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LEADER OF DELEGATION,
HON. AMOS KIMUNYA,
MP, ON 12.04.2018
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TWELFTH PARLIAMENT

(SECOND SESSION)

REPORT OF THE KENYA DELEGATION TO THE INAUGURAL
COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS' FORUM HELD AT
THE WESTMINSTER, LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM,
26TH FEBRUARY - 1ST MARCH 2018

Clerks Chambers
Parliament Buildings,
NAIROBI

April, 2018

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ABBREVIATIONS

CPA: Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

CHOGM: Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

ODI: Overseas Development Institute

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

PREFACE

Hon. Speaker,

The international Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is the professional association of all Commonwealth parliamentarians, an active network of over 17,000 parliamentarians from 175 national, state, provincial and territorial Parliaments and Legislatures.

The CPA collaborates with Parliaments and other organisations, including the intergovernmental community, to achieve its Statement of Purpose. It brings Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff together to exchange ideas among themselves and with experts in various fields, to identify benchmarks of good practices and new policy options they can adopt or adapt in the governance of their societies.

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

CPA activities focus on the Commonwealth's commitment to its fundamental political values, including: just and honest government, the alleviation of poverty, fundamental human rights, international peace and order, global economic development, the rule of law, equal rights and representation for all citizens of both genders, the separation of powers among the three branches of government and the right to participate in free and democratic political processes.

Hon. Speaker,

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK Branch (CPA UK) is one of the largest and most active branches in the CPA community and delivers a unique annual programme both in Westminster and overseas. Governed by an Executive Committee of parliamentarians from all main parties and with a membership of Members from both Houses of Parliament, CPA UK undertakes international parliamentary outreach on behalf of the UK Parliament and the wider CPA.

With a specific focus on parliamentary diplomacy and parliamentary strengthening activities, CPA UK seeks to foster co-operation and understanding between parliaments, promote good parliamentary practice and advance parliamentary democracy.

CPA UK in collaboration with the UK Commonwealth Summit Team hosted the first Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum 2018 in London between Monday, 26th February and Thursday, 1st March 2018. This Forum, which convened ninety (90) delegates from thirty (30) Commonwealth countries mainly parliamentarians from Commonwealth national legislatures was aimed at supporting and empowering parliamentarians to engage in the April 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) agenda, and create important opportunities for in-depth Cross-Commonwealth discussion. The Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum was an innovatively designed platform to ensure parliamentarians build collective confidence around the role and strength of parliamentarians to address new challenges in an era of political, economic, and social complexity, as well as provide a vital opportunity to nurture their 'unique and proud global relationships'.

The Parliamentarians' Forum was intended to spark dialogue, engage parliamentarians in the summit agenda and create opportunities for in-depth Cross-Commonwealth discussion. The Forum was an invaluable opportunity to reinforce and reinvigorate the Commonwealth's aspirations, opportunities, challenges and relevance in the coming years.

Hon. Speaker,

CHOGM will be hosted by the UK from 16-20 April 2018, bringing together up to 52 Commonwealth leaders as well as thousands of people from across business and civil society, representing the Commonwealth's vibrant and diverse global network. The over-arching theme for the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting is: **'Towards a Common Future'** - and the four main sub-themes are:

- i) **Prosperity** - boosting intra-Commonwealth trade and investment.
- ii) **Security** - increasing cooperation across security challenges including global terrorism, organised crime and cyber-attacks.
- iii) **Fairness** - promoting democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and good governance across the Commonwealth.
- iv) **Sustainability** - building the resilience of small and vulnerable states to deal with the effects of climate change and other global crises.

The Kenya delegation comprised the following: -

1. Hon. Amos Kimunya, FCPA(K), FCPS(K), EGH, MP - Leader of the Delegation
2. Hon. Sen. Moses Kajwang', MP
3. Hon. Elsie Muhanda, MP
4. Hon. Sen. Abshiro Halake, MP
5. Ms. Rachel Kairu - Principal Clerk Assistant, National Assembly
6. Ms. Michelle Osok - Third Clerk Assistant, the Senate

The Hon. Sen. Sakaja Johnson, MP attended the Forum as a guest and a speaker

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Parliament of Kenya on behalf of the delegation for bestowing upon us the important task of representing the Country in this very important Forum for Commonwealth Parliaments.

It is therefore my pleasure and humble duty to submit this report summarizing the proceedings, Declaration of the Forum; Youth Delegate Declaration of the Forum; Proposed Letter for CHOGM 2018 on Climate Change; and proposed ideas, initiatives, ways of working proposed to Commonwealth Heads of Governments from the Forum ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) scheduled for April 2018 for information and noting.



The Hon. Amos Kimunya, FCPA(K), FCPS(K), EGH, MP
LEADER OF THE KENYA DELEGATION

April 11, 2018

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The UK will host the bi-annual Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) for the first time in almost 30 years. The meeting is scheduled to take place from 16-20 April 2018, bringing together up to 52 Commonwealth leaders as well as thousands of people from across business and civil society, representing the Commonwealth's vibrant and diverse global network. The over-arching theme for the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting is: *'Towards a Common Future'*.

The key objective of the Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum held between Monday, 26th February and Thursday, 1st March, 2018 was to support and empower parliamentarians to engage in the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) agenda, and create important opportunities for in-depth Cross-Commonwealth discussion. The Forum was an innovatively designed platform to ensure parliamentarians build collective confidence around the role and strength of parliamentarians to address new challenges in an era of political, economic and social complexity, as well as provide a vital opportunity to nurture their 'unique and proud global relationships.'

AIMS

The aim of the Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum 2018 was to facilitate parliamentary engagement on the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2018 agenda, themes and issues.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum 2018 was to: -

1. Promote the importance and relevance of the Commonwealth for future generations amongst Commonwealth Parliamentarians.
2. Increase Commonwealth Parliamentarians' awareness of the key themes to be discussed at CHOGM which are: -
 - i) **Sustainability**- building the resilience of small and vulnerable states to deal with the effects of climate change and other global crises;
 - ii) **Fairness**- promoting democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and good governance across the Commonwealth;
 - iii) **Security**- increasing cooperation across security challenges including global terrorism, organised crime and cyber-attacks; and
 - iv) **Prosperity**- boosting intra-Commonwealth trade and investment, with cross-cutting themes of youth and gender.
3. Empower Commonwealth Parliamentarians by building capacity and confidence to influence their Governments ahead of the CHOGM, and beyond.
4. Strengthen the role of Commonwealth Parliamentarians in addressing Agenda 2030, by engaging with the experiences of their Commonwealth (and non-Commonwealth) counterparts in the vital role of scrutinising the goals and their implementation.

