

58TH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

Colombo, Sri Lanka
07-15 September 2012



NEWS BULLETIN

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Opening of the 32nd Small Branches Conference

Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa, Speaker and President of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) declared open the 32nd Small Branches Conference at Hotel Hilton at 9.00 a.m. yesterday. His address to the distinguished delegates is given below:

“It is indeed a great privilege and pleasure for me to welcome the Distinguished Delegates of the Small Branches of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for their 32nd Conference in Colombo. We, as Parliamentarians regularly meet at conferences, globally as well as regionally to share our ideas and experiences. This is an important practice that we continued in the promotion of parliamentary democracy.

We are meeting today on the eve of the 58th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. I am confident that the deliberations during these two days will contribute immensely to reconstruct and renew our plans effectively, for the benefit of our peoples.

I note with interest the choice of topics for the 32nd Conference which include issues on :

- Ensuring adequate Parliamentary scrutiny of foreign and commonwealth affairs,
- The impact of the informal economy on the economic diversification in small states,



- Strategies to increase women's representation in Parliament in small States and
- Measuring progress and well-being beyond GDP in small States.

These topics are relevant not only to Small States but for other countries too, and these topics continue to be debated at regional and international fora.

A two day Business Session will provide you ample opportunity to share experiences in the implementation of the strategies to overcome the present day challenges that are faced by Small States within the Commonwealth.

Today we witness the rapid changes in global economies and politics. Globalization and liberalization of the international econo-

my has gathered an irreversible momentum. In some areas of the world, borders are melting as groups of States merge their economic interests.

Former alliances have disappeared and new partnerships have emerged. Many countries, especially the small countries and weak economies, are experiencing hardship. These States are looking for answers to difficult questions that vitally affect the economic well - being of their people.

In this climate of uncertainty, new challenges must necessarily arise. Constant interaction among nations is of paramount importance if we are to maintain stability and promote greater opportunities for all our people.

We have to ensure that the channels of communication and dialogue remain open and vibrant at all times. I am confident that your deliberations in this conference will help evolve a coordinated response to the concerns of the Small States and to the challenges they currently face.

I wish you every success in your endeavours.”



Dr. William F. Shija, Secretary-General of the CPA addressing the Small Branches Conference



parliamentary issues affecting Small Branches.

I wish to encourage each of you to participate fully and effectively on each of the topics as it is important that coming out of this Conference we hear the voices of our Small Branches, therefore all your inputs are important.

The four themes being discussed this year cover a wide range of topics:

The 1st Plenary Session which follows this opening is on the topic Ensuring Adequate Parliamentary Scrutiny of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. This topic will again be discussed at Workshop C on Wednesday.

The 2nd Plenary Session will consider "The Impact of the Informal Economy on Economic Diversification in Small States".

Tomorrow's two Plenaries will be equally interesting; the 3rd Plenary Session 'Strategies to Increase Women's Representation in Parliaments in Small States' and finally, the 4th Plenary Session on "Measuring Progress and Well-being Beyond GDP in Small States".

I would like to thank Branches which made suggestions and would encourage them and others to continue to suggest topics for discussion.

Just as delegates have done in previous years and as the discussion proceeds and topics and issues emerge, please make a note of them, as the Secretariat continue to request your thoughts on what might be useful and relevant to include in next year's agenda for the 33rd Small Branches Conference in South Africa.

I wish you the best in your Conference and a pleasant stay in Colombo.

Small Branches of CPA

Since its inception in Fiji, 1981 the Small Branches Conference has provided a platform for Commonwealth Members from Jurisdictions with population of 500,000 or less to discuss and share issues pertaining to Parliamentary affairs, politics, economics and social aspects in their respective countries where the focus is on small countries. It is an international conference, which is not dominated by the issues facing larger nations. The Small branches conference encourages candid discussion where practical solutions are

found for issues faced by small communities as the best assistance that a Small state can receive is advice from another Small state. In line with its progressive nature of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Small Branches conference is the longest continuing forum dedicate to the concerns of the Small CPA members.

