

**REPORT  
ON  
  
THE PARTICIPATION OF  
INDIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION**

**AT THE  
55<sup>th</sup> COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE  
IN ARUSHA, TANZANIA**

**28 SEPTEMBER TO 6 OCTOBER, 2009**



**Laid in the Lok Sabha on 11-03-2010  
Laid in the Rajya Sabha on 11-03-2010**

**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

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## PREFACE

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is an Association of Commonwealth Parliamentarians. At present 175 National State, Provincial and Territorial Parliaments and Legislatures with a total membership of approximately 17,000 Parliamentarians, are members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

2. The Association's mission is to promote the advancement of parliamentary democracy by enhancing knowledge and understanding of democratic governance. It seeks to build an informed parliamentary community able to deepen the Commonwealth's democratic commitment and to further co-operation among its Parliaments and Legislatures.

3. The CPA's annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference provides an annual forum for discussions bringing together Parliamentarians from across the globe, fostering co-operation and understanding and promoting the study of and respect for good parliamentary practice.

4. An Indian Parliamentary Delegation led by the Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha attended the 55<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in Arusha, Tanzania from 28 September to 6 October, 2009.

5. This report brings out the details of India's participation at the above Conference.

6. I hope the information contained in the report will be of use to members as and when the related issues come up for discussion in Parliament.

P.D.T ACHARY  
Secretary-General  
Lok Sabha

New Delhi  
11, March, 2010

**55<sup>th</sup> COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE**  
**ARUSHA, TANZANIA**

**28<sup>th</sup> September to 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

**REPORT**

**Introduction**

1.1 The 55<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference was hosted by the Parliament of Tanzania at Arusha from 28<sup>th</sup> September to 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2009. The theme of the Conference was “The Commonwealth and the CPA – Meeting Future Global Challenges”.

1.2 The Indian Delegation to the Conference was led by the Hon’ble Speaker , Lok Sabha, Smt. Meira Kumar and consisted of the following members from India Union CPA Branch (Parliament of India):-

- |    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | Shri Bhubaneswar Kalita, MP                                    | Rajya Sabha  |
| 2. | Shri Bhakta Charan Das, MP                                     | Lok Sabha  |
| 3. | Shri Vikram Verma  | Rajya Sabha  |
| 4. | Shri Baijayant “Jay” Panda                                     | Lok Sabha  |
| 5. | Dr. Ratna De, MP<br>Alternate CWP<br>Steering Committee Member | Lok Sabha  |
| 7. | Shri P. D. T. Achary,  | Regional Secretary of CPA India<br>Region<br>Secretary-General, Lok Sabha<br>& Member, |

Society of Clerks-at-the-Table

8. Shri Amitabh Mukhopadhyay,  
Joint Secretary (IPU & CPA)  
and Financial Adviser  
Lok Sabha Secretariat
- Secretary to the Delegation

**Observers**

9. Shri Dushyant Singh, MP      Lok Sabha
10. Dr. V.K. Agnihotri,  
Secretary-General, Rajya Sabha  
Member of the Society of  
Clerks-at-the-Table
11. Smt. Abha Singh Yaduvanshi,  
Addl. Director,  
Lok Sabha Secretariat
12. Shri Gurnam Singh,  
Joint Director,  
Rajya Sabha Secretariat
13. Shri S. R. Mishra,  
Under Secretary,  
Lok Sabha Secretariat
14. Shri Rakesh Anand,  
Assistant Director,  
Rajya Sabha Secretariat
15. Shri Santosh Kumar,  
OSD to Hon'ble Speaker,  
Lok Sabha
16. Shri Harinder Singh,  
APS to Hon'ble Speaker,  
Lok Sabha Secretariat
17. Shri Pankaj Kumar Sharma,  
Senior Protocol Assistant  
Lok Sabha Secretariat

1.3 The delegation from India Region also included the following delegates from the State CPA Branches of India: Dr. (Prof.) Ramsundar Ram Kanaujia, MLA, Bihar Vidhan Sabha; Shri Dharam Lal Kaushik, Speaker, Chhattisgarh, Vidhan Sabha; Shri Pratapsing Raoji Rane, Speaker, Goa Legislative Assembly; Shri Tulsi Ram, Speaker, Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha; Shri Veeranna Mathikatti, Chairman, Karnataka Legislative Council; Shri K. Radhakrishnan, Speaker, Kerala Legislative Assembly; Shri Ishwar Das Rohani, Speaker, Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly; Dr. Sapam Budhichandra Singh, Speaker, Manipur Legislative Assembly; Shri Charles Pyngrope, Speaker, Meghalaya Legislative Assembly; Shri R. Romawia, Speaker, Mizoram Legislative Assembly; Shri Kiyanielie Peseyie, Speaker, Nagaland Legislative Assembly; Shri Pradeep Kumar Amat, Speaker, Orissa Legislative Assembly; Shri Deependra Singh Shekhawat, Speaker, Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha; Shri K. T. Gyaltsen, Speaker, Sikkim Legislative Assembly; Thiru V.P. Duraisamy, Speaker, Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly; Shri R. C. Debnath, Speaker, Tripura Legislative Assembly; Shri Harbans Kapoor, Speaker, Uttarakhand Vidhan Sabha; Shri Bhakti Pada Ghosh, Deputy Speaker, West Bengal Legislative Assembly; Dr. Yoganand Shastri, Speaker, Delhi Vidhan Sabha; and Shri R. Radhakrishnan, Speaker, Puducherry Legislative Assembly.

1.4 Shri Siddharatha Rao, Secretary, Delhi Legislative Assembly; Shri P.D. Rajan, Secretary, Kerala Legislative Assembly; Shri Dorjee Rinchen, Secretary, Sikkim Legislative Assembly were the three Secretaries from the State Branches who attended the Conference.

1.5 Prior to the Inauguration of the Conference and Plenary Sessions on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2009, meetings of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians' (CWP) Steering Committee ( 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2009) and the Executive Committee of CPA ( 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2009) were held. The Small Branches Conference, where India does not feature, was also held on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2009.

1.6 The details of the Programme of the Conference which included Plenary Sessions, workshops, meetings may be seen at Annexure.

## **2. Meeting of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians :**

2.1 The meetings of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians on the theme “ Impact of Global Financial Crisis on Women” were attended by Dr. Ratna De, MP, Lok Sabha . Both the Business Meeting of CWP and CWP Session were moderated by Hon. Kashmala Tariq, MNA, Chairperson, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians. The Discussion Leaders were Hon. Anna Abdallah, MP, Tanzania, President, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, Ms. Hilary Armstrong, MP, United Kingdom, Dr. Caroline Pontefract, Director, Social Transformation Services Division, Commonwealth Secretariat.

2.2 The CWP Session addressed the impact of the global financial crisis on women. Due to the financial crisis, women are facing reductions to export potential; decreasing social, education and health services; limited access to

microcredit; increased debt load; reduced income; increased infant, maternal and child mortality rates and diminished household welfare. In order to improve the financial situation, women must have access to microfinance with minimal interest rates.

2.3 Dr. Ratna De, MP (Lok Sabha) mentioned that Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12) in India recognizes gender as a cross cutting theme across all sectors and acknowledges that adequate financial provisions have to be made in all schemes. Accordingly, gender budgeting has also been introduced for all schemes and programs of government.

2.4 The CWP concluded it was desirable to approach the World Bank and Commonwealth nations to propose increased regulations of microcredit institutions. While the financial crisis affects all nations, it is the developing world which is most at risk. In order to address the financial crisis and its effects on women, the CWP must promote gender-based budgeting to ensure that the fiscal stimulus packages are benefiting women at the grassroots level. At the request of the CWP, the Commonwealth Secretariat will distribute guidelines on gender-responsive budgeting to member governments to ensure sustainability for all women. There is a need for capacity-building on gender-based budgeting in the regions and the CWP will work with its partners to enhance programs and information sharing in support of gender-based budgeting.

2.5 The session concluded with Members in agreement upon the importance of education and capacity-building regarding gender-responsive budgeting.

### **3. Meetings of the CPA Executive Committee:**

3.1 The Executive Committee meeting was attended by Smt. Meira Kumar, Hon'ble Speaker along with Shri Hashim Abdul Halim, Speaker, West Bengal Legislative Assembly and Treasurer, CPA Executive Committee. Shri Uday

Narain Chowdhury, Speaker, Bihar Legislative Assembly and Shri Tanka Bahadur Rai, Speaker, Assam Vidhan Sabha also attended the CPA Executive Committee Meeting as Regional Representatives from India Region.

3.2 The Executive Committee deliberated on various organizational matters on its Agenda. The minutes of the deliberations and decisions taken are expected to be approved by the CPA Mid-Year Executive Committee Meeting scheduled to be held in Swaziland from 8<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2010.

#### **4. Official Opening of the Conference**

4.1 The 55<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference was inaugurated on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2009 with an Address by the President of United Republic of Tanzania, H. E. Jakaya M. Kikwete. He addressed two key questions: How do we make it a more effective organisation in the face of the current global challenges? More importantly, how can we make the Commonwealth a voice for the young people who constitute the majority of the citizenry in our countries?

4.2 As one of the leaders in the Commonwealth, he was sure some of these questions would also preoccupy the deliberations at the next CHOGM meeting in Trinidad and Tobago in November, 2009. That meeting, he felt, would benefit immensely from the views and inputs the present Conference sought to explore in order to build a stronger and cohesive organization to serve us and the next generation. He called for a promise, or a commitment, that all members of the Commonwealth will strive to ensure that children and young men in the respective countries will have a decent start in life and a fair and equal opportunity for a better future.

