

# 58TH COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

Colombo, Sri Lanka  
07-15 September 2012



## NEWS BULLETIN

Issue - No. 7

Friday, 14 September 2012

# Zero tolerance towards terrorism should be the policy of all Governments

The workshop on "Terrorism - the Threat to Democracy and Security" was held at 2.30 p.m. in Committee Room 'C' of the BMICH on 12 September 2012. While it was moderated by Hon. Elijah Okupa, MP (Uganda), the Discussion Leaders were Hon. Jim Muhwezi Katugugu, MP (Uganda), Senator Syed Muzaffar Hussain Shah (Pakistan) and Ms. Irene Ng, MP (Singapore).

Hon. Jim Muhwezi Katugugu, MP (Uganda), Discussion Leader, stated at the outset that governments have realized the importance of collective action in combating terrorism as Terrorists are a great hindrance to democracy. People should be able to choose their own governments but armed groups disrupt that process. Those who are oppressed resort to terrorism. Mr. Muhwezi Katugugu, went on to explain how poverty, unemployment, unbalanced development, unfair redistribution of wealth, corruption, nepotism and gender imbalance create space for terrorism. Race and religion should be separated from terrorism since terrorists have no race or religion. Effective counter-terrorism programmes are needed.

Senator Syed Muzaffar Hussain Shah of Pakistan, Discussion Leader, said that

terrorism was no longer a local problem but has developed to become a global problem. After the 9/11 incident, it is apparent that even the developed world is not safe. Deprivation leads to terrorism, hence, the biggest weapon against terrorism is to create a just society. At present, terrorists use modern technology such as the Internet. Senator Hussain Shah emphasized

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**Final Plenary and Closing Ceremony will be held at the BMICH - Sirimavo Bandaranaike Memorial Exhibition Centre today.**

**Major events scheduled are as follows: -**

- 9:00** General Assembly and Receiving of Plaques
- 14:00** Meeting of the Society of Clerks at-the-Table
- 16:00** Closing Ceremony
- 16:30** Meeting of the New Executive Committee
- 19:30-21:30** Farewell Dinner  
Hosted by Hon. D.M Jayaratne, MP, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

## Receiving of Plaques and the Election of new Regional Representatives

The General Assembly of the 58<sup>th</sup> CPC 2012 will be electing new Regional Representatives who will take office for the period of three years.

The outgoing Regional Representatives at the end of three years will receive a plaque in recognition of their service.

Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa, MP, Speaker of the Sri Lanka Parliament will also receive a plaque as the outgoing President of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

## Background to Retiring Executive Committee Members receiving plaques

It was at a meeting of the General Assembly in Jamaica in 1978, that it was agreed that retiring Members of the Executive Committee should receive a plaque in recognition of their service. The Malaysia Branch very generously offered to donate the plaques each year. The Leader of the Malaysian Delegation or any other person in the Malaysian delegation is asked to present the plaques to other retiring Members.

## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians

The new CWP Steering Committee Members' terms start at the conclusion of the Conference.



Delegates in Jaffna



Deputy Speaker receiving Delegates in Galle



## Lessons from Europe to Tackle Youth Unemployment

The workshop on “ Tackling Youth Unemployment” was held at 2.30 p.m. in Committee Room ‘D’ of BMICH, Colombo. Hon. Dr. Nafessa Shah, MNA (Pakistan) was the Moderator of the workshop. The Discussion Leaders were Hon. David Amess, MP (United Kingdom) and Hon. Wade Mark, MP (Trinidad and Tobago).

Mr. Gregory de Paepe, Policy Analyst Europe, Middle East & Africa Unit, OECD and

employment problem was a global problem. The UK government recognised that there is a problem with youth unemployment and it was doing all that it could to reduce it. However, it has to be done within the context of the national, European and international economic turmoil.

In UK, the educational system and training were considered as the key to tackling youth unemployment. Hon. Amess reiterated that Education should gear more towards vocational type of training. He stated that the government of the UK has allocated one billion pounds to vocational training under the ‘Youth Contract Scheme’ in 2012.

