

CONTENTS: (1) Secretary-General visit to the Caribbean, (2) Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting, (3) East Africa Regional Workshop on Financial Oversight, (4) Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO

(1) Secretary-General visit to the Caribbean

The CPA Secretary-General, Dr William Shija, will travel to the Caribbean in June, starting with his attendance at the Standing Orders Review Workshop for Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, which the CPA is organizing from 17 to 21 June. Hosted by the Parliament of Antigua & Barbuda and with assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Workshop is part of the CPA's Technical Assistance Programme that will enable OECS Parliaments to update and harmonize their Standing Orders.

Following the Workshop, Dr Shija will be visiting the Parliament of Jamaica, where he will have meetings with Sen. the Hon. Syringa Marshall-Burnett, President of the Senate, Hon. Michael Peart, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Ms Heather Cooke, Clerk of Parliament. Dr Shija will then travel to the Cayman Islands to participate in the 32nd CPA Regional Conference of the Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region from 24 to 30 June. The Conference theme this year is "Embracing Change in the Way we do Business: Efficient Government". Topics to be discussed will cover: Democracy and human development, the role of second Chambers, regional co-operation in law enforcement, disaster preparedness and recovery, climate change, and civil servants and the culture of governance.

(2) Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting

A Parliamentarians Forum on Women and Leadership in a Democracy was hosted by the CPA, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Parliament of Uganda and the Uganda Women's Parliamentary Association on 8 and 9 June in Kampala. It brought together women Parliamentarians and political leaders to address participation in democratic decision-making. Recommendations were made to the 8th Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting, which followed from 11 to 14 June. The conference brought together representatives from 51 countries, partner agencies and the private sector to debate women's rights and gender equality, under the theme of "Financing Gender Equality for Development and Democracy". The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Chairperson, Hon. Lindiwe Maseko, MPL, attended. The CPA Secretariat was represented by Ms Meenakshi Dhar, Acting Director of Programmes.

(3) East Africa Regional Workshop on Financial Oversight

The Parliament of Kenya will host an East Africa Regional Workshop on Financial Oversight from 28 to 30 June in Nairobi. This is a collaboration between the CPA Secretariat, the World Bank Institute and SUNY (Kenya). It will bring together Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff working with Public Accounts Committees. The objectives are to: Equip Parliamentarians to undertake their financial scrutiny role, enable MPs to access personal and institutional networks for improving their knowledge, and provide capacity-building for parliamentary staff responsible for supporting the financial oversight committees. The CPA Secretariat will be represented by Mr Shem Baldeosingh, Assistant Director (Reference Services).

(4) Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO

The 15th session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization was held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 14 and 15 June. The CPA is a member of the Committee and this session served to update members on recent developments in the WTO, assess the outcome of the 2006 session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO and plan the next one, and discuss the composition of the Steering Committee. The CPA Secretariat was represented by Mr Shem Baldeosingh, Assistant Director (Reference Services).

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