5. Enable purposeful networking and collaborative opportunities between Commonwealth Parliamentarians and the wider Commonwealth family.
6. Identify and enable innovation around parliamentary engagement, whether that be in practices, procedures, civil society engagement etc.

PARTICIPATION

Ninety (90) delegates from thirty (30) Commonwealth countries attended the forum. They included parliamentarians from Commonwealth national legislatures.

TOPICS DISCUSSED DURING THE FIRST COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS FORUM, 2018

The following were the major topics discussed during the Commonwealth Parliamentarians Forum, 2018: -

- i) Engaging with the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2018.
- ii) 'The Commonwealth Body' - Re-imagining the sum of all CPA parts.
- iii) Upholding the Commonwealth Charter or challenging it - Can the Commonwealth of the 21st Century be a uniting force for good?
- iv) How can Commonwealth parliaments more actively hold governments to account in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
- v) Financing for Development.
- vi) Building cultures of trust and confidence across Commonwealth political systems.
- vii) The Role of Commonwealth parliaments as partners and collaborators in meeting the global challenge of climate change.
- viii) Promoting open, modern and inclusive democracies.
- ix) Preventing Conflict and sustaining peace across the Commonwealth.
- x) Freedom of religious belief; Understanding the role of religion in a secular government and ensuring peaceful coexistence of different religious and belief groups.
- xi) Launching the 'Commonwealth School of Inclusive Thought'.
- xii) Collaborative approaches to global health challenges.
- xiii) Government Transparency and Accountability: How can parliamentarians be part of the 'data and evidence revolution'?
- xiv) The role Commonwealth parliamentarians play in tackling Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation.
- xv) The Commonwealth Prosperity Outlook - Forecasts and Predictions.
- xvi) Stimulating Jobs and Livelihoods - Developing skills for the future across the Commonwealth.
- xvii) Challenge and Disruption - What role can 'entrepreneurial' parliamentarians across the Commonwealth play in driving forward legislative change?
- xviii) The Future of the Commonwealth - Open - House
- xix) How can Commonwealth parliamentarians promote smarter and more inclusive cities?
- xx) Renewal, Reform and Innovation: What should the future parliamentarian look like?

- xxi) Proposed Ideas, Initiatives, ways of working proposed to Heads of Governments *'Pitches and Pleas'*.

DISCUSSIONS DURING THE FIRST COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS FORUM

1. OPENING PLENARY: ENGAGING WITH THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING, 2018

The opening plenary was held at the Church House Conference Centre on Monday, 26th February, 2018 and was chaired by Hon. James Duddridge, MP, Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee. The speakers included Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office; H. E. Sen. Ike Ekweremadu, Deputy President of the Senate of Nigeria; the Hon. Emilia Lifaka MP, CPA International Chair, Cameroon; and Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary General, Commonwealth Secretariat.

The session discussed the significance and shared values of the Commonwealth. The session offered an overview of the four key themes that have shaped the April 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) Agenda which are: 'fairness', 'prosperity', 'security', and 'sustainability'. The session raised the following key questions;

- i) How the global challenges of the day can be better understood;
- ii) How parliamentarians can share insights about 'what works across the Commonwealth, scale ideas and initiatives, and collaborate for sustainable development; and
- iii) How the role of parliamentarians can be strengthened to address the global challenges.

The Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary General, Commonwealth Secretariat shared the values of the Commonwealth. She also focused on the Commonwealth's collaborative works to promote better understanding of the global challenges of the day. These include: -

- i) Office of Civil and Criminal Justice Reforms which supports Commonwealth countries in delivering access to justice and sustainable development through the creation of fair and effective national laws.
- ii) Common Earth which explores how the volatile climate will affect the future of food, work, and life on planet earth.
- iii) Faith in the Commonwealth which promotes understanding between faiths, ethnic groups and communities, at every level including local, regional, national and international.

The session observed that Commonwealth countries have what it takes to tackle the challenges they face but in order to be successful, they must be willing to go at it together. Parliamentarians are key in creating and sustaining this unity. The role of parliamentarians can be strengthened in addressing these challenges by: -

- i) Policy learning and sustainability to increase efforts in making policy more practical.

- ii) Capacity building for parliamentarians on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- iii) Establishment of Committees in Parliament whose primary agenda is SDGs.
- iv) Involvement of Parliamentarians by the Executive Government in policy formation from the onset.
- v) Diplomacy- forming friendship groups especially with member countries facing similar challenges to share experiences.
- vi) Creation of critical institutions that will help in the achievement of SDGs.
- vii) Educating the citizenry on the importance of the unity of Commonwealth and the need to embrace its values.

2. 'IF YOU'RE IN THE ROOM, BE IN THE ROOM!'

This was an interactive ice-breaker facilitated by CPA UK Team and Tong Yee, Director, the Thought Collective. The session which took place on Monday, 26th February, 2018 at the Church House Conference Centre was aimed at facilitating networking among delegates. Delegates were encouraged to practice the following principles throughout the Forum: -

- (i) Active participation - to be radically honest.
- (ii) Equal voice - the voice of everybody in the room counts.
- (iii) Generous listening - listen to others as they speak.

They were encouraged to network and meet their fellow parliamentarians to make the most of their time at the Forum.

3. 'THE COMMONWEALTH BODY'- RE-IMAGINING THE SUM OF ALL CPA PARTS

The session was led by Tong Yee, Director, the Thought Collective and took place at the Church House Conference Centre on Monday, 26th February, 2018. Using the concept of a Lover, Jester, Warrior and King/Queen, Mr Yee made cross-references to the four CHOGM themes: sustainability, security, fairness and prosperity. The session explored the concept of the 'Commonwealth body' and how this might create a useful and shared framework of common purpose. The discussion was centred on the visual build that delegates would create throughout the course of the Forum with their ideas and contributions, what the final output would be, and where it would be displayed.

Using Singapore as a case study, delegates were reminded that the Commonwealth is a complex organization due to its diversity. In the age of complexity, there is no right therefore it is less important to be right and more important to be sincere. Getting things done has nothing to do with the quality of leadership but the quality of relationships that keeps the work enduring. The delegates had a conversation about diversity in thinking and interactions with situations.

In conclusion, it was evident that the Commonwealth States/Nations are interdependent. Their success in meeting the SDGs lie in their ability to harness their diversity and dynamism.

4. WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AND SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Delegates were hosted to a welcome reception at the Speaker's House, House of Commons, with a welcome address by Rt. Hon. John Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons; and a speech by Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson MP, Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office where they both reiterated the importance of the Commonwealth and the relations and interdependency it fostered in promoting foreign relations, international trade and security among member countries.

They reminded parliamentarians of the sacred role they play in safeguarding these relations and holding governments accountable on key issues facing the Commonwealth while undertaking public engagement to encourage the embracement of Commonwealth values. The Secretary of State stressed on the need to renew the ties among current member Commonwealth states including former countries that have since rejoined (Gambia) and those that wish to rejoin the Commonwealth (Zimbabwe). He also spoke about opportunities for UK after it leaves the European Union and about renewing its relationship with the Commonwealth.

5. UPHOLDING THE COMMONWEALTH CHARTER OR CHALLENGING IT- CAN THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE 21ST CENTURY BE A UNITING FORCE FOR GOOD?

The Session which took the form of a debate was chaired by Rt Hon. Baroness D'Souza CMG, former Speaker of the House of Lords. It was held at House of Lords Robing Room, UK Houses of Parliament on Tuesday, 27 February, 2018. The Session centred around SDGs 16 and 17.

A rapidly changing and complex global environment is already impacting political systems across the world - creating both risks and opportunities. Delegates re-evaluated the effectiveness of their networks and the session sought to answer the following questions; whether the Commonwealth continues to have relevance to all its members, and what is the unique role of parliamentarians as custodians of the Charter and the Latimer Principles. The case for and against whether the Commonwealth was still relevant, how it can be used as a force for good as an international platform, and whether there ought to be reforms was made and won through debate.

Delegates in support of the question argued that the Commonwealth was relevant because -

- i) Member countries have equal voice regardless of size.
- ii) There was recognition of vulnerable states, the unique as well as common challenges among the member states.
- iii) The Commonwealth provides a framework that creates standards for formation of national laws and institutions that promote values and principles to create a better world.
- iv) The Commonwealth promotes the broad ethos in which member states can innovate, hold each other accountable and consequently achieve SDGs.

Delegates against the question argued that the Commonwealth was not relevant because -

1. The Commonwealth does not go far enough in defining its agenda.
2. The Commonwealth had failed to resolve the inequities among member states.
3. The Commonwealth does not address itself to pertinent issues affecting member states e.g. immigration issues.
4. The Commonwealth Values and Charter are Non enforceable.

The question on the subject of debate was subjected to a vote, and the ‘ayes’ had it.

6. HOW CAN COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTS MORE EFFECTIVELY HOLD GOVERNMENTS TO ACCOUNT IN ACHIEVING SDGs?

The Session was held at the Church House Conference Centre on Tuesday, 27 February, 2018 and chaired by Jon Davies, Chief Executive and Secretary. The Speakers included Kate Osamor MP, Shadow Secretary of State for International Development; Prof. Prajapati Trivedi, Director, Economic, Youth & Sustainable Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat; and Alex Thier, Executive Director, Overseas Development Institute (ODI); and Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator. The Session centred around SDGs 1-17.

SDGs are a key part of the global agenda for future development. Whilst SDG 16 may be considered a ‘call to action’ for parliamentarians, there is consensus that the full Agenda 2030 will not be achieved without their active involvement on such critical matters for national and global development. The session explored a diversity of approaches and activities that could be used to effectively achieve the SDGs with a focus on implementation and early action by governments, particularly at the national level.

Through a video message from Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator, he spoke about the scale of challenges parliamentarians face to achieve sustainable human development. He defined the global challenges as complex and interrelated and argued that a tailored response is needed to ensure no country is left behind with parliaments’ role being to ensure member countries collaborate/work together and extend to bodies beyond the commonwealth in advocating for the implementation of SDGs. He emphasized the importance of parliamentary strengthening and encouraged parliamentarians to use the UNDP Parliamentary Handbook on Implementing Sustainable Development Goals.

Alex Thier, the Executive Director of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) outlined the fundamental components in implementing SDGs and pointed out to the unique role of parliamentarians in ensuring that the governments are held to account for each of these distinct yet interrelated actions. He referred delegates to an ODI report: An age of choice for development finance.

Professor Prajapati Trivedi, Director of Economic, Youth and Sustainable Directorate at the Commonwealth Secretariat highlighted most of the common flaws in the implementation of SDGs and offered constructive insight on how to move past these flaws and stimulate effective implementation.

From the discussion, it emerged that the challenge for parliamentarians is creating the right ecosystem for the implementation of SDGs. This ecosystem consists of four factors-

- i) How to set policy - evidence should be derived from a wide variety of sources and proper analysis conducted to determine how to approach the issues.
- ii) How to finance- financing for development has changed over the years. Domestic business financing is the most viable financing option for development today.
- iii) Implementation and the removal of barriers to implementation of SDGs - improving overall implementation climate which includes the information system, evaluation system integrated in government wide evaluation system, and incentive system.
- iv) Measurability/Accountability.

The delegates agreed that the SDGs are the best chance to look after the planet. To do this effectively, the civil society must be involved in pushing the government to be answerable to the people. The civil society is also key in disseminating information on SDGs to the people and empowering them to hold governments accountable.

Kate Osamor MP, Shadow Secretary of State for International Development closed the session with a call to action for fairness and equality within each phase of SDG implementation, urging the Commonwealth to become the space in which inequality is addressed.

7. FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Session was chaired by Rt. Hon. The Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale. It was held at the Church House Conference Centre on Tuesday, 27 February, 2018. The discussion commenced with a keynote address by the Deputy Secretary-General United Nations, Amina Mohammed. Speakers included Jessica Horn, Director of Programmes, African Women's Development Fund; Samuel Munzele Maimbo, Head of Finance for Development Unit and Senior Adviser to the Managing Director and World Bank Group CFO; and Dirk Willem te Velde, Head of International Economic Development Group, Overseas Development Institute (ODI). The Session centred around SDGs 1-17.

In her key note address via live video from the UN Headquarters, Ms. Amina Mohammed focused on innovative funding mechanisms, the importance of peace and security and the outlook for the UN including supporting country priorities, wider reforms for the organisation, and the role parliamentarians can play in financing for development. She noted that parliaments can legislate on institutions that will promote and implement SDGs and appropriate for SDGs in their budgets. She lauded most parliaments for debating on SDGs and passing the necessary laws and policies. Ms. Amina Mohammed reiterated that the UN is keen to see how far these progresses would go and how to support these parliaments and countries. She stressed that debating on how to increase financing includes domestic investment and to achieve this, governments including parliamentarians will have to tackle issues of tax reforms so as to increase domestic income.