It was pointed out that we could do a lot by learning from other European countries, such as Austria where 40% of young people go in to industrial training after school and Germany which offers “dual education” between school

and industry.

Mr. Gregory de Paepe, Policy Analyst Europe, Middle East & Africa Unit, OECD pointed out that there are two major reasons for youth unemployment and they were population growth and theory based education. To solve this problem we should encour-

age self employment and the job market should be expanded including the private sector.

Mr. Donglin Li, Country Director, ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives expressed the view that after the financial crisis in 2007 most of the countries which are members of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association were affected. To solve that problem we have to introduce the E-learning system and have to take support from the ILO.

A lively discussion ensued and the majority of the participants were in agreement that youth unemployment is a burning global problem. There were different solutions contributed by Members such as raising the educational system, giving importance to skills development, etc.

A participants from India emphasized that more funds should be allocated for the youth ministerial portfolio in all countries. A participant from Africa suggested that the retirement age should be reduced as a solution.

**Members emphasized that as policy makers of their respective countries, it was their duty and responsibility to create employment opportunities to overcome youth unemployment problem. They stated that the job market of the private sector should be expanded to solve the problem. The private sector should be more involved.**

The session was concluded with a vote of thanks by the chairperson.



Mr. Donglin Li, Country Director, ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives acted as External Experts.

In his presentation Mr. Wade Mark, MP (Trinidad and Tobago) stated that after the economic crisis in the world, there were more than 6 million unemployed youth in his country . Most of the unemployed were between 15 - 25 years old. Hon. Mark explained that this problem was created by the instability of the social, economic and political system. He Pointed out that a proper programme of skills development/ education and a proper labour policy should be introduced to solve the problem.

Hon. David Amess, MP (United Kingdom), in his presentation mentioned that the un-



## Workshop on 'The Role of Parliamentarians in Conflict Resolution and Peace-Building'

September 2012.

The presentations focused on the fact that irrespective of the Government or Opposition, a parliamentarian has the responsibility to establish peace, and minimize violence at grassroots level by practicing the democratic values of

the parliament, mainly the overseeing, legislative, and truce commissioning.

The External Expert, Mr. Mitch O' Brian from the World Bank Institute, stressed that conflict resolution and peace can be achieved by strengthening the legislative structure and an effective budgeting process.

Hon. (Prof.) Kurien, Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, India, emphasized that



parliamentarians are collectively duty-bound to take multifarious initiatives for creating peace and stability, and process the interests of the people. That would lead to the consolidation of the peace-building process.

In conclusion, it was pointed out that peace-building was the prime responsibility of the parliamentarian and it could be achieved when they are motivated to act in the best interests of the future of the Nation.

The above session was chaired by Hon. Julianna O' Connor-Connolly (Cayman Island). The Discussion Leaders Mr. Devinder Shorley, MP, (Canada), Ms. Anna Lo, MEB, MLA (Northern Ireland), Sir Allan Kemakez, MP (Solomon Islands), and Hon. Datuk Ronald Kiandee, MP (Malaysia) shared their views based on their own experiences. The workshop was held at 2.30 p.m. in Committee Room 'A' of the BMICH, Colombo on 12



## Women should participate in the process of decision-making at national level

The workshop on 'Engaging Political Parties to Improve Gender Responsive Governance' was held at 2.30 p.m. in Committee room 'B' of the BMICH on 12 September 2012.

It was chaired by Hon. Dr. Sudharsahani Fernandopulle, MP, Sri Lanka. The Discussion Leaders were Hon. Lindiwe Maseko, MPL (Gauteng), Senator Helen Polley (Australia), Hon. Speaker Smt. Meira Kumar (India). Ms. Kemi Ogunsanya, functioned as the External Expert from the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Addressing the session Discussion Leader Hon. Lindiwe Maseko, (Gauteng) emphasized the importance of political parties in engaging in activities to find solutions to the gender issues pertaining to the

participation of women in the democratic process. She pointed out that gender equality in the political process was a fundamental necessity. No political party in the world would be in a position to achieve democracy without the active participation of women in politics.

