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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting  
its participation at the Expert Committee Meeting on Status  
(EXCO)**

**Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary  
Association**

**London, United Kingdom  
March 9 to 12, 2017**

## Report

Ms. Alexandra Mendès M.P. attended the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Status Expert Committee meeting in London, United Kingdom, on behalf of the Canadian Branch of the CPA from March 9th to 12th, 2017.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Secretariat (CPA) hosted the CPA Expert Committee in London, UK for Members to discuss the status of the Association.

Members of the CPA Executive Committee in attendance:

**Africa Region:** Hon. Justin Muturi, EGH, MP, Speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya.

**Asia Region:** Hon. Asiya Nasir, MNA, Member of National Assembly of Pakistan.

**Australia Region:** Hon Russell Wortley, MLC, President of Legislative Council of South Australia.

**British Islands & Mediterranean Region:** Hon. Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods, MP of United Kingdom.

**Canada Region:** Hon. Alexandra Mendès, MP of Canada Federal Parliament.

**Caribbean, Americas & Atlantic Region:** His Hon. Michael Carrington, QC, MP, Speaker of House of Assembly of Barbados.

**India Region:** Hon. Dr Kirit Somaiya, MP, Lok Sabha, India.

**Pacific Region:** Hon. Paul Foster-Bell, MP of New Zealand Parliament.

**South East Asia Region:** Hon YB Tuan Khoo Soo Seang, MP, House of Representatives, Parliament of Malaysia.

And Hon. Vicki Dunne, MLA, CPA Treasurer and ex officio member of Expert Committee (Legislative Assembly of Australian Capital Territory, Australia); CPA Secretary-General, Akbar Khan and CPA Headquarters Secretariat staff.

## INTRODUCTION

At the 62nd General Assembly (London, 2016) it was resolved to establish an Expert Committee, comprising of a representative group of all Members of the Association nominated from each region, to consider the status of the CPA, The Expert Committee met at the Hilton DoubleTree Hotel in Westminster, London, between March 9th to 12th, 2017. The Expert Committee's full Terms of Reference are to be found at Annex 1 of this Report.

The Report from this meeting was submitted on April 10th, 2017 to the Executive Committee for consideration, at its April 2017 Mid-Year Meeting in Darwin (Australia). The Expert Committee invited the Executive Committee to approve the recommendations for forwarding to the 63rd General Assembly (Dhaka, 2017) for adoption, which it did approve.

In addition to the nominated Regional Representatives, the Treasurer also participated as an Ex-Officio Member with no voting rights.

An election for the Expert Committee Chairperson was held at the very beginning of the Meeting. There were two nominees. The Hon. Russell Wortley (Australia) was selected.

## **OUTCOMES**

The Expert Committee operated on a consensus basis and was able to reach consensus on all material issues leading to the recommendations. As well the e Mandate of the Expert Committee received from the General Assembly was done on a consensus basis. The ability to reach decisions on all relevant issues by consensus is, in the view of the Expert Committee, a particular strength of this Report.

The Expert Committee was supported and advised in its meeting by the Secretary-General of the CPA, Mr. Akbar Khan. He in turn, was assisted by the following members of Secretariat Staff: Ms. Meenakshi Dhar (Director of Programmes), Mr. Joe Omorodion (Director of Finance and Administration), Mr. Harmish Mehta (Research Assistant), Ms. Wezi Nyirenda (Office and Conference Assistant) and Ms. Lucy Pickles (Assistant Director of Programmes and Assistant Private Secretary to the Secretary-General). The Expert Committee is grateful to the Secretary-General and his staff, including staff those who supported its work without attending the meeting.

The Expert Committee also wishes to acknowledge the advice received from: Chris Rowse (Senior Associate, Russell-Cooke LLP), an External Legal Adviser; Helen Elliott (Partner, Sayer Vincent LLP), an External Financial Adviser; and various Commonwealth and other organisations who also provided information which was of great assistance to the Expert Committee.

Most importantly, the Expert Committee is grateful to the Members and Secretaries of the Branches of the Association, the executive bodies of the Association's Regions and the Regional Secretariats. The co-operation between these networks and their respective Representatives allowed each Region's views to be fully represented in the deliberations of the Expert Committee, as envisaged by the Resolution of the 62nd General Assembly (London, 2016).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Expert Committee has been guided by the following factors in reaching its recommendations: its mandate as defined by the Terms of Reference given by the 2016 General Assembly Resolution, and legal and financial advice received on options for the CPA's Status.

The Committee reached broad agreement that the status quo is no longer an option and that there was a need for changes to the constitution of the Association. The Committee was particularly attracted by the APF (Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie)/IPU (Inter-Parliamentary Union) models. In addition, the Committee agreed that under any future changes:

- i. all Branches that currently qualify under provisions in the present Constitution remain full Members of the new Association;
- ii. any financial assets of the Association be maintained; and,
- iii. the Secretariat of the new Association be based in the United Kingdom.

**The Expert Committee invites the Executive Committee to make the following recommendations to the General Assembly:**

1. That the Association be reconstituted in the United Kingdom as an inter-parliamentary institution with an international remit, with functional privileges and immunities to reflect its appropriate status; and,
2. That the Chairperson of the Executive Committee obtain legal, financial and other advice to determine the feasibility of reconstituting the Association, including exploring with the Government of the United Kingdom the enactment of relevant UK legislation that would provide functional privileges and immunities to the reconstituted organisation.

At the presentation of this report, the 63rd General Assembly of CPA in Dhaka, approved the recommendations

Respectfully submitted,

Yasmin Ratansi, M.P.

Chair of the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

### **Travel Costs\***

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Executive Committee Meeting (EXCO)
<b>DESTINATION</b>	London, United Kingdom
<b>DATES</b>	March 9 to 12, 2017
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Ms. Alexandra Mendès, M.P.
STAFF	
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	\$276.20
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	\$0.00
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	\$0.000
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	\$376.29
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	\$0.00
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	\$0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$652.49</b>

*\*Only expenses not reimbursed by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association are included.*

## ANNEX 1 - TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference for the Expert Committee are as follows.

“The General Assembly, at its London meeting held in 2016, resolved:

- to defer to the 2017 General Assembly meeting the consideration of the Gauteng Branch’s proposed constitutional amendment, which would result in the CPA ceasing to be a charity<sup>1</sup>,
- to establish an Expert Committee to *“look into all possible amendments, including Article 35, and the legal and tax implications of the advice received regarding the change of status of the CPA”*, in accordance with the 2014 General Assembly Resolution<sup>2</sup>,
- that the Regional Secretaries should nominate one Representative per Region to serve on the Expert Committee; and
- that the report of the Expert Committee be circulated to Branches three months before the 2017 General Assembly.

The Expert Committee has also been asked to present a draft report to the next meeting of the Executive Committee, which is in Darwin in the last week of April 2017.”