



Parliament of Australia

**Report of the Parliamentary Delegation
to the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
Conference, Uganda and to Qatar**

22 September to 1 October 2019

© Commonwealth of Australia 2019
978-1-76092-047-0 Printed version
978-1-76092-048-7 PDF version

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Australia License.



The details of this licence are available on the Creative Commons website:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/au/>.

Members of the Delegation

Leader of the Delegation

Senator the Hon Scott Ryan
President of the Senate
Senator for Victoria

Deputy Leader of the Delegation and Leader of Qatar bilateral visit

Senator Catryna Bilyk
Senator for Tasmania

Ms Sharon Claydon MP

Member for Newcastle

Senator Samantha McMahon

Senator for the Northern Territory

Officials:

Mr Peter Banson
Delegation Secretary

Mr Jerome Brown
CPA Regional Secretary

Introduction

From 22 September to 1 October 2019, an Australian parliamentary delegation travelled to Uganda to attend the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference and to Qatar to conduct a bilateral visit. The delegation comprised three Senators and one Member of the House of Representatives, listed at p.iii.

This report of the delegation is in two parts – the first part reports on the delegation’s attendance, led by the President of the Senate, at the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference in Kampala, Uganda, and the second part discusses the activities of the delegation, led by Senator Catryna Bilyk, in Doha, Qatar. The Concluding Statement of the CPA Conference is at Appendix A, and the delegation’s program in Qatar is at Appendix B.

Acknowledgements

The delegation wishes to record its appreciation of the work that went into preparing for the visit, including the briefing material provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Parliamentary Library. The delegation also wishes to thank the staff of the International and Parliamentary Relations Office for their administrative assistance prior to departure.

The delegation wishes to record its appreciation of the work of the many staff of the Ugandan Parliament who contributed to the successful organisation of the CPA conference.

The delegation would also like to thank Australia’s diplomatic mission in Qatar, in particular HE Mr Jonathan Muir, Australian Ambassador to Qatar, and Ms Erin Tunks, Head of the Political and Economic Section, for the excellent support and hospitality provided during the period of the delegation’s visit. Finally, the delegation wishes to pay tribute to the work of Peter Banson, the Delegation Secretary, and Jerome Brown, the CPA Regional Secretary – their expert advice, good humour and steadfast support on the ground was invaluable.



The General Assembly: Jerome Brown (Regional Secretary), Hon John Ajaka MLC, Senator the Hon Scott Ryan, Hon Russell Wortley MLC, and Mr Sam Duluk MP

64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference

The 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference (CPC) was held in Kampala, Uganda from 22 to 29 September 2019. The conference was hosted by the Parliament of Uganda and was chaired by the Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda and President of the CPA (2018-2019).

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is a voluntary association of Commonwealth parliamentarians. The aims of the CPA are to promote knowledge and understanding about parliamentary democracy, especially good governance, transparency and accountability and respect for the rule of law, and individual rights and freedoms, irrespective of gender, race, religion or culture.

The CPA is composed of branches formed in parliaments and legislatures in Commonwealth countries which subscribe to parliamentary democracy. There are over 180 branches at national, state, provincial and territory levels of all 53 Commonwealth countries, representing approximately 17,000 members. Branches are grouped geographically into nine regions: Africa, Asia, Australia, British Islands and Mediterranean, Canada, Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic, Pacific, and South East Asia.

Over 500 delegates, observers and officials from member parliaments attended the 64th CPC. The Commonwealth of Australia Branch of the CPA was represented by a parliamentary delegation comprising Senator the Hon Scott Ryan, President of the Senate, Senator Catryna Bilyk,

Senator Samantha McMahon and Ms Sharon Claydon MP. In addition, a number of delegates attended from Australian State and Territory parliaments.

This CPC was the first attended by a delegation from the Commonwealth of Australia Branch since it rejoined the CPA in 2018. The Branch had withdrawn from the CPA in 2012, owing to concerns over governance arrangements and financial accountability. Noting progress made to address these concerns, the Branch formally rejoined the CPA with effect from 1 January 2018.

The theme of the 2019 conference was 'Adaptation, engagement and evolution of parliaments in a rapidly changing Commonwealth'.

The conference encompassed a number of components and associated activities. These were:

- meetings of regional groups of the CPA
- the 37th Small Branches Conference of members from small legislatures
- meetings of the Executive Committee of the CPA
- a plenary session and ten workshops
- the annual General Assembly of the CPA
- meetings of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians
- the 55th General Meeting of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table, comprising parliamentary officials.

Business of the Conference

Opening ceremony and speeches

The official opening of the conference took place on 26 September 2019.

The guest of honour at the opening, His Excellency Yoweri K. Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda and Vice-Patron of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), addressed the conference and read a goodwill message from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Patron of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Head of the Commonwealth.

The Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda and CPA President (2018-2019), and Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon and Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee, also made some remarks.

Plenary and workshop sessions

The main business part of the conference comprised eight workshops and a plenary session covering the following topics:

- Workshop A: Climate change: achievements, challenges and efficacy of parliament interventions
- Workshop B: Innovation in parliament: the impact of science and technology on how parliament works today
- Workshop C: The role of parliament in facilitating persons with disabilities as electors, candidates and legislators
- Workshop D: Strategies to deal with youth unemployment
- Workshop E: Combatting rapid urbanization and rural decline – a challenge for the Commonwealth
- Workshop F: Innovation in parliament – the possible effects of the United Kingdom ‘Brexit’ on small branches
- Workshop G: Fostering a culture of respect, fairness and dignity – sexual harassment has no place in legislatures
- Workshop H: The role of parliament in the doctrine of separation of powers – enhancing transparency and accountability
- Workshop I: Post legislative scrutiny: a dimension of the oversight function of parliament – how is this represented within different political systems
- Workshop J: How the updated CPA Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures has been used to strengthen the capacity of CPA legislatures
- Plenary session: Maintaining stability, evolution, dynamics and challenges of terrorism in Eastern Africa

Members of the delegation attended plenary and workshop sessions and participated in discussions. Ms Sharon Claydon MP was a speaker and panelist in workshop G. A summary report of the workshops and final plenary session is at Appendix A.

General Assembly

The 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference included the annual General Assembly of the Association, which was held on 28 September. In addition to the usual items of business

including consideration and adoption of the Association's annual report, financial statements and budget estimates, and the election of office bearers, the General Assembly considered an increase to membership fees, readmission of the Gambia Branch, venues for future CPCs and the recruitment/reappointment of the CPA Secretary General.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the CPA met on 24 and 25 September. The Australian region was represented at these meetings by the Hon John Ajaka MLC (representing the NSW CPA Branch), the Hon Russell Wortley MLC (representing the SA CPA Branch), Senator the Hon Scott Ryan (alternate for the Hon Bruce Atkinson MLC, Victorian CPA Branch).

A meeting of the new CPA Executive Committee was held following the General Assembly, during which the

Hon John Ajaka, MLC, President of the Legislative Council of NSW, was confirmed by Members of the Executive Committee to the position of Vice-Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee. The position of Vice-Chairperson is for a term of one year and the holder is also a Member of the CPA Coordinating Committee.

The President of the Senate, Senator the Hon Scott Ryan, is a member of the new CPA Executive Committee.

Small Branches Conference

The 37th Small Branches Conference was held on 23 and 24 September. It was opened by the Hon Angelo Farrugia MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta and outgoing Small Branches Chairperson. Members discussed strategies to meet the unique developmental needs of small legislatures through key activities that will build parliamentary capacity for CPA Small Branches and create greater



Australian delegates at the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Meeting: Senator Catryna Bilyk, Ms Michelle O'Byrne MP (Tas), and Ms Sharon Claydon MP

opportunities for the sharing of knowledge, parliamentary strengthening and cooperation.

Australian region delegates Mr Mark Parton MLA, Ms Michelle O’Byrne MP and Ms Robyn Lambley MLA, representing branches in the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, respectively, attended the conference. A summary report of the conference proceedings is at Appendix A.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Meeting

Senators Bilyk and McMahon, and Ms Sharon Claydon MP (Commonwealth), Ms Michelle O’Byrne MP (Tasmania), Ms Robyn Lambley MLA (Northern Territory), Ms Julia Finn (NSW), Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA (ACT) and Ms Sonya Kilkenny MP (Victoria) attended the meeting of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, which took place during the conference. The theme for the meeting was ‘CWP at 30 years: Achievements and Unfinished Business – Looking forward to the next 30 years’ in recognition of the CWP’s 30th anniversary in 2019. A summary report of the meeting is at Appendix A. The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee met on 23 September. Ms Michelle O’Byrne MP, as outgoing Vice Chair of CWP and representing the Tasmanian branch, represented the Australian Region on the Steering Committee.

