

STRATEGIC PLAN COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION (2008-2012)

The CPA promotes the advancement of parliamentary democracy by enhancing knowledge and understanding of democratic governance. It builds an informed, inclusive and gender-sensitive parliamentary community able to deepen the Commonwealth's democratic commitment and to further co-operation among its Legislatures.

The Association carries out a wide range of interparliamentary activities and collaborates with Parliaments and other organisations to achieve its mission. Increased awareness of the potential of Parliaments and Parliamentarians to contribute to global understanding and a current international focus on good governance have increased demands on elected representatives and on the CPA to strengthen parliamentary performance.

Commonwealth Heads of Government have recognized the Parliaments and legislatures of the Commonwealth as essential elements in the exercise of democratic government, and have endorsed the efforts of the Association as the parliamentary partner of the Commonwealth's governmental and non-governmental sectors.

The CPA actively supports the protection and promotion of the fundamental political values to which the Commonwealth is committed under the 1991 Commonwealth Declaration, including just and honest government, the alleviation of poverty, fundamental human rights, international peace and order, global economic development, the rule of international law, equal rights and representation for all citizens, the independence of the judiciary and the right to participate in free and democratic political processes.

To accomplish its Mission, the CPA pursues the following three strategies:

- 1. To provide to Members and parliamentary officials a range of core functions to promote parliamentary knowledge and Commonwealth parliamentary co-operation;**
- 2. To organize for Members and parliamentary officials a range of special programmes and services to meet the changing needs of the parliamentary community, and**
- 3. To create links between Parliamentarians and agencies working in the international arena in the field of good governance**

The Association's Core Functions are to:

- Represent and promote parliamentary democracy, the Association and the values of the Commonwealth to both Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth worlds;**

- **Arrange a Plenary Conference of Commonwealth Parliamentarians to include the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and the Small Countries Conference;**
- **Provide a programme of seminars, workshops, study groups and professional development opportunities, including gender- and youth- focused programmes, to Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff;**
- **Publish and disseminate parliamentary information, and**
- **Encourage, develop and co-ordinate the exchange of knowledge, skills and information among Members and among the constituent Branches of the Association including representatives of Parliaments in emerging non-Commonwealth democracies which have had close links with Commonwealth countries.**

Areas of work for the life of the Strategic Plan will be categorized under one of the following headings:

- **Commonwealth, Parliamentary and Professional Development**
- **Human Rights**
- **Global, National and Personal Security and**
- **Sustainable Development**

Overall Objectives for 2008 to 2012

Objective 1. To assist Members and Branches to adopt good practice of democratic governance and to strengthen the institution of Parliament.

To achieve this objective the Association will:

- a) Use successful programmes and practices already tested by the Association and further develop innovative methods and techniques appropriate to the CPA's mission;
- b) Facilitate the exchange of comparative constitutional, procedural and practical precedents and methods of operation among Commonwealth Parliaments;
- c) Support Commonwealth parliamentary libraries and research services for Members through assistance in the provision of information sources; and
- d) Encourage modern efficient and effective management structures and the financial independence of Legislatures.

Objective 2. To promote the Commonwealth and deepen its democratic commitment.

To achieve this objective the Association will:

- a) Promote the Commonwealth and its democratic values and principles through all the Association's activities;
- b) Strengthen the CPA's relationship with the Commonwealth's governmental and non-governmental sectors;
- c) Encourage good practices in defining benchmarks across Commonwealth Legislatures, and
- d) Sponsor outreach programmes, especially to women and youth, to make them aware of the values of parliamentary democracy and to encourage them to participate.

Objective 3. To increase the availability of professional development programmes to Members and Parliamentary staff.

To achieve this objective the Association will:

- a) Assist Members and parliamentary staff by the provision of relevant services and other help to maintain the highest standards in their professional work;
- b) Encourage individual Branches and Regions to run short induction courses for newly elected Members in addition to those offered by the Secretariat;
- c) Increase the outreach of CPA programmes by using strengthened delivery systems combining Information and Communications Technology (ICT) with other traditional methods, and
- d) Build up distance-learning modules and, where appropriate, web-based training.

Objective 4: To assist developing Parliaments with consultancy and advisory services and engage with other organizations to provide broad-based support programmes.

To achieve this objective the Association will:

- a) Focus CPA resources on Regions and Branches which have little if any funding available to them;
- b) Arrange for Members and staff from developing Parliaments to serve attachments in other Parliaments;

- c) Provide, in response to queries from Branches and others, information about, and interpretation of, practices and precedents in representative Commonwealth jurisdictions, and
- d) Provide technical assistance and parliamentary support programmes in partnership with other organizations to assist developing Parliaments.

Objective 5: To strengthen the CPA at Branch, regional and international levels through communications.

To achieve this objective the Association will:

- a) Pursue communications strategies designed to increase the awareness of the Association among its Members, Branches and Regions and to increase the outreach of the Association;
- b) Publish information on contemporary constitutional, procedural, practical and political issues relevant to the advancement of parliamentary governance and Commonwealth understanding;
- c) Expand the parliamentary knowledge base on the CPA website with data to complement CPA publications in other media;
- d) Disseminate information on the CPA to all media, and
- e) Encourage Regions and Branches to hold regular meetings to discuss issues of common interest.

Objective 6: To promote gender equality and equity in the work of the CPA and across the Association and encourage women to stand for election to representative bodies by advocating the removal of barriers to their participation and to facilitate their professional contribution as Members.

To achieve this objective the Association will:

- a) Encourage Branches to achieve the Commonwealth Heads of Government target of no less than 30 per cent of women in decision-making positions;
- b) Encourage Branches to increase the numbers of women attending CPA events, especially the Annual Conference, with monitoring and publication of results;
- c) Encourage Branches to nominate women to positions on CPA governing bodies, and to include CWP representation in Branch and Regional Executive Committees as *ex-officio* Members;
- d) Ensure that gender is mainstreamed across all activities, including the Annual Conference;

- e) Work with partner organizations to conduct gender-focused workshops targeting Commonwealth countries where gender balance has yet to be achieved, and
- f) Raise the profile of the CWP and the work of its Steering Committee through wider CPA communication channels.

Objective 7: To recognize the particular problems of Small Countries and to help their Legislatures to play a full and effective role within the Commonwealth.

To achieve this objective the Association will:

- a) Continue to hold a Small Countries Conference, to organise special programmes of particular relevance to Small Countries and to ensure that they play a full part in the work of the CPA at all levels, and
- b) Enable the legislatures of Small Countries to address such questions as the transitional problems in integrating themselves with a more globalized economy and the strengthening of their infrastructure in its various forms.

Objective 8: To improve the organizational development of the Association and to increase its effectiveness and efficiency.

To achieve this objective the Association will:

- a) Increase the productivity of the Secretariat by constantly striving for administrative efficiencies and a continued focus on the opportunities of Information Technology;
- b) Monitor, evaluate and follow-up CPA programmes and activities;
- c) Maintain an up-to-date database and other records of Commonwealth parliamentary and constitutional practice and procedure;
- d) Promote better reporting procedures and dissemination of information especially following attendance at CPA activities, and
- e) Ensure the Association remains in a viable financial position at all times.

Monitoring Arrangements

The Executive Committee will monitor progress in the achievement of these objectives at their Mid-year Meeting in 2010 and will provide a review statement with an analysis of progress to the General Assembly in 2012.