

Report by Lisa Baker

Business Meeting for the CWP, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians' Conference and 59th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference Johannesburg, South Africa, 28 August to 6 September

Background

This report provides information concerning my attendance at three related events of the CPA.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Committee of the CPA holds their business meeting on the 29th August 2013, several days before the CPA conference commences. As the Chairperson of the Australian Region CWP and the Australian regional representative on the global CWP steering committee, I was expected to attend that meeting.

Also, every three years the CWP holds an election to appoint a new Chairperson for the CWP. The election is held during the CPA Conference. I was one of two women nominated to contest that election.

In addition, the CWP holds the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians' Conference the day before the 59th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

The following report contains the minutes from the CWP Business meeting, report on the CWP conference and notes from the CPA conference and election of the next Chair of the CWP.

Reports

- 1. COMMONWEALTH WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS BUSINESS MEETING**
Sandton Convention Centre
Johannesburg, South Africa
4 September 2013

REPORT OF THE COMMONWEALTH WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

1. Report of the CWP Steering Committee Meeting

The 17th Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Meeting took place at the Sandton Convention Centre on 29 August 2013.

PRESENT

Members of the CWP Steering Committee:

CWP CHAIRPERSON

Hon. Alix Boyd Knights, MHA
Speaker of the House of Assembly, Dominica
2010-2013

CWP PRESIDENT

Ms Thapelo Dorothy Chiloane, MP
South Africa
2012-2013

AFRICA REGION

Hon. Lucia Witbooi, MP
Namibia
Alternate for: Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, MP
Speaker of Parliament
Uganda

ASIA REGION

Hon. Sagufta Yasmin, MP
Honourable Whip
Bangladesh
(2012-2015)

AUSTRALIA REGION

Ms Lisa Baker MLA
Western Australia
(2010 – 2013)

BRITISH ISLANDS AND MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Ms Patricia Ferguson, MSP
Scotland
(2012-2015)

CANADA REGION

Ms Myrna Driedger, MLA
Manitoba
(2011 - 2014)

CARIBBEAN, ATLANTIC AND AMERICAS REGION

Hon. Glenys Hanna-Martin, MP
Minister of Transport and Aviation
Bahamas
(2012-2015)

SOUTH-EAST ASIA REGION

Hon. Dato[™] Noraini Ahmad, MP
Malaysia
(2010-2013)

IN ATTENDANCE

Dr William F. Shija, Secretary-General (for first part of the meeting)
Ms. Meenakshi Dhar (Assistant Director of Programmes)
Miss Lisa Leano (Publicity and Editorial Officer)

1. WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRPERSON AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairperson welcomed Members to what would be the last Steering Committee meeting of her term of office. After Members briefly introduced themselves, the CWP President added her own welcome on behalf of the Host Branch. She informed Members about her membership of the National Assembly of the Parliament of South Africa and her country's pride in hosting this major Commonwealth parliamentary conference, the first since the apartheid regime ended in 1994.

The Secretary-General also welcomed Members to the meeting. He advised the meeting that the new CPA Strategic Plan 2013-2017 approved by the General Assembly at its last meeting in Sri Lanka in 2012, would be implemented through a CPA Business Plan, the first in the Association's history. The work of the CWP is recognised in the Business Plan and he looked forward to the CWP contribution in its successful implementation. The Secretary-General paid special tribute to the outgoing Chairperson for her commitment, involvement and motivation over the past three years. He hoped she would continue to be active in the CPA and CWP. Finally, he reiterated the Secretariat's support for the CWP Work

Programme, under the leadership of a new CWP Chairperson, and wished Members a productive meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

The Chairperson advised the meeting that apologies had been received from:

AFRICA

Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, MP
Speaker of Parliament, Uganda (2010-2013)

INDIA

Hon. Smt Chandresh Kumari Katoch, MP
Lok Sabha, India (2011-2014)

PACIFIC

Hon Elizabeth Burain, MP
Bougainville, (2011-2014)

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

4. REPORT OF THE 16TH CWP STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING AND 24TH CWP MEETING (SRI LANKA, SEPTEMBER 2012) - TO NOTE

The Report of the 16th CWP Steering Committee Meeting and 24th CWP Meeting held in Sri Lanka on 8 and 12 September 2012 was noted. Substantive matters arising were dealt with as part of the formal agenda.