Meeting of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments

The 55th meeting of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table was held on 26 and

27 September, concurrently with sessions of the conference. The delegation secretary, Mr Peter Banson, gave a presentation on the new electronic system for recording votes during divisions in the Australian House of Representatives.

The society aims to assist members to exercise their professional duties in their respective legislatures through the exchange of information, views and experience.

Conclusion

The CPC was held amid circumstances which caused some complications, not least of which was the decision by the Secretary General not to attend the CPC, amid ongoing uncertainty around his reappointment or the recruitment of a new Secretary General.

The delegation was concerned at times by the way the business of the General Assembly was dealt with in terms of proper procedure, and by the interference of observers in proceedings. However, the various other meetings and workshops of the Conference which delegates attended were largely well managed and effective, and delegates felt that they were able to make useful contributions to debates and discussions.

The Australian delegation again extends its thanks to the Members of the Ugandan Parliament, and the parliamentary staff who provided such enthusiastic assistance in hosting the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

Bilateral visit to Qatar

Introduction to Qatar

The State of Qatar is ruled as a hereditary Emirate by the Al Thani family, with Emir HH Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani as Head of State. The executive branch of the government comprises a Council of Ministers, headed by Prime Minister HE Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, and a unicameral Advisory Council called the Majlis al-Shura (the Shura Council), which has 45 seats.

The capital of Qatar is Doha, and its official language is Arabic. Qatar occupies approximately 11,600 square kilometres on the northeast coast of the Arabian Peninsula, and has a population of 2.7 million (2018), of which approximately 90 per cent are foreign migrant workers. Its economy is supported by very large oil and natural gas reserves, which have made Qatar's citizens the world's richest per capita since 2007.

The bilateral relationship

The relationship between Australia and Qatar is friendly and growing, with numerous shared interests and opportunities for cooperation. Qatar opened an Embassy in Canberra in 2012, and Australia opened its Embassy in Doha in 2016.

The goods and services trade between Australia and Qatar is deepening, and totalled \$2 billion in 2018. The main exports from Australia are sheep meat, beef, live animals, alumina, fruit and vegetables, wheat and machinery parts, and main imports from Qatar are petroleum products and fertilisers. 6,700 Qataris visited Australia in 2018, and 34,000 Australians visited Qatar in 2017, up from 14,000 in 2014 due to improved aviation links with several Australian cities.

Australia and Qatar also share interests in the energy sector, being the world's two largest exporters of natural gas.



The Delegation with HE Mr Jonathan Muir, Australian Ambassador to Qatar, at the Australian Embassy in Doha

Trade and the blockade

Qatar's economy is highly dependent on its oil and natural gas reserves, which provide more than 70% of government revenues. Because these reserves account for over half of Qatar's GDP, and output at current rates is unlikely to be sustainable beyond the medium term, its government has been making efforts to diversify the economy under its National Vision 2030, involving key infrastructure spending in sectors such as transport, education, sports, healthcare, telecommunications and hospitality.

In June 2017, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt, and several other countries ceased diplomatic relations with Qatar and banned Qatari airplanes and ships from utilising their airspace and sea routes. Saudi Arabia, the leader of the coalition, blocked Qatar's only land crossing.

The coalition cited Qatar's alleged support for terrorism as the main reason for their actions, and claimed that Qatar was too close to Iran.

The delegation was told that prior to this blockade, more than half of Qatar's imports, particularly its food supplies, are estimated to have come through the four main blockading countries. The government had to quickly arrange new methods of conducting trade, including new supply routes. After two years of the blockade, Qatar has become more self-reliant, producing much more of its own fruit and vegetables, and establishing factories which are producing essentials such as medicines. It was expressed during several meetings that a positive outcome of the blockade has been the opportunity for Qatar to pursue its ambitious and

exciting new vision. As part of these efforts, Qatar's government has been encouraging overseas investment through mechanisms including economic reforms related to labour laws, special economic zones, privatisation and higher foreign ownership limits.

Canvassing the growing relationship between Australia and Qatar, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Members of the Shura Council noted that there is scope for trade between our two countries to increase. The delegation was told that Qatar is developing a food security plan, within which it was hoped that Australia would play a major part, given its stability in comparison with other trading partners. Members of the Shura Council also requested that consideration be given to re-establishing an Australia-Qatar Parliamentary Friendship Group.

Labour reform

Qatar relies heavily on migrant labour to support its development, with a migrant labour force of over two million out of a total population of 2.7 million. Most of the migrant workers come from the Philippines, Nepal, India and Bangladesh, and are subject to an employee sponsorship system known as 'kafala', which gives employers control over many aspects of workers' lives, including the power to hold their passports and stop them changing jobs or leaving the country.

When Qatar was selected to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, attention was drawn to Qatar's labour laws and the treatment of migrant workers. In response, the Qatari Government committed to labour reforms and it has been working with organisations

including Amnesty International and the International Labour Organization (ILO), to address the issues and strengthen the rights of its migrant workers.

The delegation met with the ILO Project Office in Doha, which was established in April 2018, and has been working with the Qatari authorities to support the labour reform agenda through a three-year cooperation program.

The delegation was told that new legislation, to enter into force by January 2020, will allow migrant workers to freely change jobs and leave the country without the approval of their employers, effectively ending the kafala system. In what was described as a first for the Gulf region, Qatar has also endorsed a new law establishing a non-discriminatory minimum wage, to apply to all nationalities and all sectors of the labour market.

The ILO also noted that while there are no trade unions in Qatar, 'joint committees' are being set up in some companies, with membership elected by workers, a mechanism which is soon to be mandatory.

The delegation also met with the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy – 2022 World Cup, which explained that it has a strong focus on workers' rights, including putting a stop to the charging of illegal fees to bring workers to Qatar in a form of bonded labour. The Committee has a workers' welfare team, and a workers' welfare forum as a mechanism for raising concerns directly with employers. It has also developed a set of Workers' Welfare Standards, aligned with universally accepted principles of human rights, aimed at ensuring all workers contributing to the delivery of projects be treated with respect and dignity.

Education

The education system in Qatar is jointly directed and controlled by the Supreme Education Council and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

Primary schooling is compulsory and is free in public schools. There are over 300 international schools in Qatar, representing a diverse range of international curriculums. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has a strategic plan for 2017-2022, which aims to develop a world class educational system that offers equal access to quality education and training, and a diverse range of learning opportunities.

The delegation met with Georgetown University and the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development during its visit.

Georgetown University is one of six American universities with branches in Doha, each of which has brought particular schools to meet demand, focusing on key areas of need for Qatar rather than offering their full complement of courses. The main degree offered by Georgetown University in Doha is Foreign Service, described as identical to the degree the university offers in the United States, and the delegation was told that there is also an increasing focus on continuing education.

The Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) was founded in 1995 and is a non-profit organisation, privately funded and supported by the Government. QF is responsible for Qatar's efforts to establish itself as a leader in education, science, and cultural development.

QF told the delegation that it carries out its mission through three strategic

pillars: education, research, and community development. Its education pillar brings international universities to Qatar through targeted collaborations to help create an education sector focused on key areas of need to help achieve its aim of supporting Qatar on its journey from a carbon economy to a knowledge economy by unlocking human potential. Its research pillar develops Qatar's technological capacity by developing new technologies which can be commercialised. QF's community development pillar provides a platform to engage communities and help foster a progressive society while also enhancing cultural life, through outreach programs that aim to safeguard and celebrate Qatar's heritage.

The delegation visited Education City, QF's flagship campus occupying more than 12 square kilometres and hosting

campuses of nine international educational institutes, as well as a Qatari university. QF noted that it had space for more international campuses, and had explored collaborations with Australian universities, but needs to give careful consideration to Qatar's needs, cognisant of the programs already being offered by existing campuses.

Conclusion

Members of the delegation were very pleased to participate in this bilateral visit to Qatar, and to have the opportunity to contribute to the growing relationship that Australia has with Qatar.