Samuel Munzele Maimbo, Head of Finance for Development Unit and Senior Adviser to the Managing Director and World Bank Group CFO in his contribution used a plumbing analogy to describe financial mechanisms in development and summarised that financing is key and it builds on capacity of developing

countries.

Jessica Horn, Director of Programmes at the African Women's Development Fund emphasised the importance of keeping funds flowing into civil society to help tackle wider issues including women's rights.

Dirk Willem te Velde, Head of International Economic Development Group at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) spoke on the importance of job creation to improve a country's development.

Arising from the debate, there was a clear and strong consensus around implementation and delivery of the SDGs. What was less clear, was how this will be financed. The session considered the Addis Ababa Agreement on Financing for Development and discussed parliament's role in pushing governments to meet the commitments made towards developing the right environment for achievement of the SDGs.

The delegates agreed that domestic resources are the largest pool of funds potentially available for development but there is need to unlock that potential whose long term outcome would be: -

It was also agreed that the development agenda should precede the financial agenda with civil society and women rights at the centre of development. It was further agreed that institutions are the best foundation for success in the implementation of SDGs.

8. BUILDING CULTURES OF TRUST AND CONFIDENCE ACROSS COMMONWEALTH POLITICAL SYSTEMS

The session was chaired by Jon Davies, Chief Executive and Secretary, CPA. Speakers included Robert Mattes, Co-Founder, Afrobarometer; Rt. Hon. Maria Miller MP, Chair, Women and Equalities; and Ben Page, CEO, Ipsos MORI. The session took place at the Church House Conference Centre on Tuesday, 27 February, 2018. The Session focused on SDG 16 and 17.

Trust and confidence in public institutions has been declining in recent years. Arguably as a result, the world has witnessed political and social unrest as a backlash against governments perceived as untrustworthy; this is changing the increasingly fragile relationship between citizens and governments. The questions arising therefore are how parliamentarians can build a culture of trust and re-establish confidence amongst citizens in their political systems, and the lessons that can be learnt from initiatives in other countries that are effectively addressing this issue.

Robert Mattes, Co-founder of Afrobarometer, opened the session and discussed the disparities between what citizens want from their representatives and what parliamentarians actually focus on. Despite little trust in leadership, he emphasised that there is a strong connection between parliamentarians and their home constituencies.

Ben Page, CEO of Ipsos MORI, presented a wide array of statistics on global trends regarding public trust in institutions, government, and their political representatives. He raised the idea of radical transparency to rebuild citizens' trust in elected officials.

The Chair of the Women and Equalities Select Committee, the Rt Hon. Maria Miller MP called for an embrace to transparency so as to reduce myth and mystery surrounding the work of parliamentarians. She brought up the importance of having a presence in schools, giving children and young people an opportunity to recognise parliamentarians as they begin to learn about what Parliament does.

The Speakers also highlighted the following issues: -

- i) The need for Parliaments to look like the communities they represent in the diversity in gender, age, sexual orientation, and culture.
- ii) The need for Parliament to shed off the mystery that surrounds it and embrace modern forms of communication. Parliaments should open up to the internet age. The more open parliaments are, the more humane, the more trusted and confident they are.
- iii) Parliaments need to engage more with the locals. This includes public participation and dissemination of correct information to the people.

9. THE ROLE FOR COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTS AS PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS IN MEETING THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The Session was chaired by The Lord Bishop of Salisbury, the Rt. Revd. Nicholas Holtan took place at Portcullis House, Houses of Parliament on Wednesday, 28 February, 2018. Speakers included Professor Sam Fankhauser, Director, Grantham Research Institute; and Judy Ling Wong CBE OBE, Ambassador, Women's Environmental Network. The Session focused on SDGs 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17.

Commonwealth countries played a major part in the success of the 2015 Paris conference. They were among the 195 governments that agreed 'Climate Change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet'. The focus is rightly on implementation and delivery of these global commitments. This session offered an opportunity for parliamentarians to discuss climate finance, disaster risk reduction and prevention strategies, emerging innovations, and generate momentum and a deeper understanding of Commonwealth commitments to the Paris Agreement.

The session discussed the different ways the world is taking action on climate change by passing the necessary legislation and generating executive policy. Most countries have a working framework on climate change with Kenya cited as an example for passing the Climate Change Act (2016). Climate policy is economic policy. There must be collaboration from rich countries and poor countries in tackling climate change. It is equally important to bring in the aspects of openness, the richness of spirituality and emotions and morality to get real equality and unlock the greatness in collaboration in the fight on climate change.

Judy Ling Wong CBE OBE, Ambassador of the Women's Environmental Network, spoke about how feelings drive action and therefore nations must inject love into policy. Representatives from island nations

stressed the need for larger nations to support climate change initiatives to balance out their own carbon footprint. One of the youth delegates proposed drafting of a letter co-signed by parliamentarians in attendance, advocating for the creation of a Commonwealth Committee to monitor climate patterns.

10. PROMOTING OPEN, MODERN, AND INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACIES

The session took place at Portcullis House, Houses of Parliament on Wednesday, 28 February, 2018 and centred around SDGs 1- 17.

During the Session, the delegates were addressed by Rt. Hon. Lord Bates, Minister of State for International Development, UK. Critical to the SDGs is the key indicator to 'Leave No One Behind'. This recognises the need for societies that are open and inclusive, ensuring a voice for the most marginalised including children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with stigmatised illnesses, LGBT communities, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees, displaced persons and migrants. There is an important role for parliaments and parliamentarians to play in promoting such democracies. Equally important is the role of civil society organisations, community engagement groups, traditional leaders, religious bodies, trade unions, and the private sector, who have been and remain an important part of democratic life, and a guarantor of human rights in society. There is need therefore to develop more inclusive cultures across the Commonwealth by opening up old as well as new spaces for others and alternative perspectives.

In his key note address, Rt Hon. Lord Bates, Minister of State for International Development, UK highlighted the journey that each country takes towards democracy as a result of their unique cultures and histories, highlighting that democratic dialogue necessitates transparency. He focused on democracy and the values that the Commonwealth holds as envisioned in the Commonwealth charter. He observed that freedom of speech is paramount and civil society should be included in this fight and more should be done to protect the media. He added that women and youth should be empowered economically, socially and politically and involved in the democratic process. Democracy should also represent the rich diversity of the Commonwealth countries and no one should be left behind.

11. SPOTLIGHT SESSIONS I

Delegates broke out into four simultaneous Spotlight Sessions where a variety of issues were covered. The Sessions took place on Wednesday, 28 February, 2018 at the Portcullis House, Houses of Parliament.