The 32nd Small Branches Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association as its predecessors will entail two days of discussions on topics important to the small member countries of the Commonwealth.

Speech made by Dr. William F. Shija, Secretary- General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association on Sunday 09 September 2012

"I wish to join our host Branch, Sri Lanka, to welcome you to the 32nd Small Branches Conference here in Colombo.

This is an opportunity to wish you all the best during your deliberations over the next two days, having considered the issues that affect our Small States or Branches.

Seventeen years ago, we were guests of the Sri Lanka Parliament at what was then the 15th Small Countries Conference. There have been many changes to the size and organisation of these meetings, but the essential characteristics of this Conference has remained the same, and that is, the lively discussions on the



Delegates at the Small Branches Conference

Opening of the 32nd Small Branches Conference *(contd. from p.1)*

Rt.Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst MP, House of Commons, UK and Chairperson of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Executive Committee, in his welcome address appreciated Sri Lankan traditions and style. He pointed out that the conference offered a forum for small countries to share issues. It also provided an opportunity for him to share his experiences with others.

Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly, Small Branches Member of the CPA Executive Committee, (Cayman Islands) pointed out that the conference provided a wonderful opportunity to enhance democracy, good governance, accountability and transparency among the Small Branches Member countries as well as to build up a sense of strong cooperation among them. It also enhanced their knowledge and experience.

Ms. O'Connor-Connolly appreciated the spirit of love, unity and understanding epitomized by the CPA. She thanked the Secretary General CPA, all leaders and specially the Speaker, Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa.

Hon. Jacque Petrusma, MP (Tasmania) chaired the **1st Plenary Session** on the theme 'Ensuring Adequate Parliamentary Scrutiny of Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs'. The Discussion Leaders, Senator the Hon. Velma Newton (Barbados), Hon. David Agius (Malta) and Senator Ian Gorst (Jersey) made a presentation each on the session theme. Each presentation was followed by a discussion. The presentations focused on the current situation and challenges of Small Branches.

They emphasized that the international bodies such as the Commonwealth and International Policies played an increasingly important role in the system of governance. The influence of such agencies on national policies has been steadily growing and the decisions taken at the international sphere were influencing the lives of millions of citizens.

Hon. Sharon Halford (Falkland Islands) chaired the **2nd Plenary Session** on the theme 'The Impact of the Informal Economy on Economic Diversification in Small

States'. The Discussion Leaders of the session were Hon. Marlon Penn (British Virgin Islands) and Deputy Alistair Langlois (Guernsey). Hon. Marlon Pen pointed out that the term 'informal economy' refers to all economic activities by workers and economic activities that are considered low or in practice not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements.

He discussed unregulated legal activities such as tourism related businesses, construction work and undocumented illegal activities such as gambling, prostitution and sale of illicit drugs. Deputy Alistair Langlois (Guernsey) stated that policy formulation must be encouraged through regulations as it helps a country's economic development and parliamentary democracy. He also mentioned that the private and government sectors reap the benefits from developing the informal economy.

The presentations were followed by an active discussion with members sharing their local knowledge or their own experiences with examples typical to their respective countries.



Delegates at the Small Branches Conference

Guardstone of Polonnaruwa Era - Existed between AC 1065 to 1120

Polonnaruwa was the second capital of Sri Lanka after the destruction of Anuradhapura

Group Photograph of 'Small Branches' and 'Executive Committee' Members



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in 993. It comprises, besides the Brahmanic monuments built by the Cholas, the monumental ruins of the fabulous garden-city created by Parakramabahu I in the 12th century.



Group Photograph of 'Small Branches' Members



58th CPA Conference Colombo, Sri Lanka 7th to 15th September 2012



Group Photograph of 'Executive Committee' Members



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The Old Parliament Building at Galle Face, Colombo

The old Parliament building in Colombo is a magnificent building facing the Indian Ocean. It is considered as a remarkable architectural creation. Presently, the building is being occupied by the Presidential Secretariat.