The delegation held fruitful discussions through the various engagements during its program, and concluded the visit with a much greater understanding



The Delegation and the Australian Ambassador with Members of the Shura Council of the State of Qatar

of the many opportunities that exist and the particular challenges being faced by Qatar and, importantly, the nature of Australia's relationship with Qatar and ways in which that relationship could be enhanced and consolidated.

Parliamentary delegations such as this provide a strong bipartisan mechanism to engage with other countries and support the excellent work being done by Australia's diplomatic missions and of all Australians in the region.

Senator the Hon Scott Ryan
President of the Senate
Delegation Leader

Senator Catryna Bilyk
Delegation Leader for bilateral visit
to Qatar

December 2019

64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference Kampala, Uganda 22 to 29 September 2019

Conference Concluding Statement

Commonwealth Parliamentarians attending the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference and associated meetings recognised the Commonwealth's commitment to democracy and met under the conference theme of *'Adaption, engagement, and evolution of Parliaments in a rapidly changing Commonwealth'*.

The conference, hosted by the CPA Uganda Branch and Parliament of Uganda from 22 to 29 September 2019 in Kampala, Uganda was attended by over 500 Parliamentarians and Parliamentary Clerks representing Parliaments and Legislatures from across the Commonwealth.

The conference was hosted by the CPA President (2018-2019), Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda. The conference also included the 37th CPA Small Branches Conference and the sixth triennial Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference.

This concluding statement contains

- the main outcomes of the conference,
- a summary of the workshop discussions, and
- the recommendations that were either endorsed or noted by the Members in attendance.

Alongside the substantive conference workshops and the CPA governance meetings (64th General Assembly and Executive Committee meetings), the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference also included a number of additional events.

The unique conference brings together Speakers, Members of Parliament and Parliamentary staff representing the nine regions of the CPA – Africa; Asia; Australia; British Islands and Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic; India; Pacific; and South East Asia. The CPA reaches all 53 countries of the Commonwealth as well as national, state, provincial and territorial Parliaments and Legislatures bringing together over 180 CPA Branches of the Association.

64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference - Opening Addresses

The Chief Guest at the opening of the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference was the President of the Republic of Uganda and Vice-Patron of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), His Excellency Yoweri K. Museveni who urged Commonwealth Parliamentarians to uphold democratic principles and the values of the Commonwealth. The President of Uganda spoke of the Commonwealth having great potential through its common language and opportunities for cooperation on trade, culture and governance. The President of Uganda said that one of the Commonwealth's greatest achievements are its democratic institutions and that the huge population of the Commonwealth – 2.4 billion people – offers great opportunities to work together on trade, peace and democracy.

The President of Uganda also read the goodwill message to the conference from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Patron of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Head of the Commonwealth. Since 1989, the Vice-Patron of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association has traditionally been the Head of State or Government of the CPA Branch hosting the annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

The CPA President (2018-2019), Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda said at the opening ceremony: *“The CPA annual conference was last in Uganda in 1967 when the CPA Uganda Branch hosted the 13th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. The fact that it has taken 52 years to host this conference again might reflect the struggles Uganda’s fledgling democracy faced in the past. But those dark days are long behind us. We have since evolved to become one of the reliable members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), internationally and regionally. I want to believe this is why we have been trusted to host this landmark event again. We are delighted to be hosting the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in 2019 and to welcome Parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth. Parliamentarians are the bridge between the people and the government.”*

The Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon said: *“The CPA connects, develops, promotes and supports Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and the implementation of the enduring values of the Commonwealth. CPA activities focus on the Commonwealth’s commitment to its fundamental political values, including: just and honest government, the alleviation of poverty, fundamental human rights, international peace and order, global economic development, the rule of law, equal rights and representation for all citizens of both genders,*

the separation of powers among the three branches of government and the right to participate in free and democratic political processes.”

Mr Jarvis Matiya, Acting CPA Secretary-General for the 64th CPC said at the opening ceremony of the conference: *“The CPA is a force for good on democracy, good governance and development. It represents and connects Commonwealth Parliaments, national and provincial, unitary, federal and territorial, large and small. It enables its Members to exchange views and deepen their understanding of their roles and responsibilities as the people’s representatives.”*

The vote of thanks on behalf of Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff at the 64th CPC was given by the CPA Africa Region Chairperson, Rt Hon. Justin B. Muturi, MP, Speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya.

64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference: CPA Gambia Branch

It is announced that the National Assembly of The Gambia has rejoined the membership of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). The 64th CPA General Assembly, meeting in Kampala, Uganda at the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, approved the application from the National Assembly of The Gambia to reconstitute the Gambia Branch of the CPA following their application to re-join.

The Deputy Speaker of the House of the National Assembly of The Gambia, Hon. Momodou Lamin K. Sanneh attended the 64th CPA General Assembly as an observer and said in a statement to delegates: *“We are indeed very grateful to be invited to the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference after five years of absence. In 2018, The Gambia was readmitted to the Commonwealth. This paved the way for The Gambia to seek readmission to the various Commonwealth associations including the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Following the change of government in 2016, the CPA UK Branch has been instrumental in our parliamentary reforms. The CPA Gambia Branch is indeed happy to be welcomed back to the CPA. We want to thank all CPA member Branches, especially the CPA Executive Committee and the CPA President, Hon. Speaker of Uganda for giving due consideration to our application for readmission to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. We are back to where we belong, and we are ready to contribute to the strengthening of the core values of the CPA.”*

Future CPA Governance Meetings

During the 64th General Assembly held at the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Uganda, the following future CPA governance meetings and conferences were discussed:

- **2020 Mid-Year CPA Executive Committee Meeting** – to be hosted by the CPA Assam Branch and the Assam State Legislature, India in April/May 2020 (final dates to be confirmed).
- **65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC)** – to be hosted by the CPA Canada Region in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada from 10 to 18 January 2021.
- **2021 Mid-Year CPA Executive Committee Meeting** – an offer was received from the CPA Gibraltar Branch and Parliament of Gibraltar to host the 2021 Mid-Year Meeting.
- **66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC)** – discussions at the 64th CPC focused on the possible hosting of the 66th CPC by the CPA Ghana Branch and Parliament of Ghana with further discussions planned.

64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference: CPA Officer Elections

Several elections took place at the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference:

CPA Treasurer: During the 64th CPA General Assembly which took place at the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Uganda, Members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) endorsed the appointment of **Hon. Datuk Seri Shamsul Iskandar Mohd Akin, MP (Malaysia)** as the new CPA Treasurer. The Treasurer, who is a Member of the Association nominated by the Executive Committee, is appointed for three years by the General Assembly and works with the CPA Secretary-General and the CPA Headquarters Secretariat to monitor the finances of the Association. The CPA Treasurer also joins the Trustees board of the Association.

CPA Vice-Chairperson: The 64th CPA General Assembly was followed by a meeting of the new CPA Executive Committee during which **Hon. John Ajaka, MLC, President of the Legislative Council of New South Wales** was confirmed by Members of the Executive Committee to the position of Vice-Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee. The position of Vice-Chairperson is for a term of one year and the holder is also a Member of the CPA Co-ordinating Committee.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Chairperson: The newly elected Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), **Hon. Shandana Gulzar Khan, MNA of the National Assembly of Pakistan** has pledged to renew the effort to increase women's representation and political participation in Parliaments across the Commonwealth. The new Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians was elected for a three-year term at the CWP Business Meeting held at the sixth triennial conference of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), that took place in Kampala, Uganda as part of the wider 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

CPA Small Branches Chairperson: The newly elected Chairperson of the CPA Small Branches, **Hon. Niki Rattle, Speaker of the Parliament of the Cook Islands** pledged that the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) would have a strengthened and renewed focus on assisting Small Branches and their Parliaments and Legislatures. The Members of the CPA attending the 37th CPA Small Branches Conference elected the Speaker of the Parliament of the Cook Islands as the new Chairperson of CPA Small Branches. The role of Chairperson of CPA Small Branches is an Officer role within the CPA's governance structure and the new incumbent will sit on the CPA International Executive Committee to bring a voice for Small Branches to the governing body of the CPA.

