



THE PARLIAMENT OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to the
55th Commonwealth Parliamentary
Association Conference,
Tanzania and to Rwanda

26 September to 6 October 2009

June 2010

The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

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Canberra

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ISBN 978-0-642-79375-1



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Membership of the delegation

Leader Senator Claire Moore

Deputy
Leader Mr John Forrest MP

Members Senator Gary Humphries
 Mr Brett Raguse MP

Ms Claressa Surtees

Delegation Secretary

Introduction

- 1.1 From 26 September to 6 October 2009, an Australian parliamentary delegation (the delegation) visited neighbouring central east African countries Rwanda and Tanzania (see map at end of this chapter). The delegation comprised Senators and Members of the House of Representatives, listed at p. iv above. The first leg of the visit, from 26 September to 1 October, took place in Rwanda, and the second leg was spent in participation at the 55th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference (CPC) in Arusha, Tanzania, from 1 to 6 October.
- 1.2 This report is in two parts – Chapter 2 presents the delegation’s activities and observations during its visit to Rwanda, and Chapter 3 reports on the delegation’s attendance at the 55th CPC in Tanzania.

Bilateral delegation to Rwanda

Aims and objectives of the delegation

- 1.3 For its visit to Rwanda, the delegation agreed on the following aims and objectives. They were formulated with advice from the Parliamentary Library and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
 - Establish links with the Rwandan Parliament;

- Obtain an understanding of Rwanda's political, economic and social situation;
- Gain an appreciation of human rights and reconciliation issues;
- Gain an insight into regional security and peacekeeping issues;
- Gain an appreciation of Australian-funded development assistance; and
- Discuss cooperation within the multilateral system.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference

- 1.4 The 55th CPC held in Arusha, Tanzania, and attended by the delegation from 1 to 6 October 2009, was hosted by the Tanzanian Branch of the CPA.
- 1.5 Discussions at the conference focussed on issues around the theme – The Commonwealth and the CPA: Meeting Future Global Challenges. The global issues identified for discussion at the conference plenary and workshop sessions included the financial crisis, climate change, trade, governance, conflict prevention, policy responses in small economies and challenges for governments of small states.

Overview

- 1.6 In relation to the bilateral visit to Rwanda, the delegation considers it achieved its objectives. In particular, the delegation was delighted to be the first Australian parliamentary delegation to visit Rwanda and thereby to contribute to Australia's formative relationship with Rwanda. A copy of the delegation's program for the visit to Rwanda is at Appendix A.
- 1.7 The delegation welcomed the opportunity to attend the 55th CPC in Tanzania and was pleased to represent the Australian Parliament. The Conference provided the opportunity for delegates to engage with parliamentarians from other Commonwealth countries. It also enabled an exchange of views on a number of issues of current concern to Commonwealth countries and to the international community. A copy of the principal addresses to the Conference is at

Appendix B, and a summary report of the Conference is at Appendix C.

Acknowledgements

- 1.8 The delegation wishes to express its appreciation of the efforts of all those who contributed to the success of its visit. In particular, the delegation wishes to acknowledge the following contributions.

Canberra

- 1.9 The delegation received oral and written briefings