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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting  
its participation to the Commonwealth Parliamentarians  
Forum**

**Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary  
Association**

**London, United Kingdom  
February 26 to March 1, 2018**

## Report

The Honorable Michael MacDonald, Senator, Ms. Kelly Block, M.P. and Ms. Ruby Sahota, M.P. (Head of Delegation), attended the Commonwealth Parliamentarians Forum on behalf of the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association that was held in London, United Kingdom from February 26 to March 1, 2018.

### Purpose:

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK (CPA UK) in collaboration with the UK Commonwealth Summit Team hosted the first ever Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum 2018 in London between Monday 26 February and Thursday 1 March 2018. The purpose of the Forum, which convened more than 100 parliamentarians from national legislatures, was to support and empowered parliamentarians and to get their input for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) agenda. The Forum also provided important opportunities for in-depth cross-Commonwealth discussion. The Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum was an innovatively designed platform to ensure parliamentarians build collective confidence around the role and strength of parliamentarians in order to address new challenges in an era of political, economic, and social complexity. The Forum, as well was designed to provide a vital opportunity to nurture our 'unique and proud global relationships'.

During the week, the delegates had the opportunity to listen to speeches by various politicians and world leaders, including Rt. Hon. John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons, Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson MP, Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Secretary of State for International Trade, Rt. Hon Dr. Liam Fox MP, Deputy Secretary-General United Nations, Amina Mohammed. As well, they attended the Closing Ceremony hosted by City of London Corporation and listened to the address by Rt. Hon. the Lord Mayor of the City of London, Charles Bowman.

CHOGM was hosted by the UK from 16-20 April 2018, bringing together up to 52 Commonwealth leaders as well as thousands of people from across business and civil society, representing the Commonwealth's vibrant and diverse global network. The overarching theme for the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting was '***Towards a Common Future***' – and the four main sub-themes were:

- **Prosperity** - boosting intra-Commonwealth trade and investment
- **Security** - increasing cooperation across security challenges including global terrorism, organised crime and cyber attacks
- **Fairness** - promoting democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and good governance across the Commonwealth
- **Sustainability** - building the resilience of small and vulnerable states to deal with the effects of climate change and other global crises

### Aim:

The aim of the Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum in London was to facilitate parliamentary engagement on the Commonwealth Summit themes and issues.

**Key Objectives:**

1. Promote the importance and relevance of the Commonwealth for future generations amongst Commonwealth parliamentarians.
2. Increase Commonwealth parliamentarians' awareness of the key themes to be discussed at CHOGM (Sustainability, Fairness, Security, and Prosperity, with cross-cutting themes of youth and gender).
3. Empower Commonwealth Parliamentarians by building capacity and confidence to influence their Governments ahead of CHOGM.
4. Strengthen the role of Commonwealth parliamentarians in addressing Agenda 2030, by engaging with the experiences of their Commonwealth (and non-Commonwealth) counterparts in the vital role of scrutinizing the goals and their implementation.
5. Enable purposeful networking and collaborative opportunities between Commonwealth parliamentarians and the wider Commonwealth family.
6. Identify and enable innovation around parliamentary engagement, whether that is in practices, procedures, civil society engagement etc.

**Specific topics discussed:**

Keeping in mind the four key themes of: 'fairness', 'prosperity', 'security', and 'sustainability' the following topics were discussed:

1. How to better understand the global challenges of the day.
2. How parliamentarians can share insights about 'what works' across the Commonwealth, scale ideas and initiatives, and collaborate for sustainable development.
3. How the role of parliamentarians can be strengthened to address these challenges?
4. The concept of the 'Commonwealth Body' and how it might create a useful and shared framework of common purpose.
5. The relevance of the Commonwealth to its members. The role of parliamentarians as custodians of the Charter and the Latimer Principles.
6. How Commonwealth parliaments can more effectively hold governments to account in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

