

# 58TH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

Colombo, Sri Lanka  
07-15 September 2012



## NEWS BULLETIN

Issue - No. 5

Wednesday, 12 September 2012

### “We will uphold the principles of Democracy”

His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of Sri Lanka

“At a time of clashes between democracy and terror, we have shown the world that terrorism can be effectively defeated, and the cherished values of democracy restored to people who were denied it for nearly three decades.” stated His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and Vice Patron of the CPA yesterday.

The President was addressing a galaxy of over 650 distinguished delegates, observers and spouses of delegates from 54 Commonwealth countries and Sri Lankan invitees participating in the official opening the 58<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference last morning at the state-of-the-art Nelum Pokuna (Lotus Pond) Mahinda Rajapaksa Theatre, Colombo.

The overseas Parliamentary representatives comprised Delegates (Hon. Speakers, Members of Parliaments, Members of Leg-

islative Assemblies (MLAs), Observers, Secretaries, Accompanying Persons, Society of Clerks-at-the-Table (SOCAT) participants and Spouses.

Extracts from the President’s speech is given below :

“As the current Vice Patron of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, I am pleased to welcome all delegates to this 58<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Colombo and honoured to address you on this occasion.

This is an organization with a long and distinguished history in the annals of modern democracy. It was begun in 1911, as the Empire Parliamentary Association, when the British Empire was at the height of its strength, when the Sun never set upon it.

Later, as the success of key freedom movements from imperialism and colonialism succeeded, as in India and Sri Lanka - then Ceylon, it was

changed to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, as we know it today.

Sri Lanka, as one of the earliest members of the CPA, is glad to host this important international parliamentary conference for the third occasion. It is also important to recall that Sri Lanka is among the members of the CPA, having one of the oldest traditions in parliamentary democracy, being the first country in Asia to have universal franchise, from as far back as 1931.

We have continued this tradition of parliamentary democracy

through the past 81 years, protecting it from those who plotted against it, both in uniform and through insurrection.

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# My country is proud of its history, its people and its tradition of constitutional democracy.

Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa, Speaker and President, CPA

On behalf of the Sri Lanka Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, I am honoured and privileged to welcome you all to the opening ceremony of the 58<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

This is the third time we are hosting this meeting in Sri Lanka and that is a reflection of the strong commitment Sri Lanka and our people have towards the values of the Commonwealth and our dedication for Parliamentary democracy which form core values of this association.

Members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association are bonded by a shared history: the history of British colonialism.

This shared history runs as a thread that binds us together and undoubtedly it has enabled us to create this association and to promote Parliamentary democracy and good governance among our member states.

We, Sri Lankans received universal franchise in 1931, over eighty years ago, when we were still a colony...

Since receiving independence in 1948 the country has had an unbroken tradition of multi-party democracy with regularly held elections and political power alternating between different political parties.

We are intensely proud of the democratic tradition we have nurtured over these 64 years since gaining independence and will continue to ensure that Parliamentary democracy remains vibrant and robust in this part of the world.

It is because of this commitment to Parliamentary democracy that the Commonwealth has bestowed on Sri Lanka, the honour of hosting the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2013.

The Sri Lanka branch has been an active member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for many years.

It has played a positive role in the main forum and within the Asia

Regional group.

Currently, our Branch functions as the Regional Secretariat for the Asia Region and hosted the CPA Regional Conference in 2011.

Our Branch also sits as the representative of the Asia region in the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee.

These are all testimony to our unreserved commitment to the Commonwealth and to its future progress.

Let me say how proud we are, to be hosting this meeting at a time when peace in all parts of our



country is irreversibly established.

For thirty years Sri Lanka had to fight the worst of terrorism.

It simply destroyed the social fabric and almost divided the Sri Lankan nation into pieces.

I admire the resilience, courage and patience of all our people who had to endure tremendous hardship during the long period of the conflict.