The building was declared open on 29th January 1930 by the Governor Sir Herbert Stanley. It housed the Legislature till April 1982. Consequent to constitutional reforms,

the name of the Legislature changed several times as follows: the Legislative Council (1833-1931), the State Council (1931-1947), the House of Representatives (1947-1972), the National State Assembly (1972-1978) and the Parliament in 1978.

At the time this building was declared open as the Legislative Council, the seating accommodation in its Chamber was for 49 Members.

In 1947 the membership of the House was increased to 101 with the introduction of

the Soulbury Constitution. It was further increased from 101 to 157 as recommended by the Delimitation Commission of 1959 and continued to be so until 1972. With the adoption of the Republican Constitution of Sri Lanka in 1972 the membership was increased to 168. On each of these occasions structural alterations were made to accommodate the increased membership.

Unlike in the House of Commons of Great Britain, where tradition takes a tenacious hold on practice, and where every member is not provided with a seat in the Chamber, in Sri Lanka every Member of Parliament is provided a seat in the Chamber.

The building, which had seen constitutional reforms over the years, had without any extension provided accommodation for the officers of the Prime Minister, the Speaker, the Chief Government Whip, the Leader of the Opposition, the Parliament secretariat and a room for the exclusive use for the lady members.

In 1982 Parliament was shifted to a larger building in Sri Jayawardenapura, Kotte.



The authentic masks and masking traditions of Sri Lanka are an extraordinary cultural phenomenon and a significant contribution Sri Lanka has made to the Asian cultural spectrum. The masks represented various super natural characters.



Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa, Speaker and Chairman of CPA welcoming Hon. Jacqueline Petrusma, Chairperson of the Small Branches Opening Plenary



The Gok Gediya has numerous uses in Sri Lanka. Gok Gediya is a poetic name for what is more commonly known as a gok gediya- a tenderly shaped pot made with the young coconut palm leaf.

For Small Branches :

Venue : Ballroom, Galadari Hotel

09:00 **3rd Plenary Session – Strategies to Increase Women's Representation in Parliaments in Small States**

Chairperson:

Ms. Paula Biggar (Prince Edward Island)

Discussion Leader:

Hon. Maria Payet-Marie (Seychelles)

Discussion Leader:

Councillor Anthony Arthur Green (St Helena)

Discussion Leader:

Hon. Lovitta Foggo (Bermuda)

Discussion Leader:

Ms. Kemi Ogunsanya (Commonwealth Secretariat)

Rapporteur:

Mr. D.D.V.N. Dhammage (Sri Lanka)

10:30 Refreshment Break

Venue: Galadari Ballroom

10:45 3rd Plenary Session continued

13:00-14:00 Lunch

Venue: Galadari Ballroom

14:00 **4th Plenary Session – Measuring Progress and well-being Beyond GDP in Small States**

Chairperson:

Hon. David De Lisle (Guernsey)

Discussion Leader:

Hon. Claudius James Francis (St. Lucia)

Discussion Leader:

Hon Barbara Webster-Bourne (Anguilla)

Rapporteur:

Ms. Arlene Bussette

15:30 Refreshment Break

Venue: Galadari- Ballroom

15:45 4th Plenary Session continued

17:00 End of Plenary

Executive Committee :

Venue : Hilton - Amethyst / Moonstone

09:00 Meeting of the Executive Committee

Venue: Hilton -Amethyst / Moonstone

10:30- Refreshments

10:45 *Venue: Hilton - Amethyst / Moonstone Lobby*

13:00- Lunch

14:00 *Venue: Hilton - Curry Leaf*

14:00 Meeting of the Executive Committee - continued

Venue: Hilton - Amethyst / Moonstone

15:30- Refreshments

15:45 *Venue: Hilton - Amethyst / Moonstone Lobby*

15:45 Meeting of the Executive Committee - continued

Venue: Hilton -Amethyst / Moonstone

17:00 Close

Spouses' Programme :

