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(1) New Secretary-General Takes Office

The new Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Dr William F. Shija, a Tanzanian, took office on 2 January 2007 at the CPA Secretariat in London with a call to his staff to work as a team. He enunciated his mission to strengthen the CPA family through communications. He is seeking to publicize increasingly the CPA activities in promoting parliamentary democracy and governance up to the knowledge and usefulness of the ordinary citizen in the Commonwealth.

(2) Post Election Seminar in Zambia

The Secretary-General participated in a Post Election Seminar as one of 12 Resource Persons for the Zambia National Assembly from 14 to 19 January 2007. Dr Shija took the opportunity to hold discussions with the Vice President of Zambia, H. E. Rupiah Banda, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Amusaa Mwanamwambwa, MP, Chief Whip Hon. Vernon Mwaanga and other Parliamentary Whips. He also paid a courtesy call on the Tanzania High Commission in Lusaka.

(3) Pre-Conference Visit to India

The Secretary-General also visited India at the beginning of February to assess the progress being made in the preparations for the 53rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference to be held in New Delhi from 23 to 30 September 2007. Dr Shija is optimistic that the Conference held in India will be highly successful. While in India, Dr Shija also visited the West Bengal Legislative Assembly in Kolkata where he met the Speaker and Members. He also held discussions with CPA President, Shri Somnath Chatterjee, Exco Chairman, Shri Hashim A. Halim, and the Secretaries General of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and other senior parliamentary officials in New Delhi.

The Secretary-General also paid a courtesy call on the President of India, H.E. Dr. A.P. J. Abdul Kalam. After calling on the Tanzania High Commissioner to New Delhi, H. E. Amb. E. Nzaro, he later held a press interview with the Lok Sabha Television Station.

(4) CPA Secretariat Staff Change

At the Secretariat, the Secretary-General has accepted the resignation of Mr Niall Johnston, who was the Director of Programmes, with effect from 8 February 2007. Ms Meenakshi Dhar has been assigned to facilitate programmes with effect from 14 February 2007.

(5) Seminar on Financial Oversight of the Executive

The CPA Director of Information Services, Mr Andrew Imlach, represents the Secretariat at a Seminar on Financial Oversight of the Executive in Australia this month. The Seminar is organized by the CPA, the World Bank Institute and the Public Sector Governance and Accountability Research Centre at LaTrobe University. More than 20 Members and parliamentary officials from Commonwealth Parliaments (from Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tanzania, Sri Lanka and the Solomon Islands) are among the participants.

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