

Distributed by the CPA Secretariat
Suite 700, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA, United Kingdom
Tel. (+44) 20-7799-1460 Fax: (+44) 20-7222-6073
hq.sec@cpahq.org www.cpahq.org

Issue 6
6 September 2007

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(1) 53rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Delhi, India

CPA Members from all over the world will gather later this month for the 53rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Delhi, India. The theme of our conference this year is "Delivering Democracy and Sustainable Development." Over the course of the conference, the following topics will be discussed: Climate Change and Global Warming, Global Water and Energy Use, Balancing Economic Development and Environmental Protection, Human Trafficking, Reforms to Secure Greater Executive Accountability, Role, Rights and Responsibilities of the Opposition, Strengthening Financial Scrutiny, Right to Recall, and Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures.

All these very timely debates also reflect the concerns and priorities of the Association for the coming years. They are all reflected in the new Strategic Plan 2007-2012 that will be submitted to the Executive Committee and the General Assembly. The Strategic Plan builds on the previous one for 2002-2007 and seeks to develop the work of the CPA by adding new targets in areas such as corruption, health, education and the environment.

Once again, the CPA will be privileged to have the participation of prominent speakers from other organizations. Rt Hon. Don McKinnon, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth will address Members for the last time before his term ends. Members will also benefit from the contribution of experts from UNDP, the World Bank Institute, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Commonwealth Human Right Initiative, the Parliamentary Centre and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Their presence reinforces the fact that our partnerships and collaborations with Commonwealth and United Nations bodies are of vital importance if we are to achieve our respective missions.

A new initiative as part of our drive to improve and increase communications within the Association will be the production of a televised documentary of the Conference proceedings. This is being done in collaboration with Lok Sabha TV, the Indian Parliament's TV channel. The documentary will be distributed to all Branches for the benefit of their Members and for outreach activities to promote the CPA.

(2) Post-Election Seminar in Saint Lucia

A CPA Post-Election Seminar for Members of the Parliament of Saint Lucia was held on 20-21 August seminar as the island was recovering from Hurricane Dean which caused extensive damage to the country's mainstay banana crop and to buildings.

The challenges facing the Parliamentarians included following good parliamentary practices in the application of proposed new Standing Orders to be drafted for their Parliament and other Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Parliaments with assistance from a CPA project in partnership with the Clerk's Department of the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

Speaker Hon. Sarah Flood-Beaubrun, MHA, and Senate President Sen. the Hon. Rosemary Husband-Mathurin presided over the seminar. Dame Jennifer Smith, MP, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Bermuda and a CPA Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Regional Representative, Ms Jacqui Sampson-Jacent, Clerk of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago and CPA Caribbean Regional Secretary, and Mr Matthew Roberts, a former Speaker of the Saint Lucian House of Assembly, were among the resource people for the seminar. Mr Headley Cunningham, a former Speaker of the Jamaican House of Representatives, was unable to attend as Hurricane Dean also hit Jamaica. The CPA Secretariat was represented by Mr Andrew Imlach, Director of Information Services.

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(3) International Organizations and Heads of Government

As part of the Secretariat's continuing efforts to strengthen ties with international organizations, the CPA will be represented at a number of important meetings in coming weeks. In October, the CPA will be represented at the next meeting of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly on the World Trade Organization and the 117th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, both held in Geneva. The Secretary-General, Dr William Shija, will also be attending the 34th General Conference of UNESCO in Paris. The CPA will also attend the Commonwealth Small Countries Law Ministers Meeting in London.

In November, the Secretary-General will be attending the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kampala, Uganda. The CPA is invited to attend CHOGM as a Designated Commonwealth Organization, reflecting the recognition by Heads of Government of the special status of the Commonwealth Parliaments and their Association.

CPA contacts with other organizations are also continuing through visits to the Secretariat in London. In recent weeks the Secretary-General held meetings with Ms Lindsay Ross, Executive Director of the Commonwealth Press Union, Mr Chris Langdon, Director of Programmes at Wilton Park, and Mr Graham Teskey, Head of Governance and Social Development at the U.K.'s Department for International Development.

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