7. Financing for Development - Addis Ababa Agreement on Financing for Development and parliament's roll in pushing governments to meet the commitments made towards developing the right environment for achievement of the SDGs.
8. Building cultures of trust and confidence across Commonwealth political systems and public institutions. Initiatives taken in other countries that are effectively addressing this issue.
9. The Role for Commonwealth Parliaments as partners and collaborators in meeting the global challenge of climate change - Discussed climate finance, disaster risk reduction and prevention strategies, emerging innovations, and generate momentum and a deeper understanding of Commonwealth commitments to the Paris Agreement .
10. Promoting open, modern, and inclusive democracies - Critical to the SDGs is the key indicator 'Leave No One Behind'. This recognizes the need for societies that are open and inclusive, ensuring a voice for the most marginalized including children, youth, and persons with disabilities, people living with stigmatized illnesses, LGBT communities, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees, displaced persons and migrants.
11. Preventing conflict & sustaining peace across the Commonwealth
12. In conversation with ... on freedom of religion or belief - How to understand the role of religion and the role of secular government; How to ensure peaceful co-existence of different religious and belief groups?
13. The role of global health in addressing fairness, prosperity, security, and sustainability- ways in which governments, health agencies, CSOs, private sector organizations, and citizens can collaborate to improve health systems, infrastructure, innovation processes, and delivery.
14. Government Transparency & Accountability: How can parliamentarians be part of the 'data and evidence revolution'?
15. What role can Commonwealth parliamentarians play in tackling Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation?
16. Does a global shift towards nationalism and protectionism pose a threat or opportunity for economies across the Commonwealth? What are the main opportunities and challenges for long-term growth and prosperity? The global outlook on trade, growth, and the Commonwealth.
17. Stimulating Jobs & Livelihoods - Developing skills for the future across the Commonwealth.

18. Challenge and Disruption: what role can enterprising parliamentarians across the Commonwealth play in driving forward legislative change?
19. Engaging Youth in the dialogue about the Commonwealth and its Future. How will the Commonwealth adapt over the next 10 years? How can Parliamentarians enable and empower young people as drivers of this change?
20. How can Commonwealth parliamentarians promote smarter and more inclusive cities?

### **Outcomes:**

After 4 stimulating days of discussions the following declarations were made:

1. Parliaments and parliamentarians are essential to the future health and success of the Commonwealth and its nations. The Commonwealth Charter has as its first core value and principle Democracy. The Charter asserts that parliaments are essential elements in the exercise of democratic governance. Delegates committed to playing the roles assigned to them by the Charter, including upholding and promoting democratic cultures and practices, and being accountable to the public in this regard.
2. Parliamentarians must help ensure that Commonwealth Governments live up to the values and principles of the Charter. The Latimer Principles remain an excellent basis for ensuring accountability and transparency.
3. Delegates committed to return to their countries ready to do all they could to shape positively their country's approach to CHOGM 2018. They also committed to continuing that work beyond CHOGM 2018, in particular for the period of the UK's period as Chair-in-Office until 2020.
4. Delegates committed to playing their particular role to support and scrutinize progress by the Commonwealth and its members towards the Sustainable Development Goals.
5. Delegates drew inspiration from the presence of youth delegates from a variety of Commonwealth countries. They committed to promoting greater engagement with and by young people in pursuit of the Commonwealth's values and principles.
6. Delegates committed to pursue their individual Pitches' and Pleas made in London.

### **Proposals and Other Commitments:**

Creation of a Commonwealth Climate Change Council, whose responsibilities would encompass, but not be limited to, the collection of, monitoring and tracking of natural disasters and natural catastrophic events, raise the standard of awareness and assist with the preparedness of, and avoidance of natural disasters affecting commonwealth member states.

Many Commonwealth member states are affected by hurricanes, tropical storms, earthquakes, rising water levels, flooding, temperature levels, tsunamis, ocean acidifications, monsoons and droughts, and advocated for a collective approach to monitor the effects of these events. They advocated for the creation of a committee and action plan from the CHOGM to address the effects of global warming and natural disasters for Commonwealth members and to establish a plan for the creation of a Commonwealth Climate Change Council.

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>	Commonwealth Parliamentarians Forum
<b>DESTINATION</b>	London, United Kingdom
<b>DATES</b>	February 26 to March 1, 2018
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Michael MacDonald, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Ms. Kelly Block, M.P. Ms. Ruby Sahota, M.P.
STAFF	
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	\$4,054.86
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	\$4,508.10
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	\$0.00
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	\$1,843.06
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	\$0.00
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	\$1,856.73
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12,262.75</b>