(i) Preventing conflict & sustaining peace across the Commonwealth

The Session was chaired by Baroness Nicholson of Winterborne. Speakers included Fatimah Kelleher, International Consultant on Women's Economic Justice and Educational Empowerment; and Hon. Muhammed Mahanera MP, Gambia; and Canon Sarah Snyder, Commonwealth Reconciliation Advisor to Archbishop of Canterbury. The Session centred around SDG 16.

The realities of violent conflict and war, humanitarian and natural disasters, electoral disruptions and democratic transitions, can jeopardise the stability of Commonwealth countries. This session considered modern conflict issues by highlighting case studies from across the Commonwealth, and focused on the distinct role that parliamentarians can play in national and regional peacebuilding efforts with a global focus on sustaining peace and preventing conflict through peace mediation, reconciliation strategies, and civil society engagement.

The session considered modern conflict issues by shining a light on case studies from across the Commonwealth, explored the ways Commonwealth parliamentarians can take action to respond to pressing conflicts, but it also served as a reminder that conflicts can take many forms and do not always reflect that which is seen in mainstream media. Therefore, solutions for peace must be equally as varied and context-driven.

(ii) Freedom of religious belief; Understanding the role of religion in a secular government and ensuring peaceful coexistence of different religious and belief groups

The Session was chaired by Baroness Berridge, Co-Chair, APPG on International Freedom of Religion or Belief. Speakers included Ahmed Shaheed, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief; and Maja Daruwala, Senior Adviser of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. The Session centred around SDGs 10, 16, and 17.

Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB) is a vital human right for creating prosperous, stable and inclusive societies. 11 of the Pew Research Centre's top 16 countries with 'very high' restrictions on FoRB rank within the bottom 18 percent of the Global Peace Index. The majority of children out of school worldwide belong to minority and indigenous groups. Many religious groups across the Commonwealth face barriers to education, which entrenches their marginalisation at great cost to themselves and the rest of society.

This session focused on how Commonwealth parliamentarians can protect FoRB by holding their respective executives to account and using their leadership role and position to promote religious tolerance and freedom. The Commonwealth can and should be a vehicle for talking about issues of FoRB considering the diverse and complex histories of Commonwealth countries. The speakers explained the obligations and standards set out by the UN to ensure religious inclusivity. The speakers also highlighted the significance to citizens on having equal access to justice. The panel agreed that the Commonwealth Charter does not explicitly include FoRB, and should be amended to address these rights as they affect Commonwealth citizens to varying degrees.

(iii) Launching the 'Commonwealth School of Inclusive Thought'

The Session was chaired by Charlotte Andrews, CPA UK. Speakers included Dr Rob Berkely MBE, Head of Strategy and Digital, BBC; Philip Connelly, Disability Rights UK; Philippa Drew CB, Trustee, Kaleidoscope Trust; Dr Eva Namusoke, Fellow, Institute of Commonwealth Studies; Tong Yee, the Director of the Thought Collective. The Session centred around SDG 10.

This session championed a school of thinkers who offer inclusive and at times alternative ideas to advocate change in more inclusive ways. The focus on renewal and reform across the Commonwealth underscores the need for 'hidden', marginalised, excluded disenfranchised voices, and the power of social movements to bring about change and freedom for all Commonwealth citizens. Within this session, each of the thinkers presented their inclusive vision for more open and modern democracies, and set out a roadmap for enacting change beyond the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

The speakers emphasised the importance of having dialogues and influencing public discourse for tangible impacts. The group highlighted the distinct perspective that persons living with disabilities have to offer, notably, their resilience. The group further articulated the need for many Commonwealth countries to review discriminatory laws based on the sexuality or gender identity of a person. Parliamentarians were urged to be accessible to the youth constituents through social media. The session closed with a thought-provoking case study from Singapore on the importance of taking ownership of own actions.

(iv) Collaborative approaches to Global Health Challenges

The Session was chaired by Dr. Linda Yueh, a TV and radio presenter. Speakers included Jeremy LeFroy MP, Co-Chair for the APPG on Malaria and NTDS; and Bernard Arycete, Director of Malaria No More UK. The Session covered SDGs 3, 5, 6, 10, 16 and 17.

The role of health & healthcare in directly making lives better is widely acknowledged. From helping to eradicate poverty, preventing serious outbreaks that spur national security crises, to boosting economic productivity and sustainability – investing globally in health is a key pillar of the SDGs. It is also widely acknowledged to be a universal and collaborative effort. This session looked at the ways in which governments, health agencies, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), private sector organisations, and citizens can collaborate to improve health systems, infrastructure, innovation processes, and delivery.

The speakers stressed that investing in health initiatives is a great way to achieve global standards and attract investors. They emphasised that diseases know no borders, and therefore require collaboration across the Commonwealth. The group spoke about the progress made so far in the promotion of health but noted that financial investment and climate change presented major challenges including stalling progress.

12. KEYNOTE ADDRESS FROM THE RT. HON. JEREMY CORBYN, MP, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, UK

The Leader of the Opposition, UK the Rt. Hon. Jeremy Corbyn, MP addressed delegates at the Portcullis House, Houses of Parliament on Wednesday, February 28, 2018 and on spoke about how climate change disproportionately affects small states, while big states are the main polluters. He outlined his vision for the Commonwealth as well as his plans on tax reforms, addressing root causes of poverty and mutual trading partnership.

13. GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY: HOW PARLIAMENTARIANS CAN BE PART OF THE 'DATA AND EVIDENCE REVOLUTION'.

The Session was Chaired by Sen. Kerensia Morrison MP, Jamaica. Speakers included E. Gyimah-Boadi, Chief Executive, Afrobarometer; Dr David Halpern, Chief Executive, Behavioural Insights Team; and Emily Hayter, Programme Manager, INASP. The Session was held at the Portcullis House, Houses of Parliament on Wednesday, 28 February, 2018 and it focused on SDG 16.

Government transparency and accountability are at the heart of good governance and strong and transparent institutions. The 'data revolution' offers huge potential for achieving and effectively monitoring sustainable development. It also comes with difficult challenges around data gaps, quality, resource implications, and political realities and sensitivities. This session focused on the use of data and evidence as the 'lifeblood' of parliaments, and an essential component to parliamentary functions of oversight, scrutiny, and representation of constituents.