4.3 As a Commonwealth, he said, there is an unprecedented possibility of progress toward a community where all nations are peaceful and prosperous. We have now, in our hands, the capacity and power, never given to any other generation at any other time in human history. We can leverage these capabilities

and powers to banish poverty, human deprivations, and violence from the face of this earth.

4.4 H.E. Jakaya M. Kikwete said the year 2009 was also historic for another reason. The year saw the world challenged by the financial and economic crisis of the worst magnitude in the history of our nations. The threat to the wellbeing of nations and peoples has never been so formidable. Towards the end of the year, we had to reflect on the way we responded to the crisis and the lessons learnt from it. Certainly, all the countries and peoples were still struggling to overcome the effects of this crisis. There was failure in the manner in which the global financial system was managed and supervised. There was a huge regulatory deficit to the detriment of the economies of nations and the world economy as a whole. To avoid a recurrence of such situations in future, we must ensure that adequate regulatory measures and systems are put in place to monitor the affairs of the global financial system and take corrective measures in good time. There was also need to strengthen the institutions of global financial and economic governance to make them more transparent, responsive and representative for the sake of building shared and sustainable prosperity.

4.5 A Committee of leaders from the Commonwealth, headed by Rt. Honourable Gordon Brown, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom had been tasked in Kampala, 2007, to look at how to reform the international financial system and institutions of global financial and economic governance. The Committee had made pertinent observations and recommendations which, if embraced and implemented, he believed, would lead the way to a stable world financial order. And, for the future, the recommendations could help avert the problems the world was experiencing at the moment. The world must bear in mind that nations in the developing countries which are not responsible for the crisis have nevertheless suffered from it. Poor as they are, they cannot mount adequate national economic rescue responses. Therefore, they need and actually

deserve, to be assisted. He urged the voices from the Commonwealth Parliaments and Parliamentarians to demand action on the part of the G20 countries.

4.6 Turning to the threat of climate change, he said life-sustaining resources, such as water and green cover, are disappearing. Few miles away from Arusha, the Conference venue, because of severe and prolonged drought, thousands of herds of cattle were facing acute shortage of pasture and water. The livelihoods and proud traditions of pastoral communities are severely threatened by the emaciation and deaths of many of their livestock. Similarly, about 80 kilometres from Arusha, the white snow-cap of Mount Kilimanjaro, the wonder and splendour of permanent snow, close to the Equator, has been melting away at alarming speed over the last fifty years. There are only two glaciers left. Along the Tanzanian Indian Ocean coastline the town of Pangani was in danger of being submerged to the extent that Tanzania had been forced to incur huge expenses to build a wall to check rising sea waters. Unfortunately, the Maziwe Island nearby has not been so lucky. It is completely submerged. The Island was a hatchery for the turtles in the Indian Ocean.

4.7 Again, because of global warming, the highland areas of Tanzania which used to be malaria free are now facing the disease. The cold climatic conditions which prevented the mosquitoes carrying malaria from surviving had become warmer. They had become habitable for mosquitoes; hence the spread of the disease. This factor made the fight to eliminate malaria in Tanzania more challenging.

4.8 The Commonwealth could help to bridge the gap between positions held by countries of the South and the North and within the South as well as within the North. Commonwealth Parliamentarians could play a pivotal role in this endeavour, particularly by encouraging their respective governments to develop and adopt environment friendly policies and positions within their countries and at the global arena.

4.9 He also hoped that, at the MDG Summit in 2010, developed nations will recommit themselves to increase contribution and quicker disbursement of earlier commitments to accelerate the implementation of the MDGs to be on track with the 2015 deadline. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association could use its good offices for advocacy in pursuit of these noble goals.

4.10 He said parliamentarians from developed to developing countries, from young to mature democracies, have equal authority in so far as they speak for the people and share the awesome responsibility to live up to the expectations of the electorate. One of those expectations is that Members of Parliament will conduct themselves in Parliament, in their communities and in the world at large, in such a manner as to build rather than erode the fabrics of their nations and the stature of the institution of Parliament.

4.11 He expressed his deepest sympathies with the governments and peoples of Samoa, Tonga, Indonesia and the Philippines for the loss of lives and property that had resulted from the earthquake and subsequent floods.

4.12 With these words, the President of Tanzania, H.E. Jakaya M. Kikwete declared the 55<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association open and wished Delegates successful deliberations.

4.13 The Inaugural Function was attended by the Hon. Speaker and all members of the Indian Delegation. After the Inaugural Function, an official photograph of the Delegates and Observers was taken.

4.14 Thereafter, separate briefings were held for Delegates and Observers, Workshop Moderators, Discussion Leaders, Rapporteurs and Session Secretaries which were all attended by the designated members of the Indian Delegation.

## **5. Plenary Session - 1**

5.1 The First Plenary Session was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2009.

5.2 The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary association Dr. William F Shija addressed the gathering at the Inaugural Session. He said the year 2009 happened to be the 10th anniversary of the death of the father of

Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere who continued to be remembered by Tanzanians as having worked selflessly and sacrificed so much for the development of the nation called Tanzania. The day, 2<sup>nd</sup> October also happened to be the occasion to remember the contribution of Mahatma Gandhi who worked tirelessly, using non-violent means, for the development of democracy.

5.3 He referred to the “Extra-Budgetary Programmes/Projects” approved by the Executive Committee of CPA under the initiative of the Chairperson, the Hon Shafie Mohd. Apdal, MP. The new policy initiative was intended to deliver tangible facilities to the branches of CPA, and for the Association’s work to be seen on the ground for the promotion of democratic principles, particularly in developing countries. The first funds were to benefit the Branches of St Lucia, Zanzibar, Bougainville, Kwara State in Nigeria and Namibia. The second stage of this initiative is known as “The Little Acorns” project, which will be launched during this conference starting with three beneficiaries in Tanzania - one school in Arusha, another school in Zanzibar and a third school in Dodoma. The Little Acorns project aims to equip educational institutions with information technology facilities for the purpose of promoting democracy and good governance among the youth. It is hoped that with the assistance of partners and the usual cooperation, this project will continue to grow and benefit more Branches.

5.4 He informed delegates that the Executive Committee had already approved the planning to mark the centennial celebrations for the CPA in 2011 when the conference would be held in the United Kingdom.

5.5 Parliamentarians gathered should feel free to contribute and critique what the United Nations and other agencies are doing to establish a global response to the economic crisis, including the processes of reforming the United Nations and the world economic, financial and trading system to prevent a repetition of such a crisis. The CPA Executive Committee had in 2009 approved the formation of a Climate Change Task Force to formulate actions to combat the impacts of climate change. Also, in July this year, the CPA UK Branch convened a conference on

Climate Change, in London, the outcome of which was to be shared with delegates at the Arusha Conference. Similar discussions on climate change were held during the Regional Conferences of the Africa and Caribbean Regions.

5.6 He was also glad that delegates at this conference would debate the issue of terrorism, which continues to be a peril of immense social and economic consequences for both developing and developed countries. The impact of terrorism includes: the diversion of foreign direct investment, destruction of infrastructure, redirection of public investment to security and the limitation of trade. Terrorism, like civil conflicts, may cause spillover costs among neighbouring countries, as a terrorist campaign in a neighbour dissuades capital inflows, or a regional multiplier causes lost economic activity in the terror-ridden country to resonate throughout the region. Some of the regions such as Asia and India are currently feeling the most recent effects of terrorism. I hope that this conference will provide not only an opportunity for the sharing of experiences but devising more legislative and other mechanisms to combat terrorism at national, regional and international levels. He wished the delegates successful and fruitful deliberations over the next few days.

5.7 Mrs. Mmasekgoa Masire Mwamba, Deputy Secretary-General, Commonwealth also addressed the gathering. She stressed on the importance of Parliament, Parliamentarians, Commonwealth and democracy. She mentioned that Commonwealth often refers to democracy and development as twin pillars of it's work. She praised the work of CPA which is helping parliaments to enhance their integrity. Accordingly to Mrs. Mwamba, democracy is a journey and not a destination. It needs constantly to be nurtured, protected and promoted. The goal of Commonwealth is to create a Commonwealth of democracies where a genuine, credible election reflecting the will of the people, determines and credibility and legitimacy of the elected legislature and the government.

Mrs. Mwamba informed that the Commonwealth targets at least 30 percent of Women in positions of decision making by 2015.

The session closed after some questions and clarificatory answers regarding the projects undertaken by CPA.

## **6. Plenary – 2 : Can Trade Liberalisation Benefit the Commonwealth in the Current Economic Climate ?**

6.1 The Second Plenary was held on 5<sup>Th</sup> October, 2009 on the subject ‘Can Trade Liberalisation Benefit the Commonwealth in the Current Economic Climate ?’. Arguing that reverting to a new age of protectionism and subsidies will not help domestic economies to recover, participants called for the expansion of the global free market led by Commonwealth governments and Parliamentarians. But world trade must take place in an environment in which all benefit. Appropriate safeguards must prevent abuses of free trade which Members said are continuing and are appearing in new forms in government responses to the financial crisis.

6.2 Several Members acknowledged that subsidies and other forms of government intervention in free market economies will continue to be required to raise developing economies to a point where they can compete internationally on an equitable basis or to deal with periodic fluctuations which are part of all free market economies. These interventions should be recognized as legitimate but interim measures as genuinely free and equitable trade is the best route out of poverty.

6.3 The use of high tariffs and other forms of protectionism lasted for 44 years in India during which time the country developed a solid democracy but its economy grew only slowly. This period ended in 1991 when a balance of payments crisis forced the country to pledge its gold reserves to cover debts and caused it to recognize the need to change to significant liberalization, Shri Bajjayant Panda, MP, told delegates. The Indian Parliamentarian said his country is now a mix of developed and developing economies and an international advocate of free trade.