The Chairperson informed the Committee of five matters arising:

i) The suggestion had been made that the CWP Chairperson's Report to the General Assembly be shortened to ensure audience attention and maintain interest. Members agreed. The Chairperson said that as it was her last meeting she would crave the indulgence of the body for a further two minutes to deliver her "swan song". Members agreed.

Recommendation 1

That the Chairperson of CWP, rather than read out the CWP Report to the General Assembly, will present highlights and adhere to the 10 minutes allocated.

ii) The CPA Secretariat has compiled a list of organisations promoting the increased representation of women in politics. This is now on the CPA website, and whilst not exhaustive, Members agreed to

Recommendation 2

View the list of organisations promoting the increased representation of women in politics on the CPA website and suggest others that may also be included.

iii) The CWP website should be created with links to Regional CWP websites in addition to the already established CWP Facebook page. Members agreed

Recommendation 3

To request that the CPA website Women Members of Parliament page include links to regional CWP websites and that the CWP Chairperson hands over to her successor administrator rights to the CWP Facebook page at the conclusion of her term.

iv) The recommendation at the CWP Business Meeting that the CWP build linkages with UN Women is one taken up in the development of the CWP Conference Agenda and UN Women will be participating in CWP Conference Session 4 on "Women, Poverty and Homelessness" on 1 September. Members agreed to

Recommendation 4

Note the involvement of UN Women in the CWP Conference on 1 September 2013.

v) The recommendation at the CWP Business Meeting that the CWP be given an entire day at the CPC in the future. Members agreed to 4

Recommendation 5

Recommend to the CPA Executive Committee, that the CWP be allocated an entire day at the annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

The President expressed the importance of encouraging more young women to enter politics and the value of mentoring between young Members of Parliament and older more experienced Members as a way of encouraging women to continue to serve as parliamentarians. The Chairperson agreed and reminded Members of her ongoing effort at developing a workshop based on the theme "Strategies for Getting More Women into Parliament", employing the concepts of Mentoring, Motivating and Mobilising. She informed Members that her book on „Women in Parliament in Dominica" which was one of the tools employed as part of the mentoring aspect.

There are plans for the first workshop (partly funded by the UK High Commission in Barbados) to be held in Dominica in November 2013.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF CWP STEERING COMMITTEE

The Chairperson advised Members that Rt. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, MP, Ms Lisa Baker and MLA, Hon. Dato" Noraini Ahmad, MP, will rotate off the Committee and three new Members will come on.

Hon. Lucia Witbooi, MP, Namibia will be the new Steering Committee Member from the Africa Region to serve the term 2013-2016. The names of the new Members from Australia and South East Asia Regions are to be advised. Members agreed to.

Recommendation 6

Note the membership of the CWP Steering Committee, the terms of office for members in each region, and the responsibilities of CWP Steering Committee Members.

6. REPORTS FROM STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS ON THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THEIR BRANCH AND REGION

Reports from each of the Members were presented. Written reports submitted are attached. Additional contributions and brief summaries of oral presentations follow:

Hon. Glenys Hanna-Martin, MP, Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic

Hon. Hanna-Martin gave Members an overview of the current gender considerations in the Region. Most countries have less than 30% representation of women in Parliament yet are pivotal to the political process and a force to represent political change. At the recent Regional meeting in Antigua in July 2013, the CWP resolved to: pursue the CARICOM desk to strengthen coordination on gender matters within the region, develop a strategic action plan within six months of the meeting, establish dialogue within Parliaments and political parties (including meaningful mentoring) and establish a record of all the women who have risen to high office in the Region.

Hon. Hanna-Martin said it was important to effect social and political change by eliminating bi-partisanship and ensuring that women remain central to the countries development plan.

Ms Myrna Driedger, MLA, Canada

Ms Driedger presented the written report of the Canada Region and informed Members that the strong CWP structure had allowed it to be active since 2005. Members the Region are currently working on a CWP Canada Region Strategic Plan which will focus on Mission, Vision and Values. Her Region has developed a CWP brochure to be used as a marketing tool to inform newly elected Members and outside organisations and networks of the work of the CWP. She added that progress in terms of women's representation in leadership had stalled and there are still many challenges for women to get higher up the ladder in politics,

business and other fields such as engineering. She added that there were a lot of synergies between women's organisations in different fields but that there is little connection between them.