Hon. Maseko drew attention to the fact that political parties had a profound impact of on the issue of gender equality and that it has to be addressed in the agenda of world politics. That was not a very easy process and has been a continuing struggle in every region for many years. Hon. Lindiwe stated that in 1995 the African National Congress (ANC) had a 30% of women representation and it was 50% in 2007.

Ms. Kemi Ogunsanya, External Expert from the Commonwealth Secretariat stated that she firmly believed the fact that there should be reforms in political agendas to provide greater opportunity for women to represent political parties. She pointed

out that there was a tendency for women to vote for women. She stressed that it was a timely requirement to bring women forward in politics and that civil societies have an important role to play in monitoring that task. She emphasized that one should have specific themes to address gender issues.

She mentioned that 20% of women were involved in the process of sustainable development. Hon. Meira Kumar wanted to remind the Members of the workshop of Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the first woman Prime Minister in the world.

Senator Hellen Polley (Australia) was of the view that it was of paramount importance for women to participate in the process of decision making at national level and to address this issue at the agenda of any political party. She expressed her views on the percentage of representation of women in politics the world over. According to Senator Polley 20% of women are engaged in activities of political parties in the world. She explained that men are very well educated on the issue of gender equality in politics in Australia. She said that the Labour Party in Australia is encouraging women for politics. Finally she urged that a ten year plan has been implemented in relation to the representation of women in political parties in Australia.

Hon. Meira Kumar expressed her gratitude to the Parliament of Sri Lanka and to the Hon. Speaker Chamal Rajapaksa of the Parliament of Sri Lanka for hosting the 58th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.





Dinner hosted by His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa  
Executive Committee Members and S





, the President of Sri Lanka for Leaders of Delegations, Spouses, at Temple Trees on 12.09.2012

***Dinner hosted by Hon. (Al Haj) S. Alavi Moulana, Governor of Western Province on 12.09.2012***





## Workshop on ‘The Politics of Constitution-making, the Role of Parliaments in relation to the people’

Hon. Dr. Pambos Papageorgiou, MP (Cyprus) chaired the above workshop which was held at Committee Room ‘C’ of the BMICH, Colombo at 11.00 a.m. on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012. The Discussion Leaders were Hon. Request Muntanga, MP (Zambia), Sen. Lke Ekweremadu (Nigeria), Hon. Prof. G. L. Peiris MP (Sri Lanka) and Hon. David Musila, MP (Kenya).

Hon. Request Muntanga stated that the constitution represents majority interests of people and reflects the origin of a nation. The constitution making process should represent the majority of the people and not only the elite group. The main components in a constitution were fundamental rights and freedom.

‘numero uno, grundnorm, and fons et origo’ of any legal system.

He stressed that a relationship between the people and parliamentary sovereignty was vital. Many modern constitutions usually begin with the expression “we the people”. He stated that the process of amending constitutions is more stringent than that of conventional acts of Parliament.

Some factors that negatively affect constitution making were identified by Senator Ekweremadu. Some of them were inexperience, lack of knowledge of procedure, crisis of expectations and temptation to do so much at a time. Apathy, lack of democratic culture,

Sen. Lke Ekweremadu (Nigeria), defined the constitution as the basic and most fundamental law of a nation-state. It is the

ethnicity, lack of political will and lack of independence too were factors that negatively affected constitution making.

He pointed out that the role of parliament in relation to the people was based on the cardinal principle of inclusively, participation, diversity, openness/ transparency, accountability, autonomy and legitimacy.

Prof. G. L. Peiris defined parliament as a mirror of public opinion. In his presentation, he explained that several factors such as the electoral system, bicameral and unicameral legislature system and human rights helped to make a constitution.

The constitution should include a quota system for women with the view of providing an opportunity to achieve women’s rights.

The presentations were followed by an active discussion where Members shared their experiences in relation to their own countries.