6.4 Shri B.J. Panda, M.P. (Lok Sabha) clarified that while there is broad agreement that free trade is the most effective engine for development and the 1997 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting supported free trade, it should be noted that all agreements have built-in mechanisms to protect small developing economies. Commonwealth nations now account for 30 per cent of global trade and they include economies at all stages of development. Protectionism cost India nearly five decades of development until it removed all its restrictions including internal barriers. It continues to develop now despite the current global economic downturn which he warned is a cycle which will return. Such shocks can be good at times providing a “wake-up-call” to stagnating economies, he said.

6.5 The current recession, which he said, started in 2007 in the United States and was caused by mismanagement by some financial institutions, has revealed a new phenomenon in which the developed economies are not the only engines of global economic growth. China and India have joined the developed economies and are doing spectacularly well, despite some slowdown in performance. He said India’s economic growth rate has recently doubled from the levels of three to 3.5 per cent that it experienced before it liberalized. Other economic indicators are also positive as the country reduces the number of people living in poverty by one percentage point a year.

6.6 But he agreed with others who advocated some form of continuing protectionism. With 700 million farmers, most of them economically vulnerable, India pleads for free trade while continuing appropriate safeguards to protect its developing sectors and to keep its democracy stable.

6.7 A second speaker from the British Parliament, Mr. Nigel Evans, MP, also spoke out against the poor being exploited as a source of cheap labour. The Commonwealth and all developed nations should advocate fair practices in labour as well as in the trade in goods.

6.8 Trade which is completely free is not always possible, he added. The U.K. is a member of both the Commonwealth and the European Union, yet the EU is just as protectionist a grouping as the United States.

6.9 Hon. Peter Baiya, and Hon. Charles Onyancha, MP, of Kenya argued that the developed countries which espouse free trade also continue to protect sectors in their own economies. If developed countries remain as the only beneficiaries, free trade will be unsustainable.

6.10 Mr. Baijayant J. Panda, MP (Lok Sabha) said high levels of subsidies, particularly on agricultural produce, distort competition and therefore unfairly benefit developed countries. Bank bailouts by governments in developed countries are also subsidies which interfere with free market economies.

Developing countries receive unfairly low prices for primary products, he said. They need a level playing field so their produce can compete fairly in the international market.

## **7. Workshops held on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2009:**

### **7.1 Workshop A: COALITION GOVERNMENTS -- PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY IN DILEMMA?**

7.1.1 The workshop was moderated by Hon.Raphael Chegeni, MP,Magu and the following were Discussion Leaders: Hon;Gertrude I.Mongella, MP.Ukerewe, Hon.Halima Mdee,MP. Special seats were assigned to Hon,Jeneralli Ulimwengu Prof.Palamaggamba Kabudi,Lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam.

7.1.2 The Workshop addressed the issues of the emerging trends of coalition Governments in Africa. Whereas some speakers believed that coalition governments were a result of failed democracies and the democratic process, especially the electoral process and are bound to fail, saying that these were governments for convenience, other delegates especially those from India and Malaysia said coalition governments mandated by the people themselves resulted in economic successes and political stability as exhibited in their countries.

However they said in order for a coalition government to work effectively there are underlying conditions such as the formed government should work within agreed policies and rules, there must be transparency and the rule of law in the running of that government, it should always strive to serve the interests of the people, there must be a continuous communication among the members of the coalition in order to that disputes were averted.

7.1.3 In conclusion, some delegates suggested that in the eventuality of the failure of coalition governments, we should resort to proportional representation and move away from politics of competition to politics of complementarity which in turn leads to inclusiveness and make those in power servants of the people and not masters of the people.

7.1.4 Hon. Dr. Getrude I. Mongella, MP, Ukerewe in Tanzania said in Africa before colonization, elections were not through voting rather elders in society were entrusted and respected in making decisions for the society. She cited the Maasai's in Tanzania where age was important for decision making on behalf of the society. Halima Mdee MP, Tanzania in her presentation said coalition governments may be formed out of necessity. Citing Kenya and Zimbabwe, she said the formed coalitions may not necessarily be bad but much will depend on how quickly they focus on constitution making. She warned that it is a mistake to look at the present government in Kenya as a coalition government in the conventional sense of proportional representation. Rather, it was a transitional arrangement created to restore the legitimacy of the state by facilitating the process of producing a new constitution which would address the longstanding grievances. In her concluding remarks she argued that if coalitions are perceived as transitional mechanisms for working out popular national visions and rewriting national constitutions they will have served a positive end, while if on the other hand they are seized by rent-seeking elites as opportunities to share the spoils of political power that will block democratization and underwrite political decay in Africa.

7.1.5 Prof.Parramagamba Kabudi, a Lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam in his presentation, mentioned the cases of National Unity governments. He said these are deliberately formed such as in a post-apartheid South Africa and Ruanda. They are formed as part of National healing. He also urged third generation coalitions to learn from the experiences of India.

7.1.6 Hon.Vikram Verma, MP, India said coalition government had worked perfectly well in India and it had been there for the past twenty years. He said coalition worked if it was mandated by the people. The rise of coalition governments is a manifestation of the widening and deepening of democracy in India. Different regions and social groups have acquired a greater stake in the system with regional and State-based parties that seek to represent them winning an increasing number of seats in Parliament.

7.1.7 What has emerged in India as a pattern of coalition formation is that, despite being ideologically heterogeneous, parties both national and regional, come together on the basis of programmatic compatibility. The formulation of a ‘Common Minimum Programme’ through extensive negotiations and the constitution of a Coordination Committee of the alliance to help parties to resolve the day-to-day problems are mechanisms India is now familiar with.

7.1.8 The fact that each of the two major coalitional formations, namely, the National Democratic Alliance and the United Progressive Alliance, has completed the full five-year term in their own turns, is a significant development as the internal mechanisms of managing a coalition have successfully worked to sustain coalitions and to provide relative political stability. Coalitions and governance through coalition government are not per se unstable or unsuited to parliamentary democracy.

7.1.9 Hon.Dato Abdul Halim bin Hussain. Speaker, Penang, Malaysia told the members that Malaysia has an experience of 52 years of coalition government. He gave conditions which were necessary for the efficient functioning of the system such as: agreed policies, continuous engagements (communication)

among the members of the coalition government, transparency of government in the running of its affairs and the Executive, Judiciary and the Parliament should be independent in their deliberations. He said currently there are 14 members in the coalition government and all problems related to coalition government are solved in a cordial manner.

7.1.10 Participating in the discussion, Hon. Baijayant J. Panda, MP, Lok Sabha said coalition governments are now a reality. India in the past 14 years has seen a stable government leading to increased economic growth. The coalition is safeguarded by various laws such as the law of prohibiting floor crossing and other anti-defection laws.

7.1.11 Hon. K. T. Gyaltsen, MP, Sikkim, India said the basis of democracy is the rule of law and India has successfully progressed as a result of rule of law. He said rules that will direct how coalition government will be run and respecting people's rights would bring democracy.

## **7.2 Workshop 'B': Policy Responses to the Global Financial Crisis**

7.2.1 The Workshop was moderated by Senator Alan Ferguson, Deputy Speaker of the Senate, Australia. The Discussion Leaders were : Hon. D. Giselle Isaac-Arrindell, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Antigua and Barbuda, Prof. the Hon. Ben Turok, MP, South Africa; Hon. Abdallah Omar Kigoda, MP, Tanzania; Hon. Michael Carrington, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Barbados; Mr. Kevin Deveaux, Parliamentary Development Policy Adviser, United Nations Development Programme.

7.2.2 Economic stimulus packages to inject money into national economies were highlighted as a common government policy response to the global financial crisis but participants in this workshop also stressed the need for better government oversight and regulation of financial institutions, including oversight at the international level. Women were urged to be more active in agitating for

policies to benefit them as there was a consensus that women were suffering more than men from the effects of the recession.

7.2.3 The critical factors that led to the current crisis were identified as including such failings as: insufficient government regulation of the financial sector, an overdependence on flawed conventional economic policy, inadequate accounting and inaccurate financial readings by government. These were coupled with flawed monitoring of the state of national economies by previously trusted watchdogs such as the International Monetary Fund whose inaccurate reports misled governments as to the true state of economies, said Members.

7.2.4 The ineffectiveness of government was often overlooked as a cause of the crisis, but it was reflected in the absence of oversight and the passage of legislation which in many cases represented the interests of a few as opposed to the interests of the majority. The infusion of government money to stabilize and energize economies could improve the macroeconomic environment, said Members, adding that this should lead to a reversal of the misfortunes now affecting small states. While participants noted that the effects of the recession were widely felt in such ways as massive unemployment, bank failures, huge indebtedness, a lack of growth in the real economy and a fall in tourism, they also predicted that the effectiveness of policy responses will vary from country to country.

7.2.5 Hon. D. Giselle Isaac-Arrindell, MP, (Antigua and Barbuda) opened the debate, reflecting on the disproportionately adverse effect the global financial crisis had had on her country. She highlighted that while most of the countries in the Caribbean, Atlantic and Americas region could pinpoint one broad crisis, Antigua and Barbuda had three distinct parts. Before the global recession really hit home, news of the R. Allen Stanford scandal – in which the owner of the Stanford International Bank, headquartered in Antigua was accused and then charged in connection with an US\$8 billion fraud – failed to highlight the plight of the 800 employees who faced the breadline as a result of the debacle.

Furthermore, by the time the 2008 winter tourist season came to an end, the global crisis had really begun to take shape as properties with little or no bookings started to let staff go or reduce the number of shifts. Consequently, she stated that both direct and indirect taxes dropped by 25 per cent, causing an ongoing late payment of civil servants' salaries and the inability to make social security and other contributions on the local level as well as an inability to properly service its loan obligations on the regional and international levels. The third part of the country's crisis came as a result of the current situation that was happening in Florida, whereby the abrupt shutting down of the new housing market, left investors from a regional company "holding an empty bag".