The session elaborated on the right approach to using data and evidence by parliaments by acknowledging that parliaments don't know everything and must be willing enough to learn. There should be MP-staff collaboration with the objective of increasing evidence uptake among MPs and the ultimate goal of eliminating opinion-based policy for evidence-based policy. Key takeaways for parliamentarians were: -

- i) Parliamentarians should get to know their parliamentary research team and find out how they can support them.
- ii) Parliaments should strengthen their network with research institutions in their respective countries.

14. ROLE OF COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS IN TACKLING HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND CHILD EXPLOITATION

The Session was Chaired by Jon Davies, Chief Executive and Secretary, CPA. Speakers included Parosha Chandra, UK Barrister, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Expert; Rt. Hon. David Hanson, MP, Vice-Chair UK Executive Committee; Kevin Hyland OBE, UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. The Session was held at the Portcullis House, Houses of Parliament on Wednesday, 28 February, 2018. The session centred around SDG 8.7.

In 2016, 24.9 million people across the world were trapped in forced labour whilst 15.4 million were coerced into forced marriages. Human trafficking, child exploitation, and forced labour affect every nation in the world, including those within the Commonwealth. This session focused on understanding the causes behind human trafficking, forced labour, and child exploitation, as well as explored how these issues manifest themselves. The session sought to answer how human trafficking and child exploitation sits within the overall discourse on human rights, the benefits of legislating effectively on these issues, both ethically and practically, and the roles that parliaments can play in legislating on these heinous crimes and raising awareness among their constituents and communities.

Delegates were reminded that slavery can take many forms. However, the three main types of exploitation are sexual exploitation, labour exploitation and domestic servitude. The victims of trafficking and child exploitation are usually subdued using punishments such as blackmail, violence, coercion and deception. Parliamentarians' major role is to create stringent laws that criminalize human trafficking and child exploitation. Lastly, parliamentarians need to work closely with civil society on this issue as they are key in fulfilling the first fundamental which is protecting the victim.

The Session Speakers underlined that Governments and Parliaments are accountable for taking political action to advocate for victims and punish traffickers. They emphasized the need for better protection and access to justice for victims as well as a more secure process for prosecution of traffickers. They also emphasized the importance of protecting the vulnerable and increasing victim support but also creating strategies for prevention.

The day ended with tours of the Parliamentary Estate and opportunity to view proceedings in the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

15. THE COMMONWEALTH PROSPERITY OUTLOOK: FORECASTS & PREDICTIONS

The Session was chaired by Dr. Nick Westcott, Director of the Royal African Society. Speakers included Samuel Munzele Maimbo, Head of Finance for Development Unit and Senior Adviser to the Managing Director and World Bank Group CFO; Dr Travis Mitchell, Head of Economic Policy and Small States Section, Economics Youth and Social and Sustainable Development Directorate, The Commonwealth Secretariat; Moono Mupotola, Director, African Development Bank; and Dr Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah, Secretary-General, Civicus who joined the debate through skype. The Session took place on Thursday, March 01, 2018 at the Guildhall, City of London. The session centred around SDGs 1, 10 and 17.

During the session, the following issues arose including whether a global shift towards nationalism and protectionism pose a threat or opportunity for economies across the Commonwealth, and what the main opportunities and challenges for long-term growth and prosperity were. This session offered a global outlook on trade, growth, and the Commonwealth - exploring patterns, trends, myths, and misnomers - and offering predictions and forecasts for the economic outlook over the next five years.

The speakers acknowledged that we live in an increasingly complex environment for forecasting. There are so many risks ranging from climate change to demographic pressures and countries are experiencing increasing rising debt both at national and consumer level. In addition, inequalities among countries remain high and new technologies offer promises but also introduce new threats. In this context, Countries need to address structural reforms around baseline (soft) skills, investment needs, labour market reforms, and education and health improvements. Countries also need to invest in soft links-people to people-relationships which is enhanced by the internet age. Lastly, countries need to mobilize domestic savings and prevent capital flight for local investments. The Session appreciated the difficulties of economic

forecasting given cyber risks and global trends. The Session talked about making the most of Commonwealth economies given global trends like Brexit.

16. STIMULATING JOBS & LIVELIHOODS - DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH

The Session was Chaired by Lord Purvis of Tweed, from the UK House of Lords. Speakers included Sen. Johnson Sakaja, M.P. Nairobi Senator, Chairman of the Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association; Hon. Lenard Montoute, MP, Minister for Equity, Justice, Empowerment, Youth Development, Sports, Culture and Local Government, Saint Lucia; Hilary Simpson, Founder, Sleuth Co-Op; and Zhi Soon, Director of Youth, Education & Skills, Behavioural Insights Team. The Session took place on Thursday, March 01, 2018 at the Guildhall, City of London. The session centred around SDGs 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10 and 17.

With future work practices uncertain and changing at a rapid pace, citizens are increasingly working in a way that is interdisciplinary, often creative and digital, entrepreneurial and requiring leadership, technical ability, global awareness and civic education. Parliamentarians have a responsibility to ensure their constituents and citizens of all ages can make the most of these opportunities and ensure that the benefits are widely felt by all. The session explored the scale of the challenge and mapped out ways in which parliamentarians can support national governments to prepare for the future.

The discussion centred around studies which show that the most useful skills in ten years' time will be soft/baseline skills which include communication, creativity, problem solving and team work. The Commonwealth population is relatively young with Canada having the oldest mean age at 42 and Uganda the youngest at 15. The session assessed the current situation of unemployment globally. Millions of disengaged young people are the real threat to insecurity as they are vulnerable to radicalization and unemployment also leads to migration crises as young people from countries with high unemployment try to get to other countries with low unemployment with hope of a better life. Unemployment is therefore a global challenge and needs to be addressed in this context.

The session stressed the need to create sustainable job growth, the importance of ensuring the modern economy provides opportunities for everyone so that no one is left behind.

17. BREAKOUT SESSIONS II

Delegates broke out into four simultaneous Spotlight Sessions where a variety of issues were covered. The Sessions took place on Thursday, March 01, 2018 at the Guildhall, City of London.

- i) **Challenge and Disruption: what role can 'enterpreneurial' Parliamentarians across the Commonwealth play in driving forward legislative change?**

The Session was Chaired by Ann Hodkinson, Head of Multilateral Projects, CPA UK. Speakers included Hon. Neto Agostinho, former MP in Kenya, Lawyer and Convenor of the Kenya Parliamentary Human Rights Association; and Professor Murray Hunt, Director, Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law. The session centred around SDG 16.