06:30 Breakfast at respective Hotels

07:15 Assemble in Hotel Lobby

07:30 Leave Hotels for Meetiyaogoda via Southern Expressway

09:00 Arrive at Meetiyaogoda Moonstone Mine

09:00 -10:00 Visit Moonstone Mine and the Showroom

10:00 Leave Meetiyaogoda Moonstone Mine for Ambalangoda Mask Carving Factory

10:15 Arrive at Mask Carving Factory

10:15-10:45 Visit Mask Carving Factory, Museum and the Showroom

10:45 Leave Mask Carving Factory for Turtle Hatchery, Kosgoda

11:05 Arrive at Turtle Hatchery

11:05-11:35 Visit Turtle Hatchery

11:35 Leave for Hotel Heritage, Ahungalla

12:00 Arrive at Hotel Heritage, Ahungalla

12:00-15:15 At Hotel Heritage

- Lunch
- Cookery demonstration
- Refreshments

15:15 Leave for Colombo

16:30 Arrive at respective Hotels

For all groups :

18:15 Assemble in Hotel Lobby

18:30 Depart Hotels for the Cultural Show and Dinner

19:00- Cultural Show

20:30 *Venue: Nelum Pokuna Mahinda Rajapaksa Theatre*

20:30- Dinner - (by invitation)

22:00 Welcome Dinner hosted by Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa, Speaker and President of CPA for all Delegates, Observers, Secretaries, Accompanying Persons, Society of Clerks-at-the Table participants and Spouses

Venue: Green Path Avenue

22:00 Depart for respective Hotels

Happy Birthday to -

Hon. Anthony Arthur Green, Deputy Chairman
Health and Social Welfare, St Helena, St
Helena

Hon. Dato' Devamany S. Krishnasamy, Deputy
Minister in the Prime Minister's Department,
Malaysia (Federal), Malaysia (Federal)

Hon. Kgatiepe Ishmael, Chairperson of Portfolio
Committee on Safety and Security, Limpopo,
South Africa

Mr. Owen Mwandumba, Accompanying Officer,
Tanzania



PLEASE WEAR YOUR IDENTIFICATION BADGE

All participants to the Conference are kindly requested to wear the identification badge issued to you at all times for access to Conference proceedings and all official functions.

Today's weather in Colombo:

| Weather: | Night | Morning | Afternoon | Evening |
|-----------------|----------------------|--|--|--|
| Description: | Mostly cloudy. Mild. | Isolated tstorms. Mostly cloudy. Warm. | Widely scattered tstorms. Mostly cloudy. Warm. | Widely scattered tstorms. Mostly cloudy. Warm. |
| Temperature: | 26 °C | 29 °C | 29 °C | 27 °C |
| Comfort Level: | 28 °C | 35 °C | 33 °C | 30 °C |
| Dew point: | 23 °C | 24 °C | 24 °C | 24 °C |
| Wind Speed: | 12 km/h | 15 km/h | 19 km/h | 13 km/h |
| Wind Direction: | ↗ | ↗ | ↗ | ↗ |
| Humidity: | 83% | 73% | 74% | 84% |
| Visibility: | 13 km | 5 km | 5 km | 5 km |
| Visibility: | 41% | 62% | 62% | 33% |

Wilpattu National Park

Wilpattu is a park located on the Island of Sri Lanka. The unique feature of this park is the existence of natural lakes, sand-rimmed water basins or depression that filed with rainwater, which enable the wild animals to survive during severe droughts.

It is situated in the Northwest coast lowland dry zone of Sri Lanka, approximately 180Km from Colombo. The park is 131,693ha in extent, and it ranges from 0-152m above sea level. Nearly 60 lakes and tanks are found spread throughout Wilpattu. It is the largest and one of the oldest National Parks in Sri Lanka. Wilpattu is among the top National Parks which is famous for its Leopard population.

This park had been closed for several years due to terrorist activities, and reopened in 2009 after the conclusion of the armed conflict.