7.2.6 Antigua and Barbuda, along with the other Organisation of Eastern Caribbean State (OECS) nations, was seriously considering Trinidad and Tobago's offer to join their union as a trade partner. More importantly, she informed delegates that the government – through its recently formed Investment Authority – was actively soliciting, promoting and enabling investment by local individuals and small businesses to fill the gap left by the absence of direct foreign investment from the US, UK and Europe. Ms. Isaac-Arrindell concluded that as a tourism-dependent nation, the country was reaching out to new and untapped tourism markets, rather than depending upon its staple American, British, European and Canadian patrons.

7.2.7 Discussion leader Professor Ben Turok, MP (South Africa) recognized that the global financial crisis had thrown many political leaders off-balance. The old certainties based on traditional orthodox economic policies had been challenged and were found to be seriously flawed. He argued that the financial crisis rapidly became a crisis of the real economy whereby banks failed, redundancies were on the increase and many people faced hardship in some of the world's most advanced economies. Prof. Turok added that organizations entrusted with globally rating economies such as Standard and Poor, were too found suspect,

while the major institution charged with overseeing the world's economies, the IMF had failed to predict the coming crisis.

7.2.8 As a result, policy makers and political leaders have questioned the foundations of economic theory and economic practice. Prof. Turok said that this self-doubt had spread to a questioning of the role of certain state institutions and policies of government, a move that had prompted the French Prime Minister, Francois Fillon to comment that “the crisis has modified Europe’s ideological landscape” and that even the “British government, once firms proponents of liberal, free-market economies policies, had accepted that opening markets was not sufficient and that more state intervention and investment was now needed”. Prof. Turok stated that there was now intense self examination in the developed countries, which in turn required developing countries to review its own policies more seriously.

7.2.9 Prof. Turok claimed that developing countries should slow down its export of minerals and other primary commodities as well as institute programmes of beneficiation which would allow value to be added within the country, not abroad, create jobs and build technical capabilities.

7.2.10 Prof. Turok called for the end to the “double standards applied by the IMF and the World Bank”, claiming that the UN General Assembly was fully briefed on the total dereliction of the Fund in its surveillance duties of the US financial system but neglected to monitor the situation given they were too busy telling developing countries what to do. Good governance, he argued, had to be applied at home and not just abroad. While it was clear that some international oversight body was needed, Prof. Turok said it had to be “even handed and not discriminate against the poor”. The challenge then for Parliamentarians was to “inform ourselves of these issues and seek common ground internationally”, of which the CPA, IPU and the UN could play a major part. He concluded that national Parliaments had to regularly debate these matters and not leave it to the

executive alone, for there were important matters of public policy at stake, which the people had a right to be properly informed about.

7.2.11 Mr. Kevin Deveaux, Parliamentary Development Policy Adviser from the United Nations Development Programme said that in many countries, it was Parliaments that passed the legislation that in turn created a more liberal financial system that resulted in many of the economic challenges now being faced. This may have occurred as a result of:

- (a) Executive capture in which the Parliament was weak and the executive had driven the agenda with regard to political and economic reforms: or
- (b) Special interest capture in which a particular sector (political or economic elite) have effectively convinced the Parliament of the benefit in losing regulations with regard to banking or trade policies that resulted in an export-driven economy with limited internal demand.

7.2.12 Mr. Deveaux added that a second area of concern was in regard to oversight of the economy by Parliaments. Without the technical support to effectively question the executive branch as its economic policies, Parliaments were unable to ensure the accountability necessary to ensure such policies reflected the interests of all citizens. Lastly, he highlighted that many Parliamentarians in many countries were unwilling to ask the tough questions when remittances, emigration and loose credit created relatively good economic conditions. He argued that if anything could be discerned from this crisis, it was that the interests of a minority had usurped the interest of the majority – locally, nationally and globally. Without proper oversight of the financial sector, this problem was allowed to grow into a major crisis. Parliaments had a role to play in scrutinizing draft laws as the financial and economic sectors were re-regulated. Once these laws were passed, oversight of the implementation of such laws had to also occur.

7.2.13 The delegate from India, Hon Shri Bhakta Charan Das, MP India said that it was imperative to eliminate all traces of protectionism from the

financial rescue packages that have been put in place by the major industrialized countries. In G-20 Summit held in London in April this year, the Prime Minister of India, H.E. Dr. Manmohan Singh had very rightly drawn the attention of the international community towards the problems being faced by the developing countries due to the massive withdrawal of private capital in the wake of the on-going financial crisis. Indian Prime Minister's call for ensuring increased flow of resources to these countries from the international financial institutions to help them maintain a higher level of demand which, in turn, would help the revival of global economy, deserves utmost attention.

7.2.14 A consensus among the national Parliaments towards encouraging their respective Governments to cooperate in promoting a new rule-based international financial system was necessary so that a more just and transparent global economic structure could be established.

### **7.3 Workshop 'C': Role of Commonwealth Parliaments in Combating Terrorism**

7.3.1 Workshop C, on the Role of Commonwealth Parliaments in Combating Terrorism was moderated by Mr. Nigel Evans, MP, United Kingdom. The discussion leaders were Hon. Dr. Willbrod Slaa, MP, Tanzania, Hon. Jenny Gardiner, MLC, Australia, Senator Jan Jamali, Pakistan, Mr. Fred Matiangi, Chief of Party, State University of New York – Kenya.

7.3.2 The workshop addressed the issue of the role of Commonwealth Parliaments in combating terrorism. Participants accepted that parliaments have a significant role to play in ensuring the safety and security of those they serve to represent. The effectiveness of parliaments in performing this role may be enhanced by greater cooperation and information sharing among member jurisdictions; however, parliaments must be careful when considering security initiatives that the right balance is being maintained between security and the

protection of freedom and human rights. Any new security initiative must not erode the hard fought for freedoms and liberties so cherished by citizens of the Commonwealth. Workshop participants also explored the root causes of terrorism, including poverty, the relationship between the developed and developing world and the question of what constitutes terrorism and the difficulties associated with defining it.

7.3.3 Dr. Slaa explored the different definitions of terrorism, the different forms that terrorism may take and the root causes of terrorism. In his view, all terrorist acts are motivated by two things: social and political injustice and the belief that violence, or its threat, will be effective and usher in change. Dr. Slaa identified ethnicity, nationalism/separation, economic disadvantage and globalization, non-democracy, dehumanization, and religion as some of the main causes for terrorism and presented his views on the various forms of anti-terrorism legislation in existence across Commonwealth countries. He also challenged participants to contemplate how effective these measures have been and if a collective, or one approach for all, has been (or will be) the most effective method in combating terrorism across the commonwealth. Will using the same legislative instruments to combat terrorism deliver results particularly when the threat and form of terrorism across the commonwealth can vary so greatly ? In conclusion, Dr. Slaa emphasized the importance for the commonwealth to strike an appropriate balance between civil liberties, human rights and new security innovation. The temptation to broadly discuss acts of terrorism should be resisted as this simply feeds the interest of terrorists to perpetrate further acts of terrorism. The Commonwealth should work to create a definition of terrorism in presenting a unified approach to more effectively and cooperatively combat terrorism.

7.3.4 Ms. Gardiner provided examples of anti-terrorism initiatives taken by Australia and emphasized the need for a unified and collaborative approach to

effectively combat terrorism. She also supported the position that any counter terrorism measure must be carefully considered to ensure that an acceptable balance is achieved between individual and collective rights and any expanded powers for police and intelligence agencies being contemplated. Ms. Gardiner concluded by providing delegates with an overview of statutory changes in Australia introduced to combat terrorism, including new territorial and state laws, Crime Act initiatives respecting explosive devices and new mandatory reporting of stolen chemicals. Ms. Gardiner contended that it is a fundamental responsibility for all parliamentarians to be active in protecting citizens from harm.

7.3.5 Mr. Fred Matiangi, Country Director, Kenya Parliamentary Strengthening Program, said that despite thirteen international counter-terrorism conventions, numerous resolutions and an attempt by the Security Council to define the term in 2004, the international community has still failed to agree on a legal definition of terrorism. This failure has allowed for the enactment of inconsistent national definitions across the Commonwealth, many of which have a wide scope to punish numerous acts of lawful conduct as terrorist offences. Mr. Matiangi then presented some examples of the various definitions of terrorism adopted by different nations within the Commonwealth.

7.3.6 Senator Jan Jamali from Pakistan offered his contribution as a tribute to the memory of the late former Prime Minister of Pakistan, the Hon. Benazir Bhutto, who herself died as a result of terrorist action. Senator Jamali focused on the immense practical costs of terrorism, the roots of terrorism being in poverty and conflict and the international challenge of, in a unified way, fighting terrorism yet being ever mindful of the to ensure that these initiatives do not impinge on individual freedoms.

7.3.7 Hon. Harbans Kapoor, Legislative Assembly of Uttarakhand, India, reiterated the need for parliaments to collectively combat terrorism and stressed

vulnerability of soft targets and emphasised the need to be strong and united in order to achieve maximum effect.

7.3.8 Lord Nanvit Dholakia, UK, noted that terrorism knows no geographic boundaries and that security of citizens is one of the major responsibilities of parliaments. He contended that the United Nations must be more active and identified poverty as the root cause of terrorism.

7.3.9 Hon. W.D.J. Seniviratne, Sri Lanka recounted some of the horrific Sri Lankan experiences with terrorism and its efforts to promote a peaceful coexistence among all nations of the commonwealth and of the world. Hon. Abdulla Shahid, Maldives, expressed that legislation is necessary but more work is required to ensure that it is sufficient to address the present security environment and that all must work collectively to deal with the practical effects of terrorism and reinforced that the Muslim community does not condone terrorism.