64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference: CPA launches new handbook with British Red Cross on International Humanitarian Law for Commonwealth Parliamentarians

The CPA Small Branches Chairperson launched a new online digital resource, the **Handbook on International Humanitarian Law for Commonwealth Parliamentarians** to complement the CPA's parliamentary strengthening work and to enhance the performance of Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff across the Commonwealth. The CPA Small Branches Chairperson, Hon. Angelo Farrugia, Speaker of the Parliament of Malta launched the new publication at the CPA Executive Committee, held in Kampala ahead of the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference: CPA launches new online professional development course for parliamentary staff with leading Commonwealth universities

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) launched a new online professional development course for parliamentary staff that has been developed and will be delivered in collaboration with the School of Continuing Studies at McGill University, Canada and the International School for Government at King's College, London. The CPA launched the new online course at a reception for Parliamentary Clerks and officials in the margins of the 64th CPC in Kampala, Uganda. The launch of the new online professional development course for parliamentary staff further develop the aims of the CPA in advancing parliamentary democracy by enhancing knowledge and understanding of democratic governance. The CPA is especially honoured to be working alongside two prestigious Commonwealth universities to provide this online programme for parliamentary staff within the CPA network.

64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference: Commonwealth CPA Lecture

The role of Commonwealth Parliamentarians in maintaining security and stability in society in Eastern Africa was highlighted at the second CPA Africa Region Commonwealth Lecture which took place at the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Kampala, Uganda. Hon. Dr Crispus Kiyonga highlighted the significant role that Commonwealth Parliamentarians can play in facing the challenges of terrorism with a CPA Lecture titled: *'Maintaining Stability, Evolution, Dynamics and Challenges of Terrorism in Eastern Africa'*. Dr Crispus Kiyonga is a Ugandan physician, politician and diplomat, who has previously served as Uganda's Ambassador to China and as the Minister of Defence in the Government of Uganda (2006 to 2016).

During the CPA Lecture, Dr Kiyonga provided a working definition of terrorism, its geography and impact in the Eastern Africa Region as well as a profile of some terrorist groups operating within the region. Dr Kiyonga spoke about political violence and its objective of instilling fear in places where governance is often weak. The lecture examined the effects of terrorism which include threats to state survival, mass loss of life and impediments to economic development.

The CPA Lecture was chaired by Rt Hon. Jacob L'Okori Oulanyah, MP, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda and the discussion leaders, Kasaija Philip Apuuli, Associate Professor at Makerere University in Uganda and Hon. Simon Mulongo, Deputy Head of the Africa Union Mission in Somalia, provided a

wide range of policy proposals and interventions that can mitigate the threat of terrorism within Eastern Africa. Participants agreed that Parliaments need to occupy a more central role in counter-terrorism strategy.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Lecture Series offers CPA Members a unique opportunity to hear from distinguished Parliamentarians and experts in the field, who have made an outstanding contribution to their nation's democracy and to the institution of Parliament. Collectively, this series of lectures will contribute not only to the CPA's continuing dialogue within its membership, but also to reach out beyond to other stakeholders such as members of the international community, the diplomatic corps, civil society and the wider public.

64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference – Workshops:

Main conference theme: 'Adaption, engagement, and evolution of Parliaments in a rapidly changing Commonwealth' (nominated by CPA New Zealand Branch)

The ten main conference workshops and their recommendations were as follows:

Workshop A: Climate Change: Achievements, Challenges and Efficacy of Parliamentary Interventions (Host Branch Uganda-nominated Topic)

This session focused on the impacts of climate change and the interventions that Commonwealth Parliaments are employing to address them. Legislatures are key stakeholders in this issue and should leverage their mandate to budget, appropriate, enact legislation and give oversight to the policy implementations required for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The workshop discussants noted that the impacts of climate change cut across all sectors and responses should therefore not be a reserve of the Ministries responsible for the environment. All sectors should endeavour to mainstream climate actions into their policies, plans and budgets so as to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Legislatures emphasised the need to allocate resources, monitor and evaluate actions, adopt sustainable methods for development, require a certificate confirming responsiveness to climate change and the creation of a national climate fund. National funding mechanisms would then trigger funding from the international community. The call to climate action should be gender responsive and involve all players including the private sector.

The following recommendations were proposed but were not explicitly debated in the workshop:

- **Climate change should be mainstreamed in all the Ministries' plans with Parliament requiring a certificate of compliance before budgets are approved.**
- **The role of Parliamentarians in ensuring cohesive law-making and budgetary oversight on climate-related policy within the context of the SDGs and national development.**
- **All stakeholders' efforts should ensure the responsiveness of government to climate change for a climate resilient economy and society.**
- **Promote gender and climate change responsive policies and strategies. Establish parliamentary fora to network with non-state actors. Draft a climate change law and establish a Parliamentary Committee.**
- **Establish a national climate fund to solve the challenge of financing climate actions and to spur the provision, mobilisation and deployment of climate finance.**
- **Commonwealth jurisdictions should launch the 64th CPC Forest Project under the campaign 'Plant a CPC Forest'**

Workshop B: Innovation in Parliament: the impact of science and technology on how Parliament works today.

This workshop focused on how ICT can be integrated in Parliaments as an enabler and tool in the promotion of openness, transparency and parliamentary outreach. This was through sharing of country specific examples and experiences in the use of ICT in Parliament. Delegates observed that technological engagement increases participation by citizens in the work of Parliament. Therefore, CPA Branches are increasingly adapting new technologies. Various information tools used in selected Parliaments to engage stakeholders were shared including: Hansard, websites, television, radio, special applications, and social media platforms among others.

Emphasis was made on the need for Parliaments to avail accurate and timely information to the public so as to deal with 'fake' news concerning parliamentary business. This may require regulations on the use of social media in relation to Parliament. Benefits associated with use of ICT in Parliament included: improved efficiency and reduced costs as Parliaments go 'paperless'. However, a number of challenges associated with embracing the use of ICT included: public service policies and knowledge gaps among others,

were noted. In addition, increased use of technology is associated with risks such as demeaning ethical values and loss of jobs. Despite the risks, Parliaments must appreciate the changing world of ICT and its role in enhancing their functions.

The following two recommendations at the workshop were **endorsed** as follows:

- **Parliaments should employ ICT to connect with citizens in a more direct and meaningful way, strengthening transparency, accessibility and accountability. Adopting technology promotes political engagement and builds more effective, inclusive and responsive institutions.**
- **Parliaments must take steps to integrate ICT into their operations, to improve efficiency and communication and reach the population via various technological platforms, in an effort to deepen democracy.**

The following recommendation was **noted** as follows (due to associated risks):

- **Expanding access to Hansard through social media engagement can lead to greater awareness of, and interest in parliamentary process and decision making.**

Workshop C: The role of Parliament in facilitating persons with disabilities as electors, candidates and legislators (*nominated by CPA Jamaica Branch*)

The workshop focused on the role of Parliament in facilitating PWDs as electors, candidates and legislators. Despite constituting approximately 15% of the world's population, PWDs continue to be disproportionately represented in governance and at all levels of decision making. Inclusive and representative Parliaments are crucial to ensuring a healthy and fair democracy.

The United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is a fundamental instrument in ensuring PWDs participate in political process. Article 29 states: *“Parties shall guarantee to PWDs political rights and the opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others, and shall undertake to ensure that PWDs can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others, directly or through freely chosen representatives, including the right and opportunity for PWDs to vote and be elected.”*

Parliaments through their roles of legislation, oversight and representation should ensure effective and full participation of PWDs in public functions at all levels of governance.

The workshop **endorsed** the following six recommendations:

- **Legislatures implement a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) following consultation with stakeholders, including removing barriers for legislators with disability to effectively perform their duties;**
- **Parliament must enact laws to eliminate all forms of discrimination against PWDs seeking political offices, besides developing suitable access and other physical infrastructure in Legislatures;**
- **Parliaments should ensure ratification of CRPD and seek to adopt CRPD's Optional Protocol to promote transparency and accountability in upholding rights of PWDs;**
- **Parliament plays a more proactive role in ensuring that the ratification of the CRPD by the State is translated into tangible outcomes;**
- **Parliaments should promote a legislative agenda that ensures all concerned are aware of and incorporate, the rights of citizens living with disabilities;**
- **The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) should form a disability network fully supported by the Association.**

Workshop D (Youth Related Topic): Youth Roundtable – Strategies to deal with Youth Unemployment *(nominated by CPA Punjab Branch, Pakistan)*

This workshop was chaired by the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda and featured youth participants from a wide range of youth organisations. The Deputy Speaker highlighted three aspects of unemployment: unemployment, under-employment, and un-employability. The workshop focused on strategies to address the increasing youth unemployment which is a big challenge in most Commonwealth jurisdictions.