It is our firm intention to strengthen the bonds of friendship among all communities that inhabit this island and ensure that their children will grow up in a culture of peace and co-existence.

All our actions today are directed towards building a harmonious

nation where discrimination will not be tolerated.

As a people we are thankful to the Commonwealth for the continuous support member nations extended to us and for the understanding you showed at a time of need.

My country is proud of its history, its people and its tradition of constitutional democracy.

While in Sri Lanka, may I humbly invite you to savour the natural beauty and the splendor of our motherland and to engage with her people, among the most hospitable people you will find anywhere in the world.

Ensuring a Relevant Commonwealth for the Future is the theme of this meeting.

During these few days you will

views through our Regional Representative and we are concerned to ensure that the CPA remains vibrant and relevant in the years to come.

Before I conclude, I would like to express my profound gratitude to His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of Sri Lanka for the support, guidance and encouragement extended to us in organizing this event and your presence this morning has encouraged all of us.

I must also acknowledge the support we have received from the Rt. Honourable Sir Allen Haselhurst, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the CPA, Dr. William F. Shija Secretary – General of the CPA, and from the staff of the CPA Headquarters.

May you have a rewarding meeting, may you forge stronger bonds

discuss topics relating to health and education, democracy, rule of law and human rights, the role of parliaments, conflict resolution and peace building, gender responsive governance, terrorism, youth unemployment and the role of social media.

All these topics are of great relevance to democracies around the world and no doubt your deliberations will strengthen constitutional democracy and good governance in the CPA's member states.

The CPA is currently engaged in a study to look at how the Association could provide better support to Parliaments from member states.

Our Branch has expressed its

among your fellow Parliamentarians, and may your deliberations contribute to strengthening democracy in all parts of the Commonwealth.

I do hope that you will carry warm memories of Sri Lanka to your home country.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my privilege and great pleasure now to call upon His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, to formally declare open the 58<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

May the Noble Triple Gem Bless you.

North and East the right to vote, the first time I

**We will uphold .....**  
*continued from page 1....*

More recently, we protected our democratic system, and the democratic rights of all our people, against what has been correctly described as the most ruthless terrorist organization in the world. At a time of clashes between democracy and terror, we have shown the world that terrorism can be effectively defeated, and the cherished values of democracy restored to people who were denied it for nearly three decades.

You are meeting here today, just two days after democratic elections were successfully conducted to three Provincial Councils in the country, and you may be observing how the people have freely expressed their choice. Sri Lanka's long tradition of parliamentary democracy has seen governments change via the ballot, and

sought the Presidency in November 2005. We will also hold elections to the Northern Provincial Council next year upholding the principles of democracy.

The many successful aspects of post-conflict developments have drawn much

constitutions being similarly changed and amended.

It is also noteworthy that among the first things done after the defeat of terrorism, first in the Eastern Province, and later in the entire country, was to quickly hold local government, provincial and national elections to obtain a proper mandate from the people, large sections of whom were deprived of their franchise by the forces of terror.

In fact I myself sought a second term in office, even before the expiry of my first term, to obtain a truly national mandate, because the terrorists whose agents are still active in some parts of the world, denied many people in the



First copy of the Commemorative Stamp and the First Day Cover is presented to His Excellency the President by Hon. Jeewan Kumaranatunga, Minister of Postal Services at the Special Post Office

especially the speed with which nearly 300,000 Internally Displaced Persons were re-settled. Another important aspect has been the efforts at national reconciliation,

Reconciliation Commission (LLRC). It was to learn from the lessons from the conflict, understand how we could avoid such situations again, provide justice to those who had been affected, and, most importantly, seek the path of reconciliation as a nation, through our own experiences. The recommendations of the LLRC are already being implemented, according to a well worked out Plan of Action that we have presented to the nation and the world.

With our undoubted commitment to parliamentary democracy, we have a keen interest in the work and progress of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Your efforts to promote parliamentary democracy by enhancing knowledge and understanding of democratic governance, and interest in building an informed parliamentary community among the member nations, has our strongest support.

The many educational programmes on parliamentary practice and procedure, the efforts at studying matters of regional importance in the development of democracy, the study of democratic systems in the world's smallest nations, the efforts to train knowledgeable and efficient parliamentary staff, are all in keeping with the goal of strengthening democracy in the world.

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after a bloody conflict that dragged on for nearly three decades. It took less than two years from the end of the conflict to set up the Lessons Learnt and



His Excellency the President is introduced to the Members of the Executive Committee by the Rt. Hon. Alan Haslehurst, Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee

**We will uphold ....**

*continued from p.3...*

A matter of special importance is the work of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians to increase female representations in Parliament and recognizing the importance of gender considerations in all activities of the CPA.

Commonwealth countries and devise ways to facilitate such trade.

I have no doubt that the CPA has achieved much success in realizing the aims of its Strategic Plan 2008 - 2012, especially in assisting

highest priority to the welfare of the people to economic progress and development that positively impact on the lives of people.

In this context, it will be interesting to look at Sri Lanka's own record of success through democracy. Our achievements in education and health stand out as examples to other countries and societies. Our 96 per cent literacy is a proud record that has come from the blend of

These are all subjects of much relevance today. One must look forward to this conference recognizing the proper priorities in furthering the democratic process. You will no doubt take into consideration the current global realities that often seem to threaten proper and effective democracy, and also seek to challenge the sovereignty of nation states.

Your presence in Sri Lanka gives you a good opportunity to see for yourselves the progress of democracy in our country, after the major threat it faced under terrorism. This is important in the context of the barrage of lies being spread about Sri Lanka today. As you will see, there is full freedom of travel to any part of the country. You can also speak to anyone, from Government or the Opposition and different communities. I urge you to make use of this opportunity to learn of the real Sri Lanka, in its post-conflict era, when the highest priority is given to nation building through reconciliation.



As the country that produced the first elected woman Prime Minister of the world, Sri Lanka is particularly interested in the moves to assist in encouraging the professional contribution of women in democratic bodies, from local authorities to parliaments.

As an organization that seeks to strengthen representative democracy, your efforts to ensure the conduct of free and fair elections are most encouraging. Similarly, your focus on countries with new or revived parliamentary systems is very useful, especially with the high intake of new members to parliaments after each election.

The vast resources of human experience available to the CPA, which has 175 branches and 17,000 parliamentarians at the most recent count, places it, in an excellent position to contribute to better understanding of practice and procedure in parliaments, examine international trading systems, and look at new policies on science in an age of rapidly advancing technology. It will also be extremely useful to explore increasing trade among

Members and Branches to adopt good practice of democratic governance and strengthen the institution of Parliament. You have no doubt helped the Commonwealth deepen its democratic commitment, in big and small nations by promoting best principles of representative government that removes barriers to equality in gender, community, faith and other aspects that seek to limit democracy.

This Conference in Colombo will discuss and decide on the CPA's new Strategic Plan for the next four years. This is a good time to think of strengthening the core values of democracy. Our work should not be confined to theories and concepts but should look at the more practical aspects that affect the people. Our emphasis on the will of the people should lead us to give the most importance to policies that best serve the interests of the people. There is the need to give the

democracy, with a great tradition of education that came down from Buddhism and later advanced through the Christian churches. Similarly, our success in providing free health services to all also comes from a great tradition of healing that was advanced through democracy.

It is also important to note that Sri Lanka achieved 8 per cent GDP growth last year, and the year before, after 6 and 7 per cent growth earlier even during the battle against terrorism because of our commitment to the people and the values of democracy. It is our strong belief that there cannot be peace without development. The reverse is also true; there cannot be development without peace.

It is unfortunate that today, many impressions of Sri Lanka in foreign countries, are based on un-verified facts, and wrong or deliberately manipulated dis-information, carried out by those who once supported the forces of terror. These same elements continue to sow the seeds of division and separatism through various media, and also influence politicians in their new countries of domicile, to act against Sri Lanka, based on such dis-information.

These are people who claim to speak for Sri Lanka or a section of our people, while slandering the country from their shelters abroad. They do not bother to

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# Vote of thanks by Hon. Mininwa Johannes Mahlangu, MP Vice President CPA and Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces South Africa.

Thank you.

Allow me to recognize a few people around the Table. His Excellency the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Hon. Chairman, the Hon. Speaker of Parliament of Sri Lanka and the CPA President, the Hon. Leader of the House of Parliament of Sri Lanka, Members of the Executive Committee, Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst, Chairman of the CPA Executive Committee, Hon. Hon. Chandima Weerakkody, Deputy Speaker of Parliament of Sri Lanka, Dr. Shijia Secretary-General of the CPA, Hon. Ranil Wickramasinghe, the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Dammika Dasanayake, Secretary-General of Parliament of Sri Lanka, Honourable Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

In making my closing re-

Association of Commonwealth Parliamentarians who irrespective of gender, race, religion or culture are united by a community of interest, respect for the rule of law, individual rights and freedom and by the pursuit of positive ideals of Parliamentary democracy. Its mission is to promote the advancement of Parliamentary democracy by enhancing, acknowledging and understanding of democratic government. It sits to build and inform Parliamentary community able to depend a commonwealth democratic commitment and to further cooperate among its Parliaments and Legislatures. This mission is achieved through a strategic plan which ensures CPA activities continue to meet the changing needs of today parliamentarians. South Africa is honoured by

empower women, to reduce child mortality, to improve mental health, to control HIV and Aids, Malaria and other diseases, to environmental sustainability and to develop a global partnership for development. Therefore we over rate this year's Conference that we understand the nature of the many challenges that are facing us, importantly, we need to know what is being done to address them.

I am saying this because as public representatives from Parliaments and State Legislatures, we have the responsibility to represent the interests of the people. It is our duty to see that the resources that our nations have individually and collectively are being used effectively and efficiently in order to advance development. As public representatives, we

to keep this foundation principles live.

A relevant commonwealth for the future is the one that invest in its young people. It is therefore, opportune that during this Conference we will, among other things, tackle the challenge of youth unemployment. The Association is keenly aware of its responsibility to reach out to the people in the process of advancing parliamentary democracy, especially the young generation and to educate them about the working values of the commonwealth and the CPA, particularly, in regard to the need to support democracy and growth and sustenance of democratic institutions.

It is often said that widespread apartheid exist among the young generation towards political participation and parliamentary democracy. Whether this fear is exaggerated or not, without doubt, young people need to understand the principles which underpin democracy and civil society, develop the skills to use that knowledge effectively and be able to participate in the appropriate fora. Young people are today are no longer seen as

leaders tomorrow. They are leaders today, whether we like it not. Through their investment in business development, in policy as well as secular and religious communities, one can see what a diverse and active young commonwealth community of us the future of the commonwealth. It is therefore critical that we use this platform to intervene on behalf of the youth who are outside the margins of economy. What we do or fail to do today, will define the future and that of our democracies. No future will be safe by angry youth who feel ostracized and are not able to

participate in the economic activities.

With these words, I would like to thank you for honouring the 58<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference with a view to sharing and knowledge about matters that impact on our democracies and to strengthen the CPA. President, I wish to thank you for taking a minute or two out of your busy schedule to come and be with us today and officiate at this Conference. I thank you. You have done a wonderful job. It seems we are moving a direction because without your support the commonwealth will not live. As the Vice Patron, I want to thank you.

May I also take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General and the staff of Parliament of Sri Lanka for providing such a wonderful venue and providing such a wonderful venue and providing all the activities that we saw outside this. What an excellent welcome that all of us have received. I am so heartened at the podium today that this Conference could take more than eight days that we have planned because I am enjoying myself. I think we are going to make this a very meaningful conference. May I thank the Executive Committee, thank Dr. Shijia who has been also here to come and work with the staff.

Hon. Speaker, thank you very much for the wonderful demonstrations of activities. We saw different choreographers on the stage yesterday evening. We really enjoyed it. I really do not talk about the meals. That was extraordinary. I can assure that most of the people might have not slept as early as they wanted to but they enjoyed the meal very much. Thank you all of your delegates for behaving yourself so wonderfully and listening all speeches which were delivered. I honour you because you are good listeners. Clap very big hands for yourselves. I thank you very much.



marks, please allow me also to make brief remarks in this Conference. I welcome the opportunity to address delegates on the occasion of the 58<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, in Colombo, Sri Lanka. I hope the Conference will give us an opportunity to reflect on the issues that impact on global and country matters. Traditionally, the CPA brings together countries with diverse social, political and economical backgrounds which are regarded as equal in status and cooperate within a framework of common values and goals. It has long being an

the opportunity to host the 59<sup>th</sup> CPA Conference next year. You are all invited to come and enjoy.

The theme of the Summit for the 58<sup>th</sup> Conference is "ensuring a relevant commonwealth for the future". All of us as a global community must commit ourselves in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, just to remind you, with some of them to eradicate poverty and hunger amongst our people, which is a very crucial issue among those developing countries, especially, to achieve universal primary education, to promote gender equality and to

should not be afraid to be unpopular with Members of the Executive, if they are not acting in the interest of the electorate. It is exactly for these checks and balances that we have the roles of implementers and those who oversee implementation in a democracy.

Bodies such as the CPA have a significant role to play to what is ensuring that we actively promote development informed by the values that we stand for, such as pursuing the ideals of democracy, promoting good governance and respecting human rights and freedoms. Through the CPA we remain committed



common bond of democracy. It is also a rich diversity of cultures, traditions and values. There are countries where culture and heritage date back to many millennia. There are others with shorter histories and traditions. Democracy will truly blossom when these differences are best understood and respected in all our dealings with each other.

Democracy, or representative democracy, is today competing for headlines with various emerging national or regional springs. There is also the hum of drones that seek to bomb democracy into place with a carpet of destruction. We must be cautious of all these strategies that experience shows have not helped real democracy to take root and thrive. It is necessary to bear in mind that democracy does not foster hatred within societies among communities and among nations and

countries. Democracy stands for unity of purpose in a spirit of mutual understanding.

In conclusion, I wish to state that having your conference in a vibrant democracy, where the will of the people has been cherished, and protected for eight decades and more, there is every hope that your deliberations, amidst the well springs of democracy that prevail in our land, will produce the best results for parliamentary democracy in the Commonwealth and the world.

May you be blessed by the Noble Triple Gem!  
Theruvan Saranai!



**We will uphold.....**

*continued from p.4....*

contribute to the reconciliation and development taking place here. But worse, they do not even contribute to the progress of the people whose cause they claim to champion, from their activities abroad. You can now see the truth and return to your

countries with a deeper and richer understanding of Sri Lanka.

In seeking to advance democracy in the world, which is the commitment of the CPA, it is also important to appreciate the different cultures and values of each country where democracy has been rooted, or is growing. The Commonwealth is a rich diversity of nations with the

best understood and respected in all our dealings with each other.

It is necessary for all of us to be anchored in the true meaning and concept of democracy - which is the will of the people - freely expressed. Recently, we saw fears of this in the very Mother of Democracy, in the early stage of the current financial



## Address by Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst MP Chairman CPA Executive Committee

Your Excellency President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Vice Patron of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa – Speaker of the Sri Lankan Parliament and President of the CPA, Commonwealth Secretary-General, Hon. Kamallesh Sharma, Vice President of the CPA, Hon. Moinwa Johannes Mahlangu, Officers of the CPA, General Secretary Dr. Shija, Members of the Executive Committee, Parliamentarians, Clerks, Members of the Diplomatic Corp and other distinguished guests.

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope it is a comprehensive and correct introduction.

It is a very great honour and privilege for me as the elected Chairperson of the Executive Committee to stand here today on behalf of the entire CPA to thank first of all you, Mr. Speaker for introducing the proceedings, to you, Mr. President for declaring formally open our 58<sup>th</sup> Conference and indeed for being here gracing us with your presence on this occasion. I wish to say to you and to all your colleagues how grateful we are for your country's willingness to host the 58<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Colombo.

### *Isthuthi.*

2012 has been quite a year, distinguished perhaps in the minds of many by the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games. Who could not recall the achievements of Usain Bolt and the Jamaican trio, Stephen Kiprotich who won astonishingly

the marathon, Oscar Pistorius and the news that Sri Lanka got their first Bronze medal in the Paralympic Games. The spell of success was terrific and we hope that it is a legacy for young people throughout the Commonwealth.

Then there is another major event here in Sri Lanka. Before the T20 Cricket World Cup takes place, we have this important gathering. I do not know whether the visitors are confused by the profusion of signs appetizing both the CPA Conference and the T20 World Cup but I suspect it gives a hint of the hearts and minds of your citizens who may be more easily captured by the cricket than by the proceedings of our Conference. I must say despite that, I am astonished by the amount of coverage we have had in the press. I do not think I have ever had such front page attention in the newspapers here than I have ever achieved in thirty five years back home.

Those who are able to see most clearly with the aid of I-Pads may notice that I am wearing a tie which was given to me at the Scottish Parliament. I wear that today because I welcome Andy Murray winning his first ever Grand Slam.

However, what I really hope is that the hearts and minds of

delegates here at this Conference will be captured first by the warmth of the greeting we have received by our Sri Lankan host

as an unusual novelty but as a way of life. Hopefully, the momentum that is driving Sri Lanka forward under the Government of



and the challenges facing all of us in democratic politics.

Serendipity is a rather beautiful word. Interestingly, it has a connection with Sri Lanka. Its origin derives from the word "Serendib", the name that Arab merchants gave to this splendid island. I am sure that you will agree with me that having the 58<sup>th</sup> CPC here and now in Sri Lanka is indeed serendipitous. Serendipitous because we have the opportunity to witness the rejuvenation, reinvigoration and rebirth of a country that has risen phoenix-like from the ashes of violence and turmoil. Serendipity is because we in this CPA must also renew and progress in the first year of the second century. Sri Lanka finds itself in the spotlight in a happier way than for many years. Sri Lanka could be seen as inspirational. It is one of the most literate countries in the emerging world and an economy that has grown at an average of eight per cent over the last few years, low unemployment, expanding industries in IT, nano technology and banking, tourism is booming and exports strong.

Sri Lanka has a lot to be proud of but surely its greatest pride should come from peace. It is peace which has driven this momentum of change and it is peace which must continue, not

President Rajapaksa should inspire us because we too in the CPA must move ahead in renewal and reinvigoration.

This week we as Parliamentarians, Clerks and Observers will come together as equals in various forums such as workshops at regional meetings. We will talk about issues on topics covering health, education, youth unemployment, foreign policy, gender issues and of particular interest for me is the role of Parliamentarians in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building.

Here today, in this magnificent hall you probably feel and you realize like me that you wish to engage, network, learn and listen to the diversity of experience, knowledge and expertise that is around us. The true purpose of CPA comes out when one sees representatives from all over the Commonwealth, stretching over five continents, coming together, respecting each other, talking with each other and learning from each other.

Let us resolve that in this week in the delightful setting that we have been given in Sri Lanka, let us give it full meaning here and in the years ahead and remember always that what we have in common is what binds us together.

Thank you.



# Opening Plenary

Address by the Secretary General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Secretary General of the Commonwealth

Dr. William F. Shija Secretary General CPA stated that the theme of the current conference was 'Ensuring a Relevant Commonwealth for the Future' It was essential for the CPA to come up with a dynamic process with the objective of promoting parliamentary democracy within the Commonwealth as well as beyond the Commonwealth.

Dr. Shija was addressing the Opening plenary of the 58th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference which commenced at

3.30 p.m. yesterday at the BMICH - Sirimavo Bandaranaike Memorial Exhibition Centre, Colombo.

He pointed out that a simple definition of parliamentary democracy would be governance based on majority rule with minority care and share. Many programmes were organized each year with the funds of CPA, to promote parliamentary international diplomacy by establishing new parliament structures.

He emphasized that the CPA

should continue its gender programmes to support women's parliamentary governance and ensure gender equality within the Commonwealth Secretariat as well as other partners.

At his conclusion, Dr. Shija stated that regional issues such as human trafficking, terrorism, women's issues and climate change were discussed at Commonwealth conferences and it may assist to overcome these problems by exchanging their regional experience.



Hon. Kamalesh Sharma, the Secretary General of the Commonwealth, addressing the Opening Plenary drew attention to the fact that the CPA was a vital component in the global architecture of the Commonwealth. The CPA enhances Commonwealth values with democracy, development and respect for the diversity among

the CPA countries.

He pointed out that "an outstanding feature of the Commonwealth as a community was its capacity to convene, to connect, bringing people and institutions together, to share experience, helping each other for mutual and collective benefit".

Hon. Sharma stated that this conference is an opportunity for Sri Lanka, to make an important contribution to the Commonwealth and the world beyond.

He observed that in Sri Lanka there was progress in the context of the post-war situation. Sri Lanka had seen many years of painful and traumatic civil conflict. The country

overcoming the forces of terrorism was a major achievement for Sri Lanka. He appreciated the steps being taken to implement the recommendations of the Lessons Learnt & Reconciliation Commission and the national action plan.

In his presentation, he stressed the importance of the relationship between government and opposition parties. He emphasized that it helps to create a democratic framework, harmony and development.

Dr. Sharma thanked the Sri Lanka Branch for hosting the CPA Conference. The two presentations were followed by a Question and Answer session.

### Note to Spouses:

- You will be comfortable in cotton clothes & flat shoes today.
- Preferably a wide hat to beat the sun, casual cotton clothes, and a pair of comfortable footwear. You will be visiting the beach.
- It will be rather warm and hot inside the Porcelain Factory.
- Please note that you will be able to see the intricately designed porcelain ware created by talented Sri Lankan designers.
- Be mindful of the weight of items, if you opt to buy some of them.

### Spouses' Programme :

07:00	Breakfast at respective hotels
07:30	Assemble in Hotel Lobby
08:00	Leave Hotels for Dankotuwa Porcelain Factory
10:00	Arrive at Dankotuwa Porcelain Factory
10:00-12:00	Tour of Dankotuwa Porcelain Factory and visit the Showroom
12:00	Leave Dankotuwa Porcelain Factory for St. Mary's Church, Negombo
12:15	Arrive at St. Mary's Church, Negombo
12:15-12:45	Visit St. Mary's Church, Negombo
12:45	Leave St. Mary's Church, Negombo for Hotel Jetwing Blue
13:00	Arrive at Hotel Jetwing Blue, Negombo
13:00-15:30	At Hotel Jetwing Blue, Negombo <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lunch</li><li>• Refreshments</li></ul>
15:30	Leave Hotel Jetwing Blue, Negombo
17:00	Arrive at respective Hotels



Cultural Show at Nelum Pokuna (10.09.2012)



Hon. Chandima Weerakkody, Deputy Speaker of Sri Lanka Parliament welcoming delegates at the Nelum Pokuna Cultural Show



## For Delegates

- 07:20 CWP Participants Assemble in Hotel Lobby
- 07:30 Depart Hotels for BMICH
- 08:00- Business Meeting of CWP and Session  
10:45 'Is there such a thing as a Women's Agenda in Parliament? If not, Why not? If so, What should it be?'  
*Venue: BMICH - Committee Room B*
- 09:40 Delegates assemble in Hotel Lobby
- 10:00 Depart Hotels for BMICH
- 10:30- Refreshments *Venue: Committee Room Lobby*  
11:00
- 11:00 Workshops A – D ;  
A – 'Empowering Future Generations through Access to Health, Education and Vocational Training' (Host Branch topic)  
*Venue: BMICH - Committee Room A*  
B – 'Should the Commonwealth Establish a Commissioner for Democracy, the Rule of Law and Human Rights?'  
*Venue: BMICH - Committee Room B*  
C – 'The Politics of Constitution-making, the Role of Parliaments in relation to the People'  
*Venue: BMICH - Committee Room C*  
D – 'Ensuring adequate Parliamentary Scrutiny of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs' (Small Branches topic)  
*Venue: BMICH - Committee Room D*
- 13:30- Lunch  
14:30 *Venue: BMICH Auditorium*
- 14:30 Workshops E – H ;  
E – 'The Role of Parliamentarians in Conflict Resolution and Peace-Building'  
*Venue: BMICH - Committee Room A*  
F – 'Engaging Political Parties to Improve Gender-responsive Governance' (Gender related topic)  
*Venue: BMICH - Committee Room B*  
G – 'Terrorism – The threat to Democracy, Peace and Security'  
*Venue: BMICH - Committee Room C*  
H – 'Tackling Youth Unemployment'  
*Venue: BMICH - Committee Room D*
- 15:45- Refreshments *Venue: Committee Room Lobby*  
16:00
- 17:00 Close  
Depart for respective Hotels
- 18:40 Assemble in Hotel Lobby
- 18:50 Depart Hotels for Dinner
- 19:00- Dinner - (by invitation)  
21:00 Hosted by His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa, the President of Sri Lanka for Leaders of Delegations, Executive Committee Members and Spouses *Venue: Temple Trees*
- 19:00- Dinner - (by invitation)  
21:00 Hosted by Hon. (Al Haj) S. Alavi Moulana, Governor of Western Province for all other Delegates, Observers, Secretaries, Accompanying Persons, Society of Clerks-at-the Table participants and Spouses  
*Venue: Hilton - Grand Ball Room*
- 21:00 Depart for respective Hotels

## For Society of Clerks at-the-Table

- 08:45 Society of Clerks at-the-Table participants assemble in Hotel Lobby
- 09:00 Depart Hotels for BMICH
- 09:30 Meeting of Society of Clerks at-the-Table  
*Venue: BMICH - BCIS Auditorium*
- 09:40 Delegates assemble in Hotel Lobby
- 10:00 Depart Hotels for BMICH
- 10:30- Refreshments - *Venue: BCIS Lounge*  
11:30
- 13:30- Lunch  
14:30 *Venue: BMICH Auditorium*
- 14:30 Meeting of the Society of Clerks at-the-Table  
*Venue: BMICH - BCIS Rooms*
- Workshop 1: *BCIS Room No.101*  
Workshop 2: *BCIS Room No.102*  
Workshop 3: *BCIS Room No.105*  
Workshop 4: *BCIS Room No.106*
- 15:45- Refreshments - *Venue: BCIS Lounge*  
16:00
- 17:00 Close  
Depart for respective Hotels

# Happy Birthday

Today's weather in Colombo:



Mr. Mabunga Gadibolae, Observer,  
Botswana

Mr. Graham Albertyn, Accompanying  
Officer, South Africa



29°C 26°C

CHANCE OF RAIN: 60%  
WIND: S at 6 km/h

Scattered T-Storms

Spouses Trip to South on Monday .....

- Meetiyaigoda Moonstone Mine
- Ambalangoda Mask Carving Factory