Ms Driedger also informed Members that her Region had established contact with the YWCA and the Girl Guides in Canada to see what work could be done together, for example, creating a "girls in government" badge for the Girl Guides.

Hon. Dato' Noraini Ahmad, MP, South-East Asia

Hon. Noraini, MP, presented the written report of the South-East Asia Region and also informed the Committee that recent elections in Malaysia had not allowed the CWP to organise programmes in recent months. Whilst all parties in Malaysia had put forward women as 30% of all candidates, not many were elected, and hence women continue to be underrepresented in Parliament. The first Deputy Speaker of the Upper House and first State Assembly Speaker were appointed.

Hon. Noraini informed the Committee that there are a number of government initiatives to finance women entrepreneurs and protect the rights of women in the labour force. The Women Director Programme has attracted 952 participants and the scheme will provide women with the skills to generate income for themselves and their families. Another scheme is the Single Mother's Consumer Discount Card which assists the 80,000 registered single mothers with meeting their shopping bills.

Hon. Lucia Witbooi, MP, Africa

In addition to the written CWP Report prepared for the Africa Regional Conference, Hon. Witbooi, informed Members that the Africa Region, because of its large size, is divided into four sub regions. A workshop on promoting political participation in central Africa sub-region was held in Zambia in June and among the recommendations that emerged was the central premise that democracy is about participation, thus it is a democratic right to ensure women participated. Also important is the strategic engagement between women Members and the media in order to give increased visibility to women. Hon. Witbooi also advised the Committee that the Region had convened to clean up its CWP rules within the CPA Africa Region.

Hon. Sagufta Yasmin, MP, Asia

In addition to her written Report, Hon. Yasmin speaking to the situation in Bangladesh said that 300 of the 350 Members of Parliament are elected and of those 19 are women. The Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Speaker of Parliament, six Ministers and 1 Whip are women. Great efforts are being made to uplift the lives of women and the country rated received an MDG award for reducing the maternal mortality rates. One issue of concern is the emergence of extremist elements in politics that are using religion to hold women back from participating in social, economic and political spheres in Bangladesh. It is hoped this shall be overcome. Hon. Yasmin said her written report focused on the situation in Bangladesh as there had been no response from other Branches in the region to contribute to the Report.

Ms Lisa Baker, MLA, Australia

In addition to the written report, Ms Baker informed Members that 28.6% of Members of Parliament were women and there were different approaches to targets to improve numbers between the major political parties. The CWP Australia Region has a Steering Committee and its regional action plan focuses on Communication, Advocacy and Engagement. In the Australia region the challenges include getting young women involved in politics and the media has a discriminatory approach towards women Members which is worrying. Ms Baker informed Members that the CWP Australia Region has secured AUS\$3.85 programme funding from AusAid under the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Project. The

work to be carried out will address the under representation of women in Parliaments across the Pacific region and attempt to build the capacity of women 6.

Members in their endeavours. Ms Baker said that linkages with other networks such as the IPU and UN Women will also be furthered in the Region and beyond to Asia and South East Asia.

Ms Patricia Ferguson, MSP, British Islands and Mediterranean

Ms Ferguson informed Members that because of diverse geographical distances between Branches in the region, it has been difficult for the CWP to meet. A regional CWP Steering Committee has recently been established and a meeting is planned for December 2013. Planning has begun for a Conference to coincide with International Women's Day in 2014 which will be hosted by the CPA Scotland Branch in Edinburgh. Ms Ferguson invited Members of the Committee interested in participating to inform her as it would add value to the event to have representation from around the Commonwealth.

Ms Ferguson said that representation of women in Scotland was 35.7%, in Wales 42% and in the UK 22% and concrete efforts need to be made to increase the numbers. She also added that to sustain numbers of women in Parliament, Parliament should be made as family friendly as possible. Sitting times are made to coincide with school holidays and finish by 5pm to allow Members to return home to their families to look after children or return to take up care responsibilities for elderly relatives.

Ms Ferguson concluded her remarks by informing Members of the mutual value and support that exists between Members in Scotland and Malawi which have a long established bilateral relationship.