A panelist from the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development presented statistics on youth unemployment, the causes and the strategies that the Government of Uganda has employed to address this challenge. In Uganda, youth is defined as someone between the ages of 18 and 30 years old. Out of the 40 million people in Uganda, youth constitute 22.5% of the population. The Government of Uganda in addressing youth unemployment has focused on: strengthening skills for enhanced labour productivity, promotion of investments in manufacturing and agriculture sectors, increasing access to finance for enterprise support, externalization of labour, and streamlining the informal sector.

The second panelist noted that youth unemployment is a global problem. The solution to unemployment should be premised on the principles that

“demand for labour is derived demand.” The creation of employment is dependent on the structure and growth rate of both the population and the economy. Therefore, CPA Branches have to increase employment opportunities by addressing economic growth and supporting businesses for easier and faster integration. Emphasis was put on using both fiscal and monetary policies like giving tax rebates and lowering interest rates.

The third panelist spoke about the five types of unemployment namely frictional, structural, cyclic, seasonal and classical unemployment. The strategies to address unemployment need to target specific types of unemployment. The need for legal and policy reforms especially in education, reduction in interest rates, focus on creative industry, and regulation of externalization of labour was underscored.

The eight recommendations at the workshop were **endorsed** as follows:

- **Reforming the education system to provide practical skills and knowledge in wide areas that include creativity, innovation, mindset change, and business management. Vocational training should be enhanced to address the above.**
- **Streamlining the externalisation of labour to address regulation, monitoring and accountability of peer-to-peer right from country level (i.e. Committees between respective Ministries of countries including Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Labour, Education, Internal Affairs and Justice).**
- **Provision of fiscal incentives for businesses that create job opportunities for the youth. This should also relate to the public services through creating quotas for the youth and targeting jobs at the lower skills spectrum.**
- **Promote entrepreneurship and business management including support for incubation centers and linkages to providers of professional business services. This will partly address the concern of knowledge transfer and ensure growth and sustainability of start-ups.**
- **Increase access to affordable finance including provision of grants to youth enterprises. Grant incentives can be pegged to creation of more jobs and sustaining the businesses.**
- **Promoting opportunities for the creative industry including establishment of institutions such as football academies and sports centers. The support to cover both the public and private sector.**
- **Reforming laws and policies that relate to employment especially those that are restrictive and protect those who are already in employment while reducing opportunities for entry such as minimum wage.**

- **Climate change aspects should be considered to ensure the environment remains sustainable and supportive of the youth employment policies and strategies for the current and future generations.**

Workshop E: Combatting rapid urbanisation and rural decline – A challenge for the Commonwealth *(nominated by CPA Punjab Branch, Pakistan)*

This session focused on the impact of rapid urbanisation and rural decline in various jurisdictions within the Commonwealth. During the workshop, urbanisation was defined as the shift from a rural to an urban area leading to large concentrations of people into towns and cities. It was highlighted that with over half of the world's population currently living in urban areas and a further 2.5 billion expected to be added to that population by 2050, urbanisation and the concurrent rural decline will become an increasingly salient issue for leaders and policy makers in the coming years.

The major drivers of urbanisation stated at the workshop include: search for economic opportunities, population growth, environmental degradation, desire for change of lifestyle, among others. The adverse effects of urbanisation include: overcrowding and slums which experience major problems such as poverty, poor sanitation, unemployment and high crime rates.

It was further highlighted that urbanisation challenges are unique and vary across countries and therefore, home-based solutions should be adopted. In order to address urbanisation challenges, it is critical that countries develop and adopt integrated plans to guarantee equitable and holistic development for both the rural and urban areas. Lastly, Parliaments should ensure inclusive budgets with a focus on rural development.

The three recommendations at the workshop were **endorsed** as follows:

- **Parliaments should focus on building sustainable livelihoods in urban and rural communities that are unique to their needs and circumstances.**
- **CPA Parliamentarians support Commonwealth efforts on sustainable human settlements by partnering with locally elected leaders to frame policy for effective delivery at the local level.**
- **Rural and urban are complimentary to each other. Parliaments should focus on regulation of urbanisation and development of rural areas such as in India.**

Workshop F (Small Branches Topic): Innovation in Parliament – The possible effects of United Kingdom’s ‘Brexit’ on CPA Small Branches (*nominated by CPA Falkland Islands Branch*)

This workshop was focused on the effects of ‘Brexit’ on the parliamentary procedures in the United Kingdom and how small Parliaments can benefit and learn from the ramifications and strengthen the workings of their Legislatures. A Parliamentary Clerk from the United Kingdom noted that the backbench MPs have taken control of the House of Commons order paper, thus shaping the ‘Brexit’ discussions in the House.

A second panellist from Scotland informed the audience that Scotland’s position to remain in the European Union has not changed. A Member from Guernsey noted that his jurisdiction fully depends on the United Kingdom, so whatever situation that affects the United Kingdom will fully affect Guernsey.

A Member from New Zealand encouraged Commonwealth countries and CPA Branches to support the United Kingdom in the process of exiting the European Union because it is what the British people have voted for.

Four recommendations at the session were **endorsed** as follows.

- **Parliaments should consider the interaction between procedural rules and statute law, and how far flexible approaches to procedure allows for adaptation to unexpected political circumstances.**
- **Parliamentary scrutiny and oversight by all United Kingdom Legislatures should play a key role in the development of the United Kingdom’s international relations after ‘Brexit’.**
- **It is essential that Parliament acts early, considers all possible outcomes and puts in place the necessary legislation whilst ensuring the allocation of adequate resources.**
- **To support the United Kingdom through their democratic ‘Brexit’ process and establish long-term and sustainable Free Trade Agreements with individual Commonwealth countries.**

A further recommendation was developed and **endorsed** by all of the workshop participants.

- **Reflecting the concerns of some of the CPA Small Branches on which ‘Brexit’ has had a profound effect, such Branches must be involved in substantive discussions with the United Kingdom on their international relations.**

Workshop G (Gender Topic): Fostering a Culture of Respect, Fairness and Dignity: Sexual Harassment has no place in Legislatures (*nominated by CPA Scotland Branch*).

This workshop topic was also discussed earlier at the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference (*see below*) and called for an in-depth engagement. The first panelist from Scotland called for openness, fairness and equality among Members and parliamentary staff, emphasising a culture of respect catering to diversity, inclusiveness and adherence to the code of conduct. There had been an observed failure to report matters of sexual harassment by victims because of the embarrassment and dent on their careers.

A second panelist from New Zealand argued against the language used in descriptions of sexual harassment as incomplete and limiting. The panelist highlighted a recent inquiry into sexual harassment carried out by the New Zealand Parliament, whose recommendations centered on upholding culture, values and leadership.

The third panelist from Australia Federal thanked the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) for championing the issues of women Parliamentarians, paying tribute to those who led earlier struggles in legislation which has engendered respect and fairness. The panelist advocated for equality in representation by gender in Parliaments as is the case in the Federal Parliament of Australia.

The CWP alumni champion spoke about the push for appropriate education, training and a code of conduct in addressing sexual harassment, noting the lack of support to sexual harassment victims. She outlined identified ways of dealing with sexual harassment including; socio-psycho support, counselling and confiding in a mentor with parliamentary experience.

All three recommendations were endorsed by the workshop as follows:

- **Respectful language, upholding dignity of people, is fundamental to enhancing the quality of experience for all. Prevention and action on sexual harassment complaints is imperative.**
- **All Parliaments adopt a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, with robust procedures which take complaints seriously, crucially including awareness-raising about what is unacceptable.**
- **Parliaments should support women MPs and provide confidential counselling services, foster mentoring through programmes such as the CWP Alumni Initiative and support women's caucuses.**

Workshop H: The Role of Parliament in the doctrine of Separation of Powers; Enhancing Transparency and Accountability (*nominated by CPA India Union Branch and CPA Gujarat Branch*).