7.3.10 Intervening in the debate, Hon. Dushyant Singh, MP, Lok Sabha, India, stated India has been a victim of cross-border terrorism for decades and has been strongly advocating a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) to provide a holistic legal instrument to cover all aspects of terrorism as also to ensure effective international cooperation to fight against this global problem. India is signatory to all 13 UN Conventions on Terrorism, in addition to other bilateral and multilateral arrangements. India has supported the United Nations Global Counter Terrorism Strategy and the Plan of Action that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2006. He focused on the negative economic effects of terrorism and said measured legislative response should emphasize cooperation, love, respect and affection for fellow men if it is to truly present a sustainable solution. Parliamentarians can play an important role in combating terrorism by strengthening the democratic institutions in our respective countries as also by sharing and exchanging intelligence and information regarding the methods of fighting terrorism.

7.3.11 Mir M.H.K. Talour, Sindh, Pakistan, suggested that more attention should be directed to investigating the funding of terrorist activity.

7.3.12 Other examples of counter terrorism measures introduced were offered with several recurring themes emerged, including; the loss resulting from certain acts of terrorism, the recognition that an act of terrorism is local but the effects are broad reaching, that the problem is unquestionably an international one, that good government in one region may not necessarily be seen as good governance in another and that new security policies must be inclusive and sensitive to regional needs so all citizens of that region would feel empowered.

7.3.13 In conclusion, it was generally agreed that the Commonwealth has a role to play in combating terrorism but must be careful in so doing to ensure that civil liberties and hard fought for freedoms are not eroded. Further, the complexity of the problem demands that each jurisdiction may well require different measures to effectively get to the root of terrorism; however, the sharing of information and cooperation among member states of the commonwealth will undoubtedly provide benefit and will serve to assist the Commonwealth in combating terrorism.

#### **7.4 Workshop ‘D’: The role of Parliament in shaping the information society**

7.4.1 The Workshop was moderated by Hon. Hamide Francis Renner, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Gambia. The Discussion Leaders were : Hon. Asser Kapere, MP, Namibia; Hon. Meira Kumar, MP, Speaker of Lok Sabha , India; Hon. Ted Staffen, Yukon, Canada; Hon. Mahmoud Thabit Kambo, MHR, Zanaiba, Tanzaniar; Mr. Gherardo Casini, Global Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Parliament and Mr. Mitchell O’Brien, World Bank Institute.

7.4.2 Initiating the discussion, Hon Smt Meira Kumar said that Parliamentarians should recognize governance as a transformative process. While information and knowledge had always existed and treasured, they were held as a preserve of the elites in the past. The march of democracy had created conditions for sharing all information and knowledge with all sections of society. The digital technology was very enabling in this respect.

7.4.3 She said that the Information Technology Act was passed by Parliament of India in 2000 to make e-commerce a valid means of conducting business. Recognising the importance of harnessing communication technologies for e-governance, India launched a National e-Governance Plan in 2006. The Right to Information Act was passed in 2005 to usher in a new era for public administration in India. Elections in 2009 to the national Parliament were conducted by the world's largest democracy by electronic voting for 714 million voters. She was proud about the fact that one of the first pieces of legislation passed after she became Speaker of Lok Sabha was the Right to Free and Compulsory Education of Children Act of 2009. Without basic education services being guaranteed by Government, the involvement of the youth and bridging the digital divide was not possible. She said she would pursue the linking of the prestigious Indian Parliamentary Library with renowned libraries across the world. She concluded by saying that systems make it possible; only people can use these systems to make opportunities available to all citizens to access and gain from our world heritage and new knowledge.

7.4.4 Discussion leader Hon. Asser Kapere, MP (Namibia) highlighted the challenge of Parliamentarians acquiring a familiarity and expertise in using information communication technologies. He shared his fascination for ICT and emphasized the need to harness technologies in an age where governance functions are increasingly regulated in nature rather than cast in terms of government control.

7.4.5 Discussion leader Hon. Mahmoud Thabit Kambo, MHR, (Zanzibar, Tanzania) focused on problems representatives faced in communicating with the constituency. He described how information complimented development goods citing various illustrations to show the direct relation between growth in GDP and ICT. In addition, Mr. Kambo argued that Parliaments could effectively deploy ICT for its oversight functions which were often conducted in Cameroon.

7.4.6 Mr. Gherado Cassini, Executive Coordinator, Global Centre for ICT in Parliament , pointed out that technology itself would remain a key driver in the domain of shaping an information society. He suggested that the first step to bridging the digital divide was to set up telecentres for remote villages. He emphasized the need to share success stories and encouraged Parliaments to become active participants in the global WISS process.

7.4.7 Mr. Mitchell O'Brien, parliamentary strengthening programme, World Bank Institute, posed the ICT challenges from the user point of view of Parliaments who could use ICT as a tool to lend greater transparency to the budget process and for fighting corruption. He elaborated that since ICT stimulated innovation, securing a framework for the free flow of information between Parliament/government and citizens was crucial to development. The issues of access for all, problems of cost, literacy in developing countries, the need for Parliamentarians to become computer literate, the political will to use ICT and adequate funding to set up the infrastructure were underlined by the moderator. Mr. O'Brien categorically stated that Parliaments had a responsibility to support countrywide use of ICT irrespective of the level of the development of the country.

7.4.8 When the discussion was opened to other delegates, the Lok Sabha television channel in India and e-learning in Australia were highlighted as successful examples. The topic of using radio to overcome the problem of literacy was also suggested and evoked great interest.

7.4.9 Parliament's contribution for propagating the use of ICT in Zambia was noted as an important development along with the fact that a Bill was pending before Parliament in Nigeria to make information more freely available. The need for legislators to use ICT to interact, rather than broadcast to the constituency was pointed out as an extremely important aspect of deploying ICT in democracies.

7.4.10 The workshop concluded that generating the political will to harness ICT for access, creating transparency and good governance was the problem and it was imperative that Parliamentarians played a catalytic role.

Parliamentarians must generate the political will among governments to make information and communications technology (ICT) – including older technology such as radio – accessible to all as part of a good governance campaign to improve transparency and expand citizen access to governments and Parliaments, argued Members in the workshop.

7.4.11 Recognising that the infrastructural costs of access and the challenge of improving literacy in developing countries have to be overcome, workshop participants noted the positive examples of parliamentary support for improved access to information in both the Commonwealth's developed and developing nations. The establishment of the Lok Sabha's own television channel in India, e-learning programmes in Australia, parliamentary support for the expansion of ICT in Zambia and freedom of information legislation before the Nigerian National Assembly demonstrated that advances in communications can be accomplished by all countries. The greater use of radio attracted wide interest as a medium which overcomes deficiencies in literacy.

7.4.12 Parliament must not allow governments to use a lack of development in other areas as an excuse for not expanding ICT accessibility, it was argued. ICT is an important tool to strengthen participatory democracy as it enables Parliamentarians to interact with citizens instead of just communicating information to them.

## **7.5 Workshop E: The Role of Parliamentarians in the Elimination of Violence Against Women with a Particular reference to Domestic Violence**

7.5.1 The workshop was moderated by Hon. Anna Abdallah , MP and President , Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians. The discussants were Hon. Marjorie Morton, MHA, Nevis Island, St.Christopher and Nevis President of the Assembly Hon.Mme Charlotte L'Ecuyer , MNA, Quebec , Canada and Hon.Ellen Lee, MP, Singapore.

7.5.2 The Commonwealth Women Legislators strongly condemned domestic violence against women indicating that it is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which has led to the prevention of the full advancement of women. Parliamentarians call upon governments to come up with a national strategy which can address the issues.

7.5.3 CWP pointed out that Governments lack the necessary expertise to develop and implement policy relating to violence against women. Therefore, a more cooperative relationship between governments and civil Society should be built to combat violence against women. There is no doubt that the civil society has a significant role to play but governments must be the movers of the initiatives that would eliminate domestic violence. In this regard Parliamentarians have a signal role to play.

Much can be said but so long as Governments do not have the Political will, the issue of domestic violence will fall on deaf ears. It is important therefore for governments to take up the challenge and start the initiative of eradicating the concept.

7.5.4 There is need for training of the judiciary – from Supreme Court justices to public defenders and prosecutors to social workers and support personnel to handle women whose rights have been violated. Parliamentarians should advocate for empowering women. Programmes that will give women

representation in power, politics, and financial projects. This will raise their self-esteem and also enable them defend their rights better hence reduce Domestic violence. It should be underscored that Lack of economic resources, has underpin women's vulnerability to violence.

7.5.5 Parliamentarians should also point out to the electorate the need to have the family values more stringent. A need for respect in the family especially for the girl child.

7.5.6 The delegate from India, Smt Ratna De said the Government of India has advised all the Ministries/Departments to include an identifiable allocation for women as part of their gender budgeting process in their programmes right from the planning process to monitoring, alteration and implementation and compile this information to reflect scheme with not less than 30 per cent of funds/benefits earmarked for women in all the women-related sectors.

7.5.7 She continued, to say that violence against women and girls continues to be a global epidemic that kills, tortures, and maims – physically, psychologically, sexually and economically. It is one of the most pervasive of human rights violations, denying women and girls equality, security, dignity, self-worth, and their right to enjoy fundamental freedoms.