CWP, President, Ms Thapelo Dorothy Chiloane, MP, South Africa

The CWP President presented an oral report on the situation in South Africa. There is an active and well organised CWP South Branch that has its own programmes and is active in the CWP Africa Region. This month is Women's Month in the Parliament of South Africa and a programme of activities focusing on advancing the participation and influence of women in society. South Africa has 43% representation of women in the national Parliament, whilst striving for 50/50 representation; women continue to hold very senior posts in Government. The President recommended that efforts should be made to create linkages between CWP and Government agencies and departments dedicated to the issues of improving the lives of women. Finally, she added that the issues of women in business and education were also important and should be addressed. She promised to have a written report made available to Members later in the Conference. Members agreed to

Recommendation 7

Note the Reports presented and endorsed the use of the new CWP template for Reports from Steering Committee Members on Developments in their Branch and Region.

7. DATA ON THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTS AND LEGISLATURES

Members received details on the number of women in Commonwealth Parliaments and legislatures compiled using information submitted by Branches. Members discussed the issue of communication and the fact that not all information received from the CPA Secretariat necessarily reaches those it is intended for. Members agreed to

Recommendation 8

Note the data on number of women in Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures

Recommendation 9

Regularly consult with Branches in their respective regions and submit to the Secretariat the number of women in their Parliament or Legislature for regular update of published data on the CPA Website. 7

Recommendation 10

Ask that the CPA Secretariat write to Branches asking for information on the number of women as Presiding Officers, Premiers and Whips in each jurisdiction, and that this information will then be presented to the CWP Steering Committee at their next meeting in 2014.

Recommendation 11

To ask that the CPA Secretariat ensure that all correspondence relating to the CWP be copied to Members of the CWP Steering Committee

8. CWP WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered an update on the three-year CWP Work Programme for the period 2012 - 2014. They noted the Programmes for delivery in 2013 and proposed new programmes for 2014. They also revisit the idea of a CWP Strategic Plan. After some discussion Members agreed to

Recommendation 12

Note the Draft Programme for the CWP Conference taking place on 1 September 2013 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Recommendation 13

Note the update on strengthening CWP at the Regional level, and encourage those Regions who have yet to apply for funding assistance to do so before the end of the CPA financial year (31 December 2013).

Recommendation 14

Receive the new CWP Leaflet.

Recommendation 15

Welcome the increased allocation of funds by the Executive Committee for CWP programme activities to £100,000 in each of the years 2013 and 2014 and asked the CWP Chairperson to convey their thanks and appreciation to the Executive Committee.

Recommendation 16

Note the update on the CWP Sub-Regional "Gender, Development and Democracy" Workshop due to have taken place in Botswana in May, and the undertaking of the CWP Steering Committee Member for the Africa Region to ensure the delivery of the programme for the sub-region by the end of 2013, by informing the CPA Secretariat by 19 September 2013 of location of the programme for delivery before the end of 2013.

Recommendation 17

Note the successful delivery of a Parliamentary Workshop on Women's Political Party Caucusing as a satellite meeting to the 10th Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers' Meeting, in Dhaka, Bangladesh in June 2013.

Recommendation 18

Welcome the continuing collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat on gender related programmes.

Recommendation 19

Encourage the CWP Pacific Region to utilise the funds of £7,777 included in the budget for 2013 before the end of the CPA financial year (31 December 2013). 8

Recommendation 20

Note the update on the CWP Work Programme Budget for 2012-2014 and the suggestion to redistribute and divide equally the contingency sum of 2013 of approximately £9,000, between the Regions. This sum will then be added to the £4,968 already allocated to each Region for strengthening CWP at the Regional Level.

Recommendation 21

That those Regions that require it, be given £500 of this allocation as start-up money in advance, to facilitate communication with Branches and Members in order to develop Regional action plans and proposals for strengthening CWP at the Regional Level

Recommendation 22

Agree the allocation of £100,000 budget in 2014 as follows:

CWP Regional Strengthening £70,000

Pan CW CWP Activities in 2014 £30,000

Recommendation 23

Note and welcome the development of a CPA business plan for the Association, 2013-2015, and the provisions under Strategic Objective 6: "To promote gender equality and equity in the work of the CPA and across the Association".

9. AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION CONCERNING THE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

Members were advised of a proposed amendment to the CPA Constitution concerning the Coordinating Committee which was agreed by the Executive Committee at their last meeting held in the Cayman Islands in March 2013. Members agreed to

Recommendation 24

Note the inclusion of the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians as part of the Coordinating Committee and the proposed Constitutional amendments to be put to the General Assembly at its meeting on 5 September 2013 in Johannesburg.

10. INFORMATION REGARDING THE ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE CWP

The CWP Steering Committee noted the names and biographies of the two candidates contesting the election of Chairperson of the CWP at the CWP Business Meeting and also the "CPA Rules for Conducting Contested Elections" which govern the election. Members agreed to

Recommendation 25

Note the nominations, biographies and Rules for the Conduct of Contested Election, for the third election of the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians to take place on 4 September 2013 in Johannesburg, South Africa. 9

11. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRPERSON

Members adjourned the meeting and the election of the CWP Vice Chairperson 2013 – 2014 until after the Election of Chairperson of the CWP had taken place. They agreed to reconvene at 13.00 on Wednesday 4 September 2013.

Members of the Committee expressed their great appreciation and gratitude to the outgoing Chairperson the CWP for her leadership and hard work during her term in office and wished her well in all her future endeavors.

There being no other business, the Steering Committee adjourned.

At the their meeting at 13.00 on 4 September 2013, the Steering Committee elected Ms Patricia Ferguson, MSP, British Islands and Mediterranean Region, as the Vice Chairperson for the term 2013-2014.

2. Report of the CWP Business Meeting

The fourth election of a CWP Chairperson took place with the CWP President acting as Presiding Officer and the Secretary-General acting as Returning Officer. There had been two valid nominations for the post, Ms Lisa Baker, MLA, Western Australia and Rt. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda.

The Electoral Roll had been prepared following the registration of all delegates and a total of 105 names appeared on it. At the meeting, there were 98 ballot papers issued and the results of the voting were:

- Rt. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, MP – 68 votes
- Ms Lisa Baker, MLA – 29 votes

There was one Spoilt Ballot.

Rt. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, MP, was declared to have been validly elected.

A report of the CWP Steering Committee that had taken place in Johannesburg, South Africa on 29 August 2013 was presented by the Chairperson of the CWP.

2. Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Conference Programme - 1 September 2013

The theme of the conference was “Effective Solutions to Commonwealth Developmental Challenges – Engendering Democracy”. A copy of the programme is attached to this report. A full report to session contents is still to be provided to participants.

The day started with opening remarks from three dignitaries. Their comments set the scene for the conference discussion to move into a follow-up session from the CWP Session 2012, “Is there a Womens’ Agenda? If not, why not? If so, what should it be?” The conference agreed that there definitely is a womens’ agenda and that action must continue to realise this agenda.

Four conference sessions followed. Session 1 “Increasing Women’s Political Participation: Leadership, Electoral Systems and Campaign Funding” with key speakers from South Africa, Canada and PNG.

Session 2: Women Parliamentarians and Social Media, speakers from Cayman Islands, Uganda, New Zealand and Pakistan.

Session 3: Informal Economy and Entrepreneurship, speakers from Caribbean and South Africa.

Session 4; Women Poverty and Homelessness, speakers from Scotland and UN Women, South Africa.

I was able to collect copies of speeches from four of these speakers. The others should be available soon from CPA headquarters.

3. 59 th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference “Effective Solutions to Commonwealth Development Challenges”

The session arrangements for the full CPA conference included 8 workshops covering the following topics;

1. Land Access and Ownership
2. Should there be Commonwealth intervention in the informal economy and entrepreneurship sectors?
3. Challenges of Attaining the Millennium Development Goals by 2015
4. Inequitable Resource Sharing: A threat to democratic governance.
5. Role of parliamentarians in transfer of technology and research to boost agricultural productivity.
6. Governing Democratically in a tech-empowered world; developing partnerships between parliamentarians and parliamentary monitoring organisations.
7. Small Branch topic – Separation of Powers and good governance.
8. Policy Solutions for Caring for an Aging Population

I attended workshops Number 2, 7 and 8.

In addition, I attended three plenary sessions and the meeting of the general assembly.