Arising out of the workshop theme, the participants were given a background highlighting the importance of the doctrine and the efforts of the Commonwealth in popularizing the same. Among others, the development of the Commonwealth Latimer House Principles was noted as critical. The Chair's remarks focused on whether there was a need to update the principles and whether legislators were doing enough to ensure the accountability and transparency of the Executive and Judiciary.

The panel presentations highlighted the historical and philosophical underpinnings of the doctrine, its manifestation at subnational Legislatures, examples of the same in the Commonwealth, and the governance challenges faced by Legislatures in ensuring the implementation of the doctrine among others.

At the close of the workshop, recommendations were proposed and **endorsed** as follows:

- **Through Parliament, people exercise their sovereign power. Parliaments must diligently secure practical and well-executed constitutional separation of powers for greater democratic dividends and good governance.**
- **Parliaments should seek to replicate Gujarat's approach to ensure the doctrine of separation of powers is well entrenched in constitutions, and that legislation passed, is done so in a transparent manner.**
- **As the stark reality of the authoritarian tendency of the Executive, Parliamentarians must be able to speak their mind in debates, without fear or favour.**
- **The Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA) supports the promotion of and training in the Commonwealth Latimer House Principles and notes:**
 - **the continuing need for implementation and compliance by Governments, particularly to ensure that Legislatures have robust independent accountability mechanisms (e.g. through Select Committees) by which Ministers are held to account; and**
 - **the need to ensure the peer review mechanism by CMAG is appropriate and effective.**

Workshop I: Post Legislative Scrutiny (PLS) - a dimension of the oversight function of Parliament. How is this represented within different political systems?

The workshop discussion centered on Post Legislative Scrutiny (PLS) as a vital tool in assessing relevancy and quality of regulations and laws enacted that in relation to the intended objectives. Parliaments across the Commonwealth have variations in their approach to the PLS process, with some focusing more on legislation and less on post-legislative activities. However, they remain key engines of PLS.

In their support of post-legislative scrutiny, Parliamentary Committees scrutinise sector reports, examine financial audit reports and budgets for statutory agencies, evaluate implementation of government assurances, consider petitions, review and examine of administrative excesses and hold government accountable for any gaps in policy implementation.

The effective oversight function of Parliament and administrative accountability by the government to the Legislature is a cornerstone of democracy and an indicator of the principle of good governance respectively. Whereas budget estimates and other pre-legislative scrutiny and oversight are well undertaken, post-legislative scrutiny and oversight is very weak. There is hardly any timelines and strategies of reinforcing PLS.

There are other mechanisms that support PLS such as legal challenge against unconstitutional provisions, civic pressure on government against legal regimes that violate citizens' rights. The major challenges are: lack of legal framework, capacity gaps within oversight Committees, government laxity to implement recommendations of Parliament, and resource constrains.

The following recommendations were **endorsed** by the workshop:

- **Post-legislative scrutiny is a valuable oversight tool, part of an end-to-end iterative process, through which Parliaments can evaluate efficacy, quality and relevancy.**
- **Parliaments should evaluate the implementation of legislation passed and policy framework of Government through well-structured Committee System as well as other mechanisms.**
- **PLS requires resources: in designing PLS systems, Parliaments should consider what they can contribute themselves, and what they can ask others to contribute.**

Workshop J: How the Updated CPA Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures has been used to strengthen the capacity of CPA Legislatures.

This session focused on Parliaments having a greater self-awareness of their performance based on the updated *CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures*. The CPA Benchmarks provide a framework for excellence in Commonwealth parliamentary and legislative practice.

The moderator gave a general overview on the importance of the benchmarks linking them to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 16, 5 and 10.2). He informed the audience that the workshop was aimed to share their experiences on how the Benchmarks can be applied in different contexts.

The external expert provided an overview of the CPA Benchmarks and the evolution journey from 87 indicators in 2006 to 132 benchmarks in 2018. The CPA Benchmarks have today moved beyond minimum standard to become more aspirational in scope.

The second panellist observed that even though our lives evolve around what Parliaments do, Parliamentarians are not genuinely excited about the Benchmarks, but on winning the next elections. He emphasised that the CPA Benchmarks provide an opportunity for self-assessment, which is the best for improving performance.

The third panellist reiterated that details in the Benchmarks are very critical in helping to deal with challenges like 'Brexit' and hence, establishing the supremacy of Parliaments. The Benchmarks also ensure measures are in place to support new MPs to flourish and thrive in Parliaments, especially women.

The final panellist stressed that Legislatures should aspire to accomplish the fundamental principles of humanity entailed in the CPA Benchmarks, these are: democracy, accountability, openness, service, transparency and honesty.

Three recommendations were **endorsed** by the workshop as follows:

- **That consideration be given to developing an abridged version of the CPA Benchmarks in order to encourage the uptake of assessments.**
- **Recommended CPA Benchmarks are imperative and when implemented conjointly will help facilitate the growth of democracy for the betterment of the people of respective Parliamentary jurisdictions.**
- **CPA Branches to review their Parliament's capacity and performance using the updated CPA Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures and report on the results.**

37th CPA Small Branches Conference

Conference Theme: *'Adaption, engagement, and evolution of Parliaments in a rapidly changing Commonwealth'.*

With the increased logistical, financial and infrastructure demands facing small jurisdictions in the Commonwealth, Parliamentarians met to examine the unique challenges they face. The 37th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Small Branches Conference was held in Kampala, Uganda with Members of Parliaments and Legislatures from CPA Small Branches attending the conference.

The conference discussed strategies to meet the unique developmental needs of the CPA's smallest Legislatures through key thematic seminars and development activities that will build parliamentary capacity for CPA Small Branches and create greater opportunities for the sharing of knowledge, parliamentary strengthening and cooperation across the network.

The outgoing CPA Small Branches Chairperson, Hon. Angelo Farrugia, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of Malta said at the opening of the Small Branches Conference: *"The CPA Small Branches Conference will help to build capacities for the small Parliaments and Legislatures of the Commonwealth and create greater and more constant opportunities for the sharing of knowledge and cooperation across the CPA network. The CPA Small Branches need to come together to address their common difficulties, common strengths and their shared experiences."*

During his three-year term as the CPA Small Branches Chairperson, Hon. Angelo Farrugia has highlighted the importance of tackling climate change for the 53 Commonwealth countries, especially its 31 small and developing states which are often the least polluting but the first casualties of climate change and delegates had the opportunity to discuss a newly developed CPA handbook on climate change during the CPA Small Branches Conference.

In the margins of the conference, the initial cohort of the CPA Small Branches Steering Committee met for the first time, following the decision of the CPA Executive Committee at their Mid-Year Meeting in Mauritius 2018 for the formation of this new committee. The CPA Small Branches Steering Committee comprises the CPA Small Branches Chairperson and seven Commonwealth Parliamentarians who represent the seven Regions of the CPA with Small Branches: Africa; Australia; British Isles and the Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic; Pacific; and South-East Asia.

Small Branches Session 1: How do Commonwealth countries (CPA Small Branches in particular), that all ostensibly base their Parliamentary procedures and practices on the Westminster model, implement culturally appropriate measures including institutional design? (nominated by CPA Yukon Branch)

This session focused on discussions around how Commonwealth countries, including small state jurisdictions that base their parliamentary procedures and practices on the Westminster model, implement culturally appropriate measures including institutional design. Delegates were informed that many countries across the world adopted the Westminster model as former colonies. After gaining independence, they negotiated with the United Kingdom through constitution seminars to bring harmony through flexible procedures and institutions that suited their unique cultural and historical realities. Indeed, it is the cultural adaptability of Westminster model that has shaped its success across the Commonwealth.

One discussion leader gave an example of the uniqueness of the Canadian North-Eastern Territory (Nunavut), with extreme weather conditions, inaccessible by road, despite the abundant resources available. This territory has no political parties. The challenge was to have procedures and institutions that reflect on its aboriginal society. Governance is by consensus through the caucuses of the whole house and non-Cabinet Ministers, hence the adaptation and adoption to procedures that deviate from the Westminster model.

The Westminster model is premised on parliamentary sovereignty, an Executive answerable to the people through Parliament, Cabinet decisions taken and implemented by a neutral civil service and accountability to the Cabinet. However, an apolitical public service in a jurisdiction of less than 500,000 people is untenable as ethnicity and dormant tribes potentially influence society, hence creating the difference. CPA Small Branches ought to examine their own realities and build systems based on their uniqueness.