## **7.6 Workshop 'F' : Climate Change – Are Policy Solutions Working?**

7.6.1 The workshop was moderated by Hon. Abdulla Shahid, MP, Maldives, Speaker of the People's Majlis The Discussion Leaders were : Dr Roberta Blackman Woods, MP, United Kingdom, Hon. Madame Fatima Houada Pepin, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Quebec, Canada, Hon. Timon R. Aneri, MP, Kiribati, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, MP, Bangladesh, Mr Mitchell O'Brien, Parliamentary Strengthening Program, World Bank Institute, Dr Habiba Gitay, Ecologist, Parliamentary Strengthening Program, World Bank Institute

7.6.2 All areas in the Commonwealth were experiencing the adverse effects of climate change on their local environments. These effects were manifest in

extreme weather events and apparent changes in weather patterns which present differently in different regions including, severe reductions in the levels of precipitation in some regions, exceptionally heavy rainfall in other regions and a general increase in temperatures around the world. The recent natural disasters in the Asia and Pacific regions have been caused or exacerbated by the effects of climate change. The severe threats to peoples and the environment in various regions are through inundation of land in low lying nations and more broadly, the loss of habitat for humans, animals and vegetation. There was a high level of concern among Parliamentarians about climate change, and members of the CPA would benefit from an ongoing dialogue on climate change. Such dialogue enables members to exchange experiences and become better informed in all aspects of the debate, including analysis of trends, predictions of outcomes and proposed policy approaches.

7.6.3 Delegates felt it was important to share their many experiences in relation to climate change, from reporting on the direct impact of climate change in their local environments through to identifying policies and programs which they considered to be effective in addressing the problems of climate change, and proposing practical measures to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. The examples raised included, government legislation and action plans, government support for UN proposals and also acknowledgments of the positive commitments of other countries and regions; New Zealand's pledge of financial support for climate change, Japan's Cool Earth Promotion Programme, the European Union's Global Climate Change Alliance, Australia's commitment to the Kyoto Protocol together with its recent announcement of a climate change programme, Bangladesh and UK parliamentary climate change inquiry.

Delegates agreed that systems and mechanisms needed to be responsive to local conditions and that everyone should join in and commence action to reduce emissions immediately. Furthermore, there was recognition that assistance to less developed countries and areas would be needed.

7.6.4 The Hon. Abdulla Shahid highlighted the special situation of the Maldives as the lowest lying country in the world facing the threat that much of the islands would be inundated with water from rising sea levels. One important policy aim of the government is to become carbon neutral by switching to renewable energy sources. The Maldives is willing to take practical action to commence adaptation. In order to emphasise the seriousness of the threat from climate change, shortly the Cabinet is to conduct a meeting entirely underwater to impress upon the world community the need for immediate action.

7.6.5 Dr Roberta Blackman Woods stated that the UK Government had developed an extensive climate change policy platform, which includes the Climate Change Act 2008, low carbon route maps and a climate impacts programme. The policy platform addresses mitigation and planning for adverse effects of climate change. She identified four challenges, to increase the speed of delivery of renewable energy, to persuade all people to adopt good practices and conserve energy use, to encourage business to adopt good practices and to transfer knowledge in relation to all aspects of climate change issues on a global basis.

7.6.6 The Hon. Madame Fatima Houda Pepin agreed that all countries are united in experiencing problems associated with adverse climate change. It is important that sustainable development, climate change and energy should not be dealt with in isolation from one another. Quebec has a good reputation for addressing the problems arising from adverse climate change and it is making every effort to ensure that natural resources are developed in a sustainable manner, Renewable energies account for a high proportion of Quebec's total energy consumption, for example wind and hydel electricity. The Sustainable Development Act 2006 establishes a management framework to guide all government action in Quebec in the interests of present and future society. The Act affirms the right of everyone to live in a healthful environment and obliges the government administration to pursue and foster sustainable development. Furthermore, there is a requirement

for these measures to be monitored and parliamentarians have a role in examining plans.

7.6.7 Delegates from Kiribati, Mr Timon Aneri and Dr Tataina, MP, and Bangladesh, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and the Hon. Dr Ashequr Rahmin, MP, spoke about the serious threats of climate change and sea level rise to the very existence of their communities and nations on low lying lands. While not major emitters of greenhouse gases, these nations are among the worst affected communities of adverse climate change. Mr Aneri called for greater leadership from developed countries in relation to solutions for these seriously affected areas as there was an immediate need for decisions to support practical measures. He stated that these communities had been appealing to the broader international community for some years asking for action and solutions for those low lying areas seriously at risk of inundation by sea water. He explained that mitigation and adaptation strategies were an integral component of Kiribati's response to climate change, with seawall construction as the main adaptation measure currently undertaken by the Government. However, Kiribati needs assistance to increase its seawall construction because it has resources to protect public infrastructure only, and not private properties. Mr Aneri said that researchers had estimated that projected sea level rises would mean that Kiribati would be uninhabitable within 50 years, so the Government of Kiribati was developing a relocation strategy. Dr Tataina spoke of the need to carry out research which was relevant to each region because policies should be examined to determine whether they are providing effective solutions.

7.6.8 Sheikh Selim explained that in Bangladesh the potential for natural disaster was severe, especially given that a one metre rise in sea level would inundate a third of the country. Analysis suggests that Bangladesh's economy would be severely challenged due to climate change as already a substantial portion of its resources are being used for disaster constructions and rehabilitation efforts. Sheikh Selim was looking forward to the establishment of a new World Climate

Services System, one of the outcomes of the UN World Climate Conference held earlier in the year, which should lead to enhanced predictions and climate information. Mr Rahmin concluded that everyone agreed that climate change is a vital issue having a global dimension. For example, air pollution was not confined by national boundaries so solutions should be devised on a regional basis and take into account all important issues.

7.6.9 Dr Habiba Gitay clarified that scientific recognitions of climate change were based on the recording of significant changes in climate which had taken place over decades. Of all carbon emissions, 80% derived from fossil fuels and 20% from land based activity, such as farm animals and deforestation. To date, there have been a lack of financial and human responses to the dangers. Dr Gitay encouraged action now which required developing countries and developed countries to work collectively. In particular, she agreed it was important to exchange information in relation to all actions related to climate change.

7.6.10 The Hon. James Netto, MP, Gibraltar, commented on the current overall lack of willingness to share the burden between developed and developing countries and said that resources or grants needed to be provided to developing countries. Nevertheless a collective approach was needed for all areas to become low carbon emission economies. The Hon. Charles Onyancha, MP, Kenya mentioned that the adverse effects of climate change present differently in different countries. In Kenya there have been prolonged droughts and the failure of crops. Aid was needed to assist less developed areas to address the problems.

7.6.11 Mr Shane Ardern, MP, New Zealand, referred to the media reports received from Samoa, over the course of the early days of the 55th CPC, which indicated there had been a major adverse weather event, and identified this as an example of climate change. He stated that New Zealand also was vulnerable to significant impacts due to adverse weather events because of the reliance of the economy on agriculture. One difficulty New Zealand faced in meeting emission control targets was because of the large herds of farmed cows producing methane

gas. Mr Ardern argued that the current system didn't adequately take account of such effects.

7.6.12 Mr Geia Halinaga, MP, South Africa, supported the development and implementation of policies in response to the many serious concerns about climate change. For example, longstanding practices such as cutting down trees to produce charcoal should be critically reviewed. Ms Niama, MP, South Africa, made some very practical observations – the effects of bad practices do not stay on one side of a border and so there is a need to adopt policies to stop bad practices. Furthermore, it is important to look for expertise and solutions everywhere and not just in developed countries.

7.6.13 Hon. Sophocles Fittis, MP, Cyprus, encouraged a global response to climate change to take effect now. Cyprus shares some of the weather events which are problems for the whole world, for example, experiencing a five year drought and the destruction of coastal areas. Mr Hari Ramkarran, MP, Speaker of the House, Guyana, commented that Guyana was experiencing the heaviest rainfall on record, especially in the hurricane season. Guyanan land is 80% forests and parks, and government policies supported a halt to deforestation. In general, the government supported UN proposals for reducing emissions and halting deforestation.

7.6.14 The delegate from India Hon Shri Bajjayant "Jay" Panda, MP India stated that India has probably the most comprehensive framework of legal and institutional mechanisms in the region in response to the challenge of Climate Change.

Our country, with 16 per cent of the world's population, contributes only 4 per cent of the total global greenhouse gas emissions. In terms of per capita CHG emissions in the year 2004, India is further lower at only 1.02 MT CO<sub>2</sub>. 1593 Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects have been approved in India by

the CDM National Designated Authority, and 420 of these have been registered by the CDM Executive Board.

7.6.15 The developed countries should fulfil their commitments for limiting and reducing their emissions as per the Kyoto Protocol as well as come forward and take deeper commitments beyond the year 2012. In addition, they should “take all practicable steps” to promote the development and transfer of environment friendly technologies to the developing countries.

### **7.7 Workshop ‘G’: Developing Mechanism to Remedy Root Causes of Political, Economic and Social Conflicts.**

7.7.1 Workshop G was moderated by Hon. Ronald Kiandee, M.P. (Malaysia). The Discussion Leaders were : Mr Norman Whittaker, M.P. (Guyana), Hon. Shri Bhakta Charan Das, M.P. (India), Hon. David Musila, MGH, M.P. (Kenya), Mr Kevin Deveaux, Parliamentary Development Policy Adviser (United Nations Development Programme).

7.7.2 The main issue raised and debated at this workshop concerned the need to have appropriate legislative structures and good practices in place that would prevent the breakout of conflicts arising from political, economic and social conflicts and that would lead to their peaceful resolution should they arise. The speakers who took part in this workshop came up with the following proposals:

- i) to have in place a constitution and other legal instruments that would guarantee a free, representative and transparent electoral process, institution building to provide for the rule of law, e.g. an impartial and efficient judiciary and law enforcement agencies, a parliament that would enact laws following a broad consultation process that would respect the interests of all sections of society and a parliament that would effectively exercise its oversight function to scrutinise the actions of the executive against abuse of power and corruption thus leading to good governance;

- ii) to make resources accessible to all, the proper distribution of national wealth and planning development in such a way that would benefit different regions and different social groups; and
- iii) tolerance and respect towards different ethnic and social groups and access to employment opportunities, education, health and other services to prevent social exclusion.