The power and influence of parliamentarians is not solely reserved for those in governing parties. Arguably, a single Member of Parliament in the opposition party/minority party has more flexibility to push for new campaigns and policies through Private Members Bills, lobbying in Committees, online Petitions, and social media. Reviewing legislation and representing public interest are key components of a parliamentarian's role. The session illuminated the conditions and mechanisms needed to support the 'entrepreneurial parliamentarian', exploring the ways in which parliamentarians can capitalise on a number of resources to challenge government legislation and create real societal change.

The session discussed ways of passing legislation while a Member belongs to the opposition party/minority party, cross-party working, and forming credible coalitions. The session suggested that parliamentarians get involved in reviews of international conventions such as the UN Human Rights Council so they can hold their governments accountable, improve scrutiny, and push the passage of legislation.

ii) The Future of the Commonwealth: Open-House Q&A session

The Session was Chaired by Sophia Thakur, Storyteller and Poet. Speakers included Forum Youth Delegates Sina Mario from Fiji and William Carter Jones from the UK; Hon. Damian Crawford, MP, Jamaica; and Hon. Adrien Duval, MP Mauritius. The session centred around SDG 17.

The Commonwealth's 53 member countries have a combined population in excess of 2 billion, of which more than 60 percent are under the age of 30. With the Commonwealth having officially stated that young people are assets to a country's development, it is time to move beyond the rhetoric so that young people can fully realise their potential. A critical part of this is listening to their questions and engaging in an open dialogue about the Commonwealth and its future, including what the priorities should be; That is, fairness, prosperity, security, or sustainability; how the Commonwealth will adapt over the next 10 years; and how Parliamentarians can enable and empower young people as drivers of this change. The session, designed and delivered by Commonwealth young people, attempted to unpack youth perspectives and communicate their priorities to elected officials.

The session discussed how young people can be agents of change, both directly, through positions of power, indirectly, and by supporting social movements. Participants debated whether today's youth should be addressed as a demographic that will be replaced in several years' time, or as a generation that will remain throughout many ages of life.

iii) **How Commonwealth parliamentarians can promote smarter and more inclusive cities?**

The Session was chaired by Dr Roberta Blackman- Woods MP, Hon. Treasurer, CPA UK Executive Committee. The Speaker was Dr Eva Namusoke, Fellow, Institute of Commonwealth Studies. The session centred around SDGs 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Cities have become a focus point of discussion around inequality and inclusive growth. Global trends show populations are continuing to shift towards economic, political and cultural centres, and governments are investing heavily in cities to ensure that they are resilient, sustainable, secure, and innovative. But what does a smarter and more inclusive city look like? How do they effectively address security, fairness, sustainability, and prosperity for all? The session explored the issues parliamentarians are tackling and the role parliamentarians can play in responding to the growth of global cities.

The speaker highlighted the importance of issues of urbanisation in every Commonwealth country. Urban areas, which face income inequality, must be accessible to everyone. The group discussed the effect of the mass migration to cities such as those in India, creating huge urban populations and leaving rural citizens behind.

18. RENEWAL, REFORM, AND INNOVATION: WHAT SHOULD THE FUTURE PARLIAMENTARIAN LOOK LIKE?

The Session was facilitated by Martin Kalungu-Banda, Author and Leadership Consultant.

In a rapidly changing and uncertain political world, the future parliamentarian will need to be prepared, responsive, collaborative, empathetic and digitally sensitive, among other things. The leadership of parliamentarians can influence policy and drive the overarching purpose to do the right things with people to ensure a fairer, secure, sustainable and prosperous society. In this hands-on session, delegates shaped a job description or profile of the future parliamentarian, identifying gaps in capability and suggesting approaches to address them.

Mr. Martin Kalungu-Banda identified the future parliamentarian as a systems thinker, a black belt listener and one who has switched on the three faculties of intelligence namely open mind, open heart and open will. This parliamentarian must know the world and must be able to bend the beam of observation on himself for self-awareness.

He stressed that the future prosperity will depend on addressing hunger, health systems, and mental health and spoke about people's ability to translate their fundamental beliefs and values into structures that address these issues.

19. WHAT WOULD YOU DO AS HEAD OF GOVERNMENT? PITCHES AND PLEAS

Rt. Hon. Emily Thornberry - Shadow Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary kicked off the 'pitches and pleas' session with a key note address outlining the importance of a strong opposition in holding the government to account.

Hon. Thornberry began by defining the role of the opposition which she said was to compel the government of the day to listen and sometimes change their mind. She then explained that the Commonwealth remains important as a body as it is a vital tool in global leadership and safeguarding human rights and rule of law. Hon. Thornberry opened the door on pitches as she articulated what she would say to Prime Minister Theresa May on why the approach to Brexit was not working and what should be done, and the need to create a non-partisan governmental department tasked with forecasting the future of Britain and resolving the problems in the long-run. She offered her own 'pitch and plea' to the UK Government including a change in strategy in negotiating Brexit and a dedicated, permanent, non-partisan arm of government to take on long-term problems.

Delegates were asked to imagine that they had been given the chance to stand in front of their Heads of Governments to propose ideas, initiatives, and ways of working. These were the 'pitches and pleas'. This was a participatory opportunity for delegates to brainstorm on the ideas and initiatives.

The conference sessions came to an end with delegates making their 'pitches and pleas' to their respective Heads of States. Some proposed ideas, initiatives, ways of working proposed to Commonwealth Heads of Governments from the forum ahead of the meeting scheduled for April 2018 (Pitches and Pleas) include: -

- i) Creation of a Pool of experts for the Commonwealth to draw on;
- ii) Creation of a Permanent office of the Commonwealth in every country;
- iii) Review of colonial-era laws;
- iv) Countries with descendants of Africa to re-examine how they celebrate their black population and respect their history;
- v) Formation of a climate change council;
- vi) Unifying the Commonwealth Parliamentarians;
- vii) Educate citizens on the value and history of the Commonwealth;
- viii) Heads of Commonwealth States to be more assertive at UN level and other world forums;
- ix) A plea to Commonwealth governments to uphold democracy and listen to the opposition; and
- x) A plea to a Commonwealth Heads of States to extend the free movement of persons with minimum visa restrictions throughout the Commonwealth.

The Youth Delegates presented a declaration to parliamentarians which include the following: To ensure there is;

- i) A commitment from parliamentarians to focus on Commonwealth education in school curriculums;
- ii) Push for non-governmental groups to evaluate policy;
- iii) Youth analysis in policy-making;
- iv) Evidence-based health policy;
- v) Applied universal human rights; and
- vi) Pan-Commonwealth scheme for apprenticeships and internships.

20. OFFICIAL CLOSE OF COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS' FORUM 2018

The Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum concluded with a closing reception hosted by City of London Corporation with the Keynote Address by Rt Hon. the Lord Mayor of the City of London, Charles Bowman and closing remarks by Lord James Duddrige, Chair, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK.