The two recommendations at the workshop were **endorsed** as follows:

- **Each Parliament should take advantage of Westminster flexible procedures to apply changes that actually work in modern times, suiting cultural and historical realities.**
- **CPA Small Branches shall develop Legislatures that fit their contexts and look to the experience of other Small Branches for examples of good practice.**

Small Branches Session 2: Innovation in Parliament – The possible effects of United Kingdom’s ‘Brexit’ on CPA Small Branches *(nominated by CPA Falkland Islands Branch)*

This session focused on the possible effects of ‘Brexit’ on CPA Small Branches. ‘Brexit’ is not just a matter between the United Kingdom and the European Union but also concerns the CPA Small Branches and perhaps it could extend to larger Parliaments that are former colonies of the United Kingdom. The degree of uncertainty will depend on whether the European Union Regulatory Framework will still have direct effect on the United Kingdom. There are concerns about ‘Brexit’ but the uncertainties are of great concern to CPA Small Branches. ‘Brexit’ possesses two scenarios; either the Overseas Territories align themselves with the United Kingdom in all circumstances or depart from the agenda and programme of the United Kingdom.

Delegates heard that the implications of ‘Brexit’ are far reaching. However, CPA Small Branches have a good chance of dealing with the consequences of ‘Brexit’ by working together through sharing knowledge and extending networks to get their voices and message across clearly. Small states are not powerless if they work together.

CPA Small Branches should have a contingency plan to guard against the uncertainties arising from ‘Brexit’. They have an opportunity to minimise the effects of ‘Brexit’, through the Commonwealth where their Legislatures can advance their agenda with the United Kingdom.

The three recommendations at the workshop were **endorsed** as follows:

- **CPA Small Branches, especially sub-nationals, should effectively participate in decision making to ensure that they have input in policies that will directly affect them.**
- **CPA Small Branches should extend their networks for sharing information and best practice to better tackle major common challenges such as ‘Brexit’ and climate change.**
- **Legislatures must recalibrate their relations with the United Kingdom. Although risks and uncertainties predominate, the opportunities ‘Brexit’ will present must not be undermined.**

Small Branches Session 3: What professional development and training is required to develop focused and talented Parliamentarians? *(nominated by CPA Northern Territory Branch)*

This workshop session examined the different professional development and training models available to develop focused and talented Parliamentarians. The mentoring session saw Parliamentarians and

parliamentary staff given the opportunity to meet different experts in the field of parliamentary training.

At the end of the workshop, three recommendations were **endorsed** as follows:

- **That Parliamentarians from CPA Small Branches are actively encouraged to seek professional development and training outside their jurisdictions in order to broaden their knowledge and understanding.**
- **CPA Small Branch capacity can be built by giving MPs the knowledge and skills required. Branches should encourage MPs to attend the CPA-McGill University Professional Development Programme.**
- **Parliaments shall encourage political parties to employ candidate selections that include talented, substantive prospects, embracing the importance of gender balance, and encouraging sensitivity and diversity.**

Small Branches Session 4: Climate change and the possible effects on CPA Small Branch economies and development (*nominated by CPA Falkland Islands Branch*)

This workshop was premised on the discussion on climate change and its possible effects on CPA Small Branch economies and development. The discussion centred on the following contextual debate - of how climate change action can be integrated into progress towards sustainable development; with what initiatives can and have CPA Small Branches made an impact on mitigating and adapting to climate change, and what examples of this action are out there; how can governments, Parliaments and civil society in Small Branches work together to influence the global climate change agenda?

CPA Small Branches suffer the effects of climate change the most, even as the effects are caused by the developed states culminated into a failure to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets. They must take collective action so that their voices are heard vis-a-vis climate change and its after-effects, which have caused great threats to the quality of life, loss of life, property and revenue.

The development of a good working relationship between the CPA and UNEP that was launched in 2014 when UNEP signed an agreement with CPA has played a very impressive role in mitigating the impact of climate change. Parliamentarians have to raise citizens' awareness and develop appropriate policies in order to address the adverse effects of climate change.

The workshop **endorsed** the following three recommendations:

- **Parliament must foster dialogue which leads to mechanisms for building resilience of Small Island States adapting to climate change, which adversely affect our GDP.**
- **Parliamentarians have a critical role in raising awareness of climate change, while developing appropriate policies and legislation to protect the environment and human rights.**
- **Parliaments should participate in initiatives and programmes by United Nations bodies that facilitate mitigation and adaptation policies, climate finance and technology in Small Island States.**

6th triennial Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference

Overall theme: ‘CWP at 30 years: Achievements and Unfinished Business – Looking forward to the next 30 years’

Women Parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth gathered in Kampala, Uganda for the triennial conference of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), held ahead of the wider 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. The theme of the sixth Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference was ‘CWP at 30 years: Achievements and Unfinished Business – Looking forward to the next 30 years’ in recognition of the CWP’s 30th anniversary in 2019.

The CWP Conference was opened by the outgoing Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, Hon. Dr Dato’ Noraini Ahmad, MP (Malaysia) who has held the office since her election in 2016 and she said: *“In 2019, the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) marks its 30th anniversary and can reflect on the many successes of the past three decades. The CWP envisions a world where women and men have equal access to opportunities – a world where women’s voices are recognised and respected. I urge all Parliamentarians, with the support of the CWP network, to pursue this vision with continued dynamism and enthusiasm. Together we can and will build the future we want, working towards a future of equal rights, equal opportunities and progress for all.”*

Over 100 Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians attended the conference from across the Commonwealth. The CWP conference saw leading figures in Commonwealth Parliaments addressing the conference.

The CWP President (2018-2019), Hon. Syda Namirembe Bbumba, MP (Uganda) spoke to the CWP conference about her experience as a legislator in the Parliament of Uganda. The CWP Conference also heard from CWP Alumni

Champion, Dr Lesley Clark, a former Member of Parliament of Queensland about the CWP's mentoring initiative and her work with women across the Commonwealth.

In recognition of the 30th anniversary of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) in 2019, a special ceremony was held with the current and previous CWP Chairpersons - Hon. Dr Dato' Noraini Ahmad, MP (Malaysia, CWP Chairperson from 2106-2019); Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, MP, Speaker of Parliament (Uganda, 2013-2016); Hon. Alix Boyd Knights, MHA, Speaker of the House of Assembly (Dominica, 2010-2013); Ms Kashmala Tariq (Pakistan, 2007-2010) and Hon. Lindiwe Maseko (South Africa, 2004-2007).

Ahead of the CWP Conference, the current CWP Chairperson and CWP Steering Committee met in Uganda representing the nine CPA Regions: Africa; Asia; Australia; British Isles and the Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic; India; Pacific; and South-East Asia.

CWP Session 1: The Importance of Mentoring for New Parliamentarians

This workshop session focused on sustained mentoring as an effective strategy for increasing the influence of elected women leaders and for increasing the likelihood for their re-election. When framed with a gender equality agenda, women's political mentoring programmes can be an effective strategy for newly elected women MPs, particularly in the following areas: strengthening political skills, enhancing cross-party networks of women Parliamentarians, strengthening links between women MPs and women's rights movements, and deepening political ties across countries.

It was emphasised that the work of Parliament is varied in nature and considerable in volume thus the need for mentoring. Inducting, orientating and building capacity of MPs is a necessary intervention if Parliaments are to be effective. Mentoring through social media was presented not as an alternative to more traditional face-to-face training, but as an important tool that can help women learn from each other. The CWP Alumni Initiative, as outlined in the CWP Strategic Plan 2017-19, was emphasised as important and should be supported.

The following recommendations were **endorsed** by delegates:

- **The work done by Parliament is not only varied in nature but also considerable in volume. Therefore, all Parliaments should strive for in-house capacity building and mentoring for new Parliamentarians.**
- **Inducting, orienting and building the capacity of Members of Parliament is a necessary intervention, if we, and the institutions we serve in, are also to become effective.**

- **Political parties and governments should provide mentoring programmes to encourage women and girls to stand for elected offices including Parliaments, and to support women when successfully elected.**
- **To establish a CWP Alumni Mentoring Trust Fund to provide resources to CWP Steering Committees to assist in developing and implementing mentoring programmes for sitting women MPs.**

CWP Session 2: Promoting Women to Leadership Positions and Senior Portfolios

One of the discussants highlighted the timeliness of the CWP conference theme of reflecting on 30 years of progress and in taking stock and planning for the future. The United Nations was recognised for its efforts in documenting progress made by female political leaders and the development of conventions that have set benchmarks for women's rights.