7.7.3 Mr Norman Whittaker M.P. (Guyana) explained that conflicts represented the clash of interests or values or actions. He added that the conflicts in Guyana, situated in South America, were rooted in its colonial past and in the failure or lack of ability of post independence (1966) governments to effect changes to the institutional structures that were an integral part of the colonial administration and which had given rise to a division based on ethnicity between the two large racial groups in Guyana, i.e. the blacks and the East Indians and, in some measure, the minority group of indigenous people. Mr Whittaker remarked that the influence of slavery and colonialism was evident in the administration and in the political structures and practices of Guyana such that authority and power were concentrated in the hands of a particular ethnic group and it therefore followed that most of the benefits that accrued went towards that dominant group. He argued that in the case of Guyana, the difference in ethnicity, whether real or perceived, were the roots of conflicts. Another cause of conflict mentioned by Mr Whittaker was the rigging of elections which was rampant for a period of 26 years after independence, i.e. between 1966 and 1992, by means of which the leadership did not represent the majority of the population. He added that this lack of accountability resulted in social inequalities that sparked riots and casualties. Mr Whittaker reported that this issue was remedied in 1992 when, with foreign assistance, free and fair elections were held thus ushering in a new era where people started having confidence in their leaders and that national reconciliation was embarked upon to remove the unjust and unequal society that had been created during the previous 26 years. Mr Whittaker stated that a wide

consultation process was carried out with a view to distribute power and wealth in such a manner that would reduce the gap between the rich and the poor by promoting unity through the dismantling of the tribal economic and social structure. He said that to participate in this process one did not have to necessarily join a political party because civil society had been actively engaged. Mr Whittaker remarked that one of the main sources of conflict was removed through a progressive constitutional reform following a wide consultation process that led to the strengthening of social justice and the rule of law. He continued that a useful tool to enhance cohesion was the setting up of a number of national commissions to represent the various interests and groups such as the gender and indigenous commissions, together with parliamentary committees some of which, like the Public Accounts Committee, were chaired by the Opposition to improve transparency and accountability. Another example cited by Mr Whittaker was the Elections Commission which was composed of 7 members, 3 nominated by the Opposition and 3 by the government with its chair being chosen by the president from a list of 6 persons submitted by the Opposition. He added that even the appointment of important constitutional posts, such as the Chief Justice and the judiciary, was undertaken after consulting with the Opposition which although it did not mean that the President was bound by these consultations in most cases a consensus was reached.

Mr Whittaker concluded that conflicts would continue to breakout however having strong political institutions and appropriate legal instruments in place did contribute towards good governance and to reforms in the distribution of wealth.

7.7.4 Shri Bhakta Charan Das, M.P., India explained that conflicts were often secessionist or nationalist in nature. He added that it was the civilian population that suffered most in the advent of conflicts and pointed out the several negative aspects of modern conflicts such as child soldiers, kidnapping and violence against women. He said that by the year 2000 international conflicts had

generated 13 million refugees and asylum seekers worldwide and in addition some 25 million people were displaced within their own country. He explained that India was a country of many religions, ethnic groups, castes and creed and that it had always had a strong belief in tolerance, compromise and consultation based on universal brotherhood and mutual respect.

7.7.5 Mr Das declared that India followed the philosophy, policies and teachings advocated by Mahatma Gandhi and Gautama Buddha who believed that the whole world was one family and that economic policy had to be directed at alleviating the hardship of all suffering persons. He maintained that issues concerning minority rights, women and children rights, human rights and other such issues, were being addressed in India by the setting up of national commissions and even of parliamentary committees composed of members from government and opposition. He expressed the opinion that globalisation had created an uneven distribution of wealth that was giving rise to conflicts in various parts of the world and he therefore urged that there should be a drive towards sustainable development. Mr Shri Bhakta Charan Das concluded that in solving political, economic and social conflicts India has followed the philosophy of Mahatma - meaning the great soul - Gandhi who advocated truth as the soul of life and that truth, consultation, freedom of expression and tolerance should be the guiding factors when dealing with contentious issues at all levels.

7.7.6 Hon. David Musila, MGH, M.P. (Kenya) argued that conflicts, be them individual, organisational, communal or international, arose from incompatibility and that conflicts were major contributors to poverty and to lack of development. He explained that there were many root causes of conflict, such as, exclusion from access and use of resources, lack of respect to the rule of law and weak institutional structures. Hon. Musila urged states to fight the culture of impunity which in itself encouraged other conflicts. He claimed that it was important to have commissions but more importantly the state had to act on the reports submitted by these commissions. Hon. Musila suggested that there should be

parliamentary groups both at local and at regional level to intervene swiftly wherever conflicts were building up and at that stage he mentioned the conflict in Kenya following the last election when its neighbours, namely Tanzania and Uganda, assisted Kenya in finding a solution. Hon. Musila concluded that people needed to feel included in the democratic process and yearned for the opportunity to make their input because most of the causes of conflict, especially in Africa, related to the structure of government that produced unequal opportunities and poverty.

7.7.7 Mr Kevin Deveaux, Parliamentary Development Policy Adviser (United Nations Development Programme) focused his speech on the three main functions of parliaments, i.e. law making, oversight by scrutinising the activities of government and representation by reflecting the needs of the people. Mr Deveaux remarked that parliaments were facing great challenges and difficulties in fulfilling their role and one of them was the lack of capacity of Members of Parliament and their staff. He added that Members of Parliament who were on a part-time basis or who were not adequately paid could not dedicate all their energy to parliamentary work and the lack of time could lead them to lose contact with the people who elected them thus detaching themselves from the problems on the ground. Mr Deveaux insisted that parliamentarians should enter into dialogue with the citizens both at the constituency level and at committee level to understand their concerns and to reflect those concerns when enacting legislation. He continued that parliaments had to enact laws that would benefit all and not just certain sectors to the detriment of others. Mr Deveaux observed that if parliamentarians were not adequately compensated financially they would be more prone to corruption and to operate not in a transparent manner. Mr Deveaux also mentioned that parliament was often not as effective as the executive or as the military and that was due to inadequate funding and to lack of human resources which limited their access to expertise both internally and externally. He added that such a situation limited parliament in effectively and

efficiently carrying out its functions especially with regard to oversight. Mr Deveaux remarked that parliaments needed to have the institutional authority emerging from appropriate rules and procedures and the necessary resources to enable it to scrutinise the executive whose actions or inactions were often the cause of conflicts. Mr Deveaux opined that parliament also needed to scrutinise the military establishment. Mr Deveaux pointed out that when parliament was not representative in its constitution there was the tendency that it could overlook the interests of minorities thus giving rise to animosity and conflict. Mr Deveaux noted that the international community did a lot of work with regard to assistance to countries in staging free and fair elections, even if these were considered as internal affairs, and he cited the recent example of Ghana which had gone through a very smooth electoral process supervised by a respected local commission with foreign assistance. Mr Deveaux proposed code of ethics for Members of Parliament, for the executive and for public officials along with the setting up of the Office of the Public Auditor as measures to promote accountability and good practices. He also insisted on the need for governments to adhere at the national level to certain international treaties which were primarily meant to address certain causes of conflict.

Mr Deveaux exposed another problem that parliaments faced in the sense that they were often looked upon as cumbersome machinery when it came to the resolution of conflicts and hence it was often bypassed and ignored on the pretext of urgency. He concluded that in such circumstances other institutions tended to usurp the role assigned to parliament which, he stressed, was the voice of the people and as such parliament should be a venue for dialogue especially in times of crisis and conflict.

7.7.8 Hon Nasharudin Mat Isa (Malaysia Branch) remarked that inequalities among the various communities had contributed to social unrest in Malaysia in 1969 and that since then measures, such as the development of the skills of the

workforce, had been implemented to improve the lives of all citizens with the result that since 1969 Malaysia has enjoyed a long period of peace. Hon Mat Isa added that a study has shown that Malaysia had managed to avoid political, economic and social conflicts primarily through its economic achievements because experience had demonstrated that conflict was more likely to occur in countries with low per capita income.

7.7.9 Hon Michael Mulemi Mabenga (Zambia Branch) opined that conflicts could be best managed positively through mediation, negotiation and consensus building among the parties concerned. He maintained that constitutional democracy offered the best means to manage conflicts through the parliamentary system, the rule of law and the judiciary.

7.7.10 Hon Douda Ibrahim Karfi (Katsina Branch, Nigeria) reported that Nigeria was rich in mineral wealth and that the population was made up of different ethnic groups which were united into one state. Hon Karfi remarked that Nigeria returned to democratic rule ten years ago and he claimed that the imposition of sanctions against a country created more problems rather than solved problems and at times even served as a source of conflict.

7.7.11 Hon Kuluta M.P. (Eastern Cape Province Branch, South Africa) proposed that there should be an international body, like Commonwealth, that would formulate a set of principles and rules that will be commonly applicable to all member states. Hon Kuluta argued that prevention was better than cure and suggested that where there were indications of irregularities like in the case of the rigging of elections, which was a process, such an international body should take immediate action before the issue would develop in a fully blown conflict.

7.7.12 Hon Tau paid tribute to the former President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, who had succeeded in uniting over 100 ethnic groups to form one nation and he stressed that African nations had to look at the structure of the state and to undertake measures aimed at nation building, a lesson which they could learn from the Tanzanian experience.