Thereafter was the unveiling of 'The Commonwealth Body' mural and official closure of the Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum 2018.

21. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE KENYA PARLIAMENT DELEGATION

Recognizing that achievement of results across the four thematic areas of Sustainability, Fairness, Security and Security requires political goodwill, and policy and legislative frameworks, the Kenya delegation identified key policy options and measures to support and implement objectives within the four thematic areas and the cross-cutting themes of youth, gender and inclusion. These are:-

- (i) Putting in place legal, regulatory and policy frameworks in place. There is need to sponsor, advocate for and support clear policy plans for delivering on the four areas of strategic priority.
- (ii) Financial/Fiscal Policies. These can be achieved through advocating for investments in the four thematic areas.
- (iii) Engaging in oversight and scrutiny of the National Action Plans and Budgets that have an effect on the implementation of initiatives in the four priority areas.
- (iv) Championing and pushing for effective implementation of the SDGs both at National and County levels.
- (v) Initiating debate and creating awareness on key issues in the four thematic areas.
- (vi) Tabling questions and motions on how the country can create response mechanisms.

DECLARATION OF THE 1ST COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS' FORUM,

CPA UK, Westminster, London, 26 February – 1 March 2018

The UK Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA UK) hosted the first ever Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum in London, from 26 February to 1 March 2018. 90 delegates from 30 Commonwealth countries met 50 days ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), also taking place in London, from 16 April. The following Declaration reflects their discussions and decisions over four stimulating days.

- i) The Commonwealth and its nations are like a body. Parliaments and parliamentarians are essential to the future health and success of that body.
- ii) The Commonwealth Charter is the essential skeleton for the Commonwealth body. It has as its first core value and principle Democracy; its second Human Rights. The Charter asserts that parliaments are essential elements in the exercise of democratic governance. Delegates committed to playing the roles assigned to them by the Charter, including upholding and promoting democratic cultures and practices, and being accountable to the public in this regard. They represent the people, and must reflect the people's priorities.
- iii) The values and principles of the Charter are the heart of the Commonwealth body. Parliamentarians must help ensure that Commonwealth Governments live up to those values and principles, including the Rule of Law, backed by an independent, impartial, honest and competent judiciary; and Freedom of Expression, including through a free and responsible media. The Latimer Principles remain an excellent basis for ensuring accountability and transparency.
- iv) Parliamentarians can be the hands of the Commonwealth body, to make things happen. Delegates committed to return to their countries ready to do all they could to positively shape their country's approach to CHOGM 2018 and its four, inter-dependent themes. They committed to continuing that campaigning work beyond CHOGM 2018, in particular for the period of the UK's period as Chair-in-Office until 2020. They will press for the proper resourcing of this work.
- v) Parliamentarians can act as the intelligent head of the Commonwealth body. Delegates committed to seeking and sharing the knowledge and information which their people need. They supported the holding of a second Forum, early enough to influence CHOGM 2020.
- vi) Delegates committed to playing their particular role to support and scrutinise progress by the Commonwealth and its members towards the Sustainable Development Goals.
- vii) Delegates drew inspiration from the presence of youth delegates from a variety of Commonwealth countries. They committed to promoting greater engagement with and by young people in pursuit of the Commonwealth's values and principles. This should be one example of the Commonwealth's strength through diversity and inclusivity, as well as through its unity in action.

YOUTH DELEGATE DECLARATION OF THE 1ST COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARIANS' FORUM,

CPA UK, Westminster, London, 26 February – 1 March 2018

The UK Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA UK) hosted the first ever Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Forum in London, from 26 February to 1 March 2018. 90 delegates from 30 Commonwealth countries met 50 days ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), also taking place in London, from 16 April. There were 11 youth delegates from 5 different Commonwealth countries in attendance. The youth delegates unanimously agreed on the importance of upholding The Commonwealth Charter. The following Declaration reflects the decisions that they would like parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth and the Pan-Commonwealth working group to put at the forefront of their agenda between now and CHOGM, and beyond:

- i) A commitment from parliamentarians to push for a focus on Commonwealth education in school curriculums.
- ii) A commitment from parliamentarians to push for a Commonwealth non-governmental policy implementation body to provide checks and balances on the policy proposals of governments and government ministers. This should also ensure that the Commonwealth charter is consistent throughout policy and legislation.
- iii) In Fiji for instance, there is now an emphasis on gender analysis in policy formulation. We would therefore like to propose across the Commonwealth, a commitment from parliamentarians to encourage youth perspective in policy making.
- iv) A commitment from parliamentarians to push for evidence based health policy.
- v) A commitment to ensuring that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is 'universally applied' with specific regard to marginalised groups.
- vi) A campaign from parliamentarians for a pan-commonwealth placement scheme to be introduced focussing on apprenticeships and internships for The Commonwealths' young people from low socio-economic backgrounds.

**PROPOSED LETTER FOR CHOGM 2018: CPA UK, WESTMINSTER,
LONDON, 26 FEBRUARY – 1 MARCH 2018**

Dear Commonwealth Chair in-Office,

We the below encourage our Heads of Government to formally support the creation of a Commonwealth Climate Change Council. The council's responsibilities will encompass, but are not limited to, the collection, monitoring, and tracking of natural disasters and natural catastrophic events connected to, or caused by, global warming. The creation of such a council will raise the standard of awareness and assist with the preparedness for, and avoidance of, natural disasters affecting Commonwealth member states.

We the member states all are affected in one way or another by the likes of hurricanes, tropical storms, earthquakes, rising sea levels, flooding, temperature shifts, tsunamis, ocean acidifications, monsoons, and droughts, and advocate for a collective approach to monitor the effects of these events.

From a financial, moral, and economic standpoint, it is in our best interests to form such a council as many member states may not be able to afford the required resources, technology and labour necessary for such a commitment. With the ever growing concerns around the negative effects of climate change, we the below signatories see the urgency of the creation of such a council forthwith.

We advocate the creation of a committee and action plan from the CHOGM to address the effects of global warming and natural disasters for Commonwealth members to establish a remit for the Commonwealth Climate Change Council.

This promissory note will be carbon copied to the following names with the hope of the topic being placed onto the agenda as a priority matter for discussion and commitment at CHOGM:

Hon. Emilia Lifaka MP, Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee
Baroness Patricia Scotland, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat
Mr Akbar Khan, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
Theresa May, in her capacity as incoming Chair in Office of the Commonwealth
Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the UK Opposition