Despite these strides, challenges such as poverty, lack of access to education, cultural practices, intimidation and mistrust were identified as factors that impede the active participation of women in politics.

Women were urged to embrace Information Technology to address entrenched cultural and social practices for personal advancement, effectively prepare for leadership positions and cultivate spaces that allow discussion and advocacy for women to be pro-women. Legislation was highlighted as key in promoting women to compete fairly for elective offices.

Through the election of women to leadership positions, Parliaments become more representative of their societies and there is creation of a ripple effect that encourages more women to take up leadership. Consequently, leaders were urged to realistically share their experiences, so as to connect with the electorate and leverage their networks as platforms for conversations that result into actions that will create lasting change.

The workshop delegates **endorsed** three recommendations as follows:

- **Need for legislative policy frameworks at national and global levels that create equitable access for women to leadership positions, gender parity and remove social-cultural impediments.**
- **Consider how CWP can leverage its network by allowing Members to share their experiences and expertise in an atmosphere that catapults discussion into actionable outcomes.**
- **Encourage political parties to amend their constitution to adopt fair recruitment principles to enable a wider range of women to put themselves forward for elections.**

CWP Session 3: Empowering Women as Effective Legislators in the 21st century

This workshop session was focused on discussions of empowering women as effective Legislators in the 21st century. The Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda noted that training, inductions and capacity building should be enforced if CWP is to see female MPs retained and increased in numbers in Commonwealth Parliaments.

The second panellist pointed out that four 'M's can be used in empowering female legislators: Mobilization - of fellow women to encourage them to join Parliament, with more females in Parliament their issues are easier to address; Mentoring - by senior female Legislators to the new female Legislators; Money - looking for enough resources to fund female dominated projects; and Men - female Legislators need the support of male Legislators to achieve all of the above.

The third panellist asked Members to develop strategies that put male-dominated political parties on target to implement programmes that advance women's participation in politics.

The fourth panellist asked female MPs to take advantage of the CWP Conferences, through learning from each other's experiences and implement the lessons to better their legislative skills.

The four recommendations at the session were **endorsed** as follows:

- **Training, Induction and Capacity – Building for Female Legislators. This will make female Members of Parliament ready for any leadership position**
- **Invest continuously and strategically focussing on mentoring women Legislators to enable them and ensure social, political, economic and legal empowerment of women and women with disabilities.**
- **Empower women as effective Legislators including those from minority groups, and ensure political environments are free from gender-based discrimination for a democratic governance**
- **Take opportunities to increase your knowledge and skills in the performance of your parliamentary duties, and to share your expertise with other Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians.**

CWP Session 4: Combatting Bullying and Harassment within Parliaments

This workshop session focused on the strategies to combat sexual harassment and bullying within Parliaments, which has become common culture and normalised behaviour.

The first discussion leader highlighted that there is no single definition for harassment/bullying but involves: the imbalance and misuse of power; repeated and unreasonable use of words or actions that belittle, intimidate, harass, humiliate, embarrass, demean and marginalise individuals. This behaviour, if not adequately addressed, has far reaching negative consequences ranging from individual to organisational, namely: the loss of productivity, personnel turnover and absenteeism. For Parliaments, this compromises its ability to attract more women and representatives from diverse backgrounds.

The second discussion leader spoke about the need to have all complaints reported and heard by having policies in place. The idea that zero complaints means no harassment is a misconception. The importance of cultural and behavioural change, which becomes evident with as much as a 30% women representation in Legislative Assemblies, was underscored.

The final discussion leader shared her experiences stressing the need to make Parliament a safe working environment for all. The role of able leadership in breaking barriers was stressed, highlighting the compassion of the Prime Minister in handling complaints, and setting up a review commission into the sexual harassment predicament.

At the end of the workshop session, three recommendations were **endorsed** as follows:

- **CPA Branches identify and report on procedures, policies, and frameworks within their Parliaments which promote a workplace that is respectful and free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.**
- **Any country that has human rights codes should use the guidelines to frame their anti-harassment legislations and policies**
- **Parliament must be a safe workplace for all and a model for other organisations. This requires not only words, but actions, championed by the leadership.**

55th General Meeting of the Society-of-Clerks-at-the-Table (SOCATT) in Commonwealth Parliaments

The 55th Meeting of the Society-of-Clerks-at-the-Table (SoCATT) took place in the margins of the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in Kampala, Uganda. The meeting brought together Parliamentary Clerks and parliamentary staff from Commonwealth Parliaments to discuss the latest legislative practices and to share best practice. Mrs. Jane L Kibirige, Clerk to the Parliament of Uganda was elected the Chair of the meeting and she presented a paper on the parliamentary system and recent developments in Uganda.

Further presentations were made during the meeting by a number of different Parliamentary Clerks on subjects including parliamentary procedures, privileges and practice; tackling bullying and harassment in Parliaments; the fourth Industrial Revolution and the core business of Parliament; minority governments and the challenges to parliamentary clerks; the administrative and financial autonomy of Parliament; the media and the use of IT amongst Members.

Parliamentary Clerks at the meeting also heard from McGill University about the International Professional Development Program for Parliamentary Staff and its impact in building capacity. A presentation was given about the CPA launching a new online professional development course for parliamentary staff that has been developed and will be delivered in collaboration with the School of Continuing Studies at McGill University, Canada and the International School for Government at King's College, London.

Finally, the SOCATT meeting heard from the CPA Headquarters Secretariat about the updated CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures and the self-assessment and technical assistance programmes available to assist Parliaments.

Delegation program in Qatar

SUNDAY 29 SEPTEMBER

Delegation arrives in Doha

MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER

Embassy Briefing

- HE Ambassador Jonathan Muir
- Mr Daniel Ross, Consul
- Ms Erin Tunks, Head of Political and Economic Section

Courtesy call with Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- HE Dr Ahmad Hassan Al-Hamadi, Secretary General
- HE Khalid Ibrahim Abdulrahman Al-Hamar, Director of Asian Affairs Department

Meeting with Shura Council

- HE Mr Nasser Bin Khalil Al-Jaida, Shura Council
- HE Mr Abdulla Bin Fahad Al-Marri, Shura Council
- HE Mrs Reem Bint Mohammed Al-Mansoori, Rapporteur
- HE Dr Hend Bint Abd Al Rahman Mohamed Al Muftah, Shura Council
- HE Mr Dahlan Bin Jaman Al-Hamad, Shura Council

Lunch with members of the Australian business community, hosted by Ambassador Muir

- Ms Fabienne Hajjar, Senior Manager, Servcorp
- Mr Graham Storrie, Country Manager, BG&E
- Mr Robert Ball, Senior Vice President, Aspen Medical
- Ms Lauren Fryer, Managing Partner, QANECT
- Dr Leonie Lethbridge, Executive General Manager and Chief Operating Partner, Commercial Bank
- Mr Raghu Menon, Cluster General Manager, Marsa Malaz Kempinski
- Mr Bassam Halabi, General Manager, GHD Qatar
- Mr Justin Kerr-Stevens, General Manager Middle East, Portland Communications

Meeting with Mr Yousef Al-Jaida, CEO, Qatar Financial Centre

Meeting with Mr Houtan Homayounpour, Head of the International Labour Organisation's Qatar Project Office

Tour of the Qatar National Museum

TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER

Meeting with Ms Zahra Babar, Associate Director for Research, Centre for International and Regional Studies, Georgetown University

Meeting with the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, 2022 FIFA World Cup

- Ms Dana Mohamed Al-Nooaimi, Deputy General Counsel
- Ms Sama Rubie, Head of International Relations
- Ms Haya Al-Kuwari, International Relations Officer
- Ms Najwa Al-Thani, Workers' Welfare Manager
- Ms Ruth Muschinski, Head of Special Projects

Meeting with Qatar Foundation

- Dr Richard O'Kennedy, Vice President for Research, Development and Innovation
- Dr Ahmed ElMagarmid, Executive Director, Qatar Computing Research Institute

Tour of Qatar Foundation Headquarters and Education City Mosque

Depart Doha/Return to Australia