## **7.8 Workshop ‘H’: The Commonwealth and Youth –**

### **How to engage future generations in Representative Democracy**

7.8.1 The workshop was moderated by Hon Moana Mackey, MP, New Zealand. The Discussion Leaders were :Hon Sada Soli MP, Nigeria, Mr Rajkumar Bidla, Programme Officer, Commonwealth Youth Programme, Hon Carmel Sepuloni MP, New Zealand, Hon Lazaro Nyalandu MP, Tanzania

7.8.1 The Workshop agreed that demonstration of responsible and accountable leadership is vital if young people are to be allowed to have faith in the system. In discussing the best means of engaging young people in representative democracy, Members called on the political leadership to see youth as partners rather than as competitors for power. In particular, education is a key component of ensuring greater awareness of the possibilities of politics for creating solutions to the problems facing young people, especially at the secondary level. To achieve this, the school curriculum should be expanded to suit local conditions which vary considerably among different jurisdictions.

7.8.2 The process of engaging young people should be transparent. It should be available to all young people. Engagement with the young must be genuine and involve changes to the internal structures of political parties. Young people must see representative democracy not as a means of getting a job but as means of serving. A need was seen for structures within the Commonwealth and the CPA to engage with youth comparable to the structures for improving participation of women in politics.

## **8. Meeting of the Task Force on Climate Change on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2009 :**

8.1 As Moderator of the Task Force, Mr. Nigel Evans welcomed the launch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Task Force on Climate Change, commenting that the Task Force could be the voice for individuals who know the impact of climate change in their own countries and regions. While dialogue at the government level is important, he encouraged delegates to reflect on the added

dimension of a dialogue among parliaments and parliamentarians and to support the building up of a parliamentary network on climate change.

8.2 Mr. Evans advised delegates that a budget of £ 25000 was available to the Task Force to implement a programme to address the concerns identified. The aim was that together, the Task Force, the World Bank Institute and the Commonwealth Secretariat could support delegates and their parliaments to target national and international commitments.

8.3 It was vital that Parliaments and Parliamentarians contribute to world leadership in addressing the problems arising from climate change. A parliamentary network would enable individual jurisdictions and regions to better share and disseminate information on how to achieve energy reduction and to reduce carbon emissions at a local level. This exchange of information would enable individual Parliaments and Parliamentarians to facilitate practical action to implement changes to improve resilience in communities at the local and global levels. The CPA should lead global collective action now, including by contributing to the upcoming Climate Change Conference (COP15), scheduled to take place in December 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark, and beyond to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change. The members of the CPA desire an ongoing dialogue on climate change so that Parliamentarians can develop better access to available information which will enable them to engage with their communities, the private sector and the media and to contribute to responses to climate change for the long term. The Task Force would establish a programme to provide support to Parliaments and Parliamentarians, of developed and developing countries, in preparing action plans to establish legislation and policies to mitigate the effects of and adapt to climate change.

8.4 Through its role in encouraging delegates to work together, the Task Force could enhance processes for countries in developing individual legislative and programme responses in adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.

8.5 Dr. Roberta Blackman-Woods agreed it was a good idea. Mr. Mitchell O'Brien stated that the World Bank Institute (WBI) was committed to assist. Dr. Habiba Gitay saw a high priority need in better managing risks and sharing information, including technology transfer. However, it was but one step and not the endpoint. Effect responses to climate change needed to address issues critical for the long term, such as land management. The Hon. James Netto, MP, Gibraltar, restated the need not to focus too strongly on Copenhagen in the short term but encouraged delegates to look beyond that meeting.

8.6 The Hon. Jim K. Muhwezi, MP, Uganda, commented that while action was needed, policies needed to recognize practical issues, such as the need to eat as well as to protect the environment. Mr. Shane Ardern, MP, New Zealand, encouraged the Task Force to take careful action in preparing contributions to the conference in Copenhagen because outcomes needed to be realistic. He had a concern that sometimes actions don't seem appropriate for individual countries, for example, he cited the Kyoto Protocol ban on forestry offsets as inappropriate for agrarian economies and countries like New Zealand. Mr. Tom Marsters, MP, Cook Islands, expressed a doubt that some proposals for change would truly lead to best practices, for example, he was concerned about whether carbon trading schemes would result in a reduction of greenhouse gases. On the other hand, Hon. John Pandazopoulos, MP, Victoria, Australia, argued that a price mechanism was needed because he considered that someone had to pay to ensure positive change was achieved.

8.7 Delegates from Kiribati, Mr. Timon Aneri and Dr. Tataina, MP, and Bangladesh, Dr. Oli Ahmad, Bir Bikram MP, Mr. Nawab Ali Abbas Khan, MP, and the Hon. Dr. Ashequr Rahmin, MP, spoke further about the serious threats of rising sea levels to the very existence of their communities on low lying lands. The Hon. Phee Boon Poh, MP, Penang, Malaysia, identified that coastal flooding due to climate change seriously affected Malaysia also because most of its border

area was coastal. Dr. Ahmad said that, to address these issues, it was necessary to encourage an attitudinal change in everyone to contribute.

8.8 Shri Baijayant J. Panda, MP, India, observed that there had already been adverse impacts of climate change on the environment in India. He was concerned about future development in India, which had 4 % of the world's carbon and 16% of its people. The nation need to access energy to enable development and Shri Panda considered that with wind and solar energies still requiring further development to make them viable, he was in favour of carbon trading to enable the development resources, including by using coal energy.

8.9 Mr. Poh too was concerned that charges associated with carbon trading schemes acted as a tax on development and would mean lost revenues to individual economies. Ms. Vicky Dunne, MLA, Australian Capital Territory, Australia, informed the discussion that her region had been affected by drought, bushfires and storms. The local government had committed to Kyoto Protocol style goals and there was substantial community support for feed-in tariffs and energy efficiency targets. The Hon. Paul Delorey, MP, Speaker of the House, North West Territories, Canada, reported that the adverse effects of climate change were evident in the North West Territories of Canada and that caribou and polar bear were disappearing.

8.10 The Hon. Mwansa Kapeya, MP, Zambia, recognized that some countries were reporting on targets. He suggested that the Task Force review the current policies in response to the recent disasters in Asia and the Pacific areas. It was important to look at what developed countries had done and were doing because of the potential for developing countries to follow the same path.

## **9. General Assembly of CPA**

The General Assembly of CPA met in the forenoon of 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2009 and was presided over by Hon'ble Samuel John Sitta, Speaker of National Asembly, Tanzania. The General Assembly inter alia discussed the membership fee for the 2011, proposal to amend the ruels for conducting and contesting the

elections, report of the 29<sup>th</sup> Conference of Members from small branches, report on CWP, report on future venues, etc.

9.2 So far as the venue for the year 2011 is concerned in view of the worldwide economic climate General Assembly approved that the Executive Committee of the CPA will reconsider the matter in its meeting in May, 2010. In the General Assembly Hon'ble Kenneth Marende, Speaker of the National Assembly, Kenya was elected as the President of CPA. Rt. Hon. John Bercow, MP Speaker of the United Kingdom House of Commons was elected as the Vice-President of CPA for the year 2010. Hon. Kathleen Casey, MLA Speaker of the Prince Edward Island Legislative Assembly was elected as the Vice-Chairperson for the coming year. Smt. Meira Kumar, MP Speaker, Lok Sabha was elected as the CPA India Region Regional Representative by the General Assembly for the period 2009-2012 and Madhya Pradesh CPA Branch was elected as the stand by Branch from CPA India Region for the year 2009-2010.

9.3 Besides Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri Tanka Bahadur Rai, Speaker, Assam Legislative Assembly and Shri Uday Narain Choudhary, Speaker of Bihar Vidhan Sabha attended General Assembly as the Regional representative from CPA India Region. Shri Hasim Abdul Halim, Speaker, West Bengal, Legislative Assembly attended the General Assembly in his capacity of Treasurer of the CPA.

## **10. Extraordinary General Assembly Meeting of CPA India Region**

During the 55<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference an extraordinary General Assembly Meeting of CPA India Region was organized in Arusha, Tanzania on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2009.

10.2 The General Assembly approved the following recommendations of CPA India Region Executive Committee:

- (i) On dissolution of the region the surpluses, assets and unspent amount may not be returned to the participating members but utilized for the All India

Presiding Officers' Annual Conference, as all the participants would be same and that organization is also pursuing similar objectives.

- (ii) The appointment of M/s. S.S. Kothari Mehta & Company, 146-149, Tribhuvan Complex, Ishwar Nagar, Mathura Road, New Delhi-110065 to file Income Tax Returns for CPA India Region Accounts under intimation to the Executive Committee.
- (iii) Audited accounts of CPA India Region for the financial year 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.
- (iv) Broad responsibilities of CWP Steering Committee of CPA India Region.
- (v) The Regional Secretariat to request the State CPA Branches to constitute the State level Executive Committee and forward the name of their representatives for CWP Steering Committee of CPA India Region.
- (vi) Hosting of Regional conference for 2010 may be considered by these branches of CPA India Region.
- (vii) Funding and participation pattern of regional seminars.

## **11. Meetings of the Society of Clerks –at-the-Table**

Meetings of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table were held on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2009. Two topics viz. Parliamentary Privilege, procedure and practice; and Capacity Building and Human Resource Management were discussed. Secretary General, Lok Sabha participated in the first topic and Secretary General, Rajya Sabha participated in the second topic.

## **12. Bilateral Meeting**

On the sidelines of the Conference a meeting of delegations from India and United Kingdom was organized. Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha and some members of India Union delegates interacted with the delegation from United Kingdom attending the Conference. The discussions revolved around the issues related to climate change, the successful conducting of electronic voting during last general elections in India and the Right to Free and Compulsory Education of

Children Act, 2009 introduced in India. The meeting was cordial and delegates on both sides expressed a wish to further strengthen parliamentary relations between the two countries.

**13.** The Conference closed after the Second Plenary Session and a Meeting of the New Executive Committee on 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2009 and delegates departed for their respective countries on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

**New Delhi  
11 March, 2010**

**P.D.T. ACHARY  
Secretary - General  
Lok Sabha**