore (2017-2023)



Members of the CPA Executive Committee following their meeting in Accra, Ghana, ahead of the 66<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in October 2023.



# CPA'S MISSION STATEMENT

To promote knowledge of the constitutional, legislative, economic, social and cultural aspects of parliamentary democracy, with particular reference to the countries of the Commonwealth.

## CPA'S VISION

That the work of the CPA enables:

- Commonwealth Parliamentarians and officials to uphold and strengthen parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, sustainable development and human rights.
- Mutual learning, dialogue, cooperation and networking across the Commonwealth to build strong, powerful and effective parliamentary institutions able to respond and adapt to the challenges of today and tomorrow.
- Partnerships with others to maximise our impact in line with the shared values which underpin the CPA's mission.

## CPA'S VALUES

The CPA's organisational values are:

- The CPA promotes democracy, good governance and human rights throughout the Commonwealth.
- We champion respect, equality, diversity, accountability, transparency and best practice.





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organisations including the Commonwealth Secretariat.

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# COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Annual Report for January to December 2023 provides an overview of the activity of the CPA and highlights the progress of this activity against the CPA Strategic Plan. This report focuses on the programme strands and activities of the CPA Headquarters Secretariat.

In 2023, the CPA Headquarters Secretariat continued to deliver CPA programmes, activities and seminars. This report includes the three CPA networks – Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP); CPA Small Branches; and Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) as well as parliamentary strengthening, partnership work and Communications activities.

The CPA's Annual Report 2023 is composed of reports, images and analysis of the CPA's activities and work strands throughout the year. For any enquiries please contact [hq.sec@cpahq.org](mailto:hq.sec@cpahq.org).

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