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(1) Public Accounts Committee at the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago

Held over the two days (3 and 4 December), the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago hosted a Public Accounts Committee Workshop attended by Sen. the Hon. Danny Montano, President of the Senate and the Hon. Barendra Sinanan, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The workshop comprised eleven sessions and the resource persons included Ms Lorelly Pujadas, institutional strengthening manager for CAROSAI-INTOSAI Development Initiative; Hon. Dr Morais Guy, MP, Jamaica; Mr Craig James, Clerk of Committees in the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia; Hon. Walter M. Lister, JP, MP, Bermuda and Mr Everard T (Bob) Richards JP, MP, Bermuda. The CPA was represented by Mr David Broom, Director of Administration and Finance. Topics examined included the relationship between the PAC/Auditor-General; PAC's and corruption; preparing for hearings; The PAC/executive relationship and good practice for PAC's/enhancing PAC performance.

Participants included the Chairperson of the PAC, Senator Wade Mark, the Chairperson of the PAEC, Dr Roodal Moonilal, several government Ministers, Members and Senators. At the conclusion of the workshop participants had agreed upon a 12-point plan to strengthen the processes surrounding the operations of the PAC and PAEC.

(2) Parliamentary debates to mark Commonwealth anniversaries

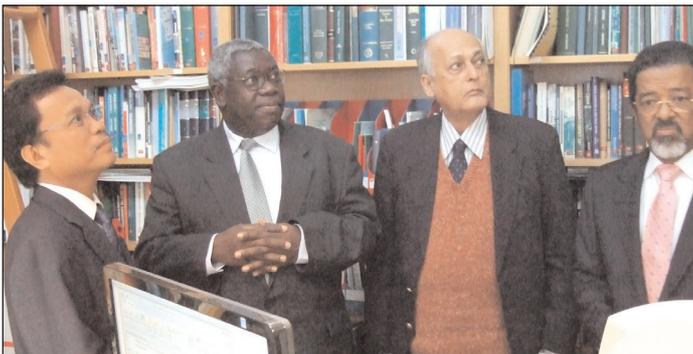
Parliaments are being asked to debate the future of the Commonwealth in 2009 to mark the first of two imminent Commonwealth anniversaries.

CPA Secretary-General Dr William F. Shija and Commonwealth Secretary-General H.E. Kamallesh Sharma are proposing that Parliaments mark the first of the milestones, the 60th anniversary of the founding of the modern Commonwealth, by holding parliamentary debates on the enduring value to all nations of membership in the organization. Dr Shija has written to all CPA Branches while Mr Sharma has approached Commonwealth national governments.

Debating the continued relevance of the Commonwealth in Parliaments would improve public knowledge of both the Commonwealth and the CPA and assist Members to better appreciate the organizations' contributions to democracy, development and international understanding. The CPA Secretariat and the Commonwealth Secretariat are able to provide to Members on request any briefing material they need to help prepare for a debate.

The 2009 anniversary marks the moment that the British Empire evolved into the modern Commonwealth of Nations with the London Declaration by Heads of Government on 28 April 1949. Preparations are under way to mark the anniversary with a programme intended to spark renewed interest in an association of governments, Parliaments and non-governmental organizations that pools expertise and focuses support to improve the lives of a third of the world's people.

Planning is also under way to mark the second of the major anniversaries, the centennial in 2011 of the founding of the CPA, initially as the Empire Parliamentary Association. The CPA is developing a programme of events to celebrate the anniversary in each Branch as well as regionally and Commonwealth-wide.



At the CPA HQ in London, from l-r: CPA Chairperson, Hon. Dato' Seri Mohd. Shafie Apdal, Secretary-General Dr William F. Shija, Treasurer Hon. Hashim Abdul Halim and Vice-Chairperson Hon. Keith Flax.

(3) The CPA Co-ordinating Committee

The CPA Co-ordinating Committee composed of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Executive Committee and the Treasurer met on 5 and 6 November at the CPA Secretariat. Members discussed the Chairperson's vision of the Association as an organization active in the development of Commonwealth member states by maximizing co-operation among their Parliamentarians to enhance trade and economic relations globally and the economic and social development of the people of the Commonwealth. The committee also considered preliminary management questions in preparation for the CPA Executive Committee meeting in Bermuda in April 2009.

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