08:20	Assemble in Hotel Lobby
08:30	Depart Hotels for BMICH
09:00	General Assembly and Receiving of Plaques <i>Venue: BMICH - Sirimavo Bandaranaike Memorial Exhibition Centre</i>
10:30-	Refreshments
10:45	<i>Venue: Lobby Area</i>
12:00	Receiving of Plaques
13:00-	Lunch
14:00	<i>Venue: BMICH Auditorium</i>
14:00	Final Plenary: 'The Role of Social Media in Modern-day Politics' <i>Venue: BMICH - Sirimavo Bandaranaike Memorial Exhibition Centre</i>
14:00	Meeting of the Society of Clerks at-the-Table <i>Venue: BMICH - Committee Room A</i>
15:45-	Refreshments
16:00	<i>Venue: Lobby Area</i>
16:00	Closing Ceremony <i>Venue: BMICH - Sirimavo Bandaranaike Memorial Exhibition Centre</i>
16:30	Meeting of the New Executive Committee <i>Venue: BMICH - Committee Room C</i>
17:00	Close Depart for respective Hotels

**Spouses' Programme :**

07:00	Breakfast at respective hotels
08:00	Assemble in Hotel Lobby
08:30	Leave for Laksala Handicraft Emporium, Colombo
09:00-10:15	Visit Laksala Handicraft Emporium Refreshments <i>Venue: Laksala Handicraft Emporium, Colombo</i>
10:15	Leave for Barefoot Handloom Gallery, Colpetty
10:30-11:15	Visit Barefoot Handloom Gallery
11:15	Leave Barefoot Handloom Gallery for Mt. Lavinia Hotel
12:30	Arrival of the First Lady Madam Shiranthi Rajapaksa
12:45	Spouses Group Photograph
13:00 -14:00	Lunch <i>Venue: Mt. Lavinia Hotel</i>
14:00	Leave for Zam Gems, Bambalapitiya
14:30-15:15	Visit Zam Gems Showroom
15:15	Leave for ODEL Fashion Store, Town Hall
15:45-16:45	Visit ODEL Fashion Store
16:45	Leave for respective Hotels
17:30	Arrive at respective Hotels

**For all participants :**

19:00	Assemble in Hotel Lobby
19:15	Depart Hotels for Dinner
19:30-	Farewell Dinner - (by invitation)
21:30	Hosted by Hon. D.M Jayaratne, MP, Prime Minister for Delegates, Secretaries, Observers, Accompanying Officers, SOCATT Participants and Spouses <i>Venue: Hilton - Grand Ball Room</i>

**Zero Tolerance .....**

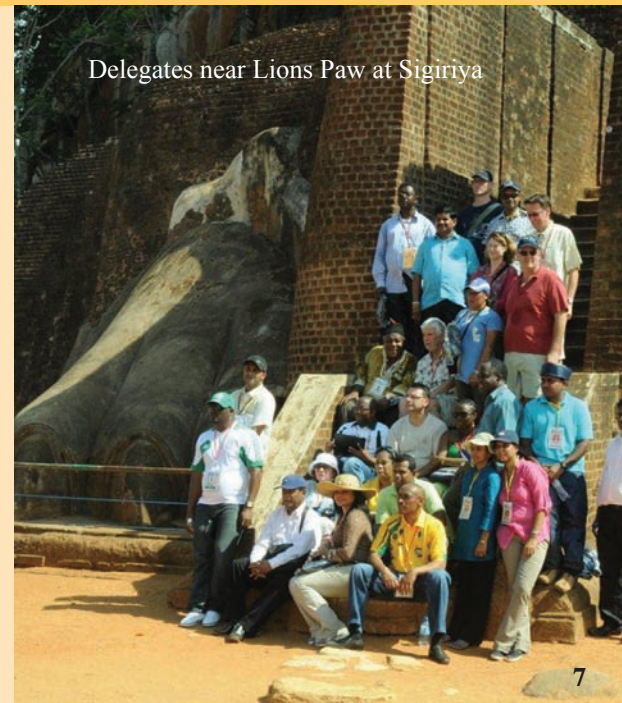
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that terrorists ought to be isolated and their funding blocked. A global response is required since terrorism is a global phenomenon.

Ms. Irene Ng, (Singapore), Discussion Leader, said that in her country some Muslim youths are being radicalised. They are influenced by extremist ideologies. Through English language websites extremist ideas are propagated. Singapore government has launched an effective anti-terrorist operation. Terrorism is not a mere law and order problem. It is an ideological issue as

well. Anti- terrorism operations are not directed against Muslims. Only extremist groups such as JI are targeted. A special effort is being made to build trust between communities.

**At the lively discussion which followed the presentations, participants stated that zero tolerance towards terrorism should be the policy of all governments. It was stressed that comprehensive anti-terrorist programmes are required.** However, at the same time political, social and economic rights of all people should be granted. Anti-terrorism laws alone are not adequate - democracy with development and social justice are very important.



Delegates near Lions Paw at Sigiriya



**Ms. Dintle Nkwanyana,**  
**Personal Assistant to**  
**Hon. Speaker,**  
**Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa**

## Weather today -

Day		Night	
	<b>High 30°C</b> Scattered T-Storms From South South West at 10 kmph		<b>Low 26°C</b> Scattered T-Storms From South South West at 6 kmph
Wind	74%	Wind	78%
Maximum Humidity	11	Maximum Humidity	40%
UV Index	40%	Chance of Precip.	26°C
Chance of Precip.	29°C	Avg. Low	N/A
Avg. High	N/A	Record Low	N/A
Record High	06:01	Sunset	18:11
Sunrise			

## Historic Sasseruwa

Sasseruwa which is located in Meegala in the Kurunegala-Anuradhapura border is a place of great history, running back to thousands of years to the time of King Devanampiyatissa (262 – 232 BC.).

The temple premises are quite unassuming and at first glance it is not apparent that this is a place of rich and vibrant history. The temple has had the patronage of kings from various eras.

Sasseruwa is popularly known as Ras Vehera. Owing to the fact that Buddha Rashmi or *Budhu Ras* had emanated on the occasion of planting one of the 32 saplings of the Sri Maha Bodhi at this site by King Devanampiyatissa. Hence the name *Ras Vehera*. Furthermore, it is also thought that as a result, the temple was established here.

Another school of thought is that King Valagamba gathered his troops here, which in Sinhala mean ‘Senaga Ras Karapu Viharaya’ that resulted in the name *Ras Vehera*.

King Devanampiyatissa established the temple. King Valagamba during his 13 years of exile from the capital, sought refuge at Ras Vehera from foreign invaders and built the two len vihara (cave temples); Maha Viharaya and Sath Pilima Viharaya.

Then, King Mahasen was believed to have commissioned the sculpture of a rock standing statue of Lord Buddha, which is one of the highlights of the visit. It is because of this statue that the temple is also known as Sasseruwa, which is derived from Sahalgath Ruwa (meaning carved image). There is a reference to King Bathiyatissa, with a cave designated in his name.

Though Sasseruwa had been abandoned for some time we see a renaissance during



the Kandyan era under the patronage of King Veera Parakrama Narendrasinghe.

**The ancient Bodhi tree rises majestically and its surrounding bodhigaraya consisting of brown stone is equally ancient, which enhanced the feel of the place. The branches spread far and wide.**

### Tranquil surroundings

Spread over 1,400 acres the temple complex is said to consist of 99 caves of which only nine can be seen today. This was a site of great spirituality as it was the home to over 300 Arahat (reaching a high level of spirituality)



the visitor is showered with calm and tranquility in this peaceful environment.

Villagers from the area say that although wild elephants come to the temple premises they do not harm the temple as it is a place of great divinity.

From the main path you can see a great flight of stairs made of stone rising up, and only trees remain visible at the top. At the base of the steps are two buildings. One is the Dharma Shalawa or the hall where devotees listen to the sermons of the priest. This has been built during the Kandyan period and this is evident from the architecture.

However, the steps leading to the hall have



Buddhist monks and although what remains of it today is only a fraction of its glorious past, a sense of calmness prevails and been made of stone flower pedestals that were used during a period before the Kandyan era. The stone pillars were previously obelisks with the king's commands and on top is what remains of a sculptured crown.

**The awesome ancient Bodhi tree was a sapling of the Sri Maha Bodhi that had been planted thousands of years ago by the King who instated Buddhism in Sri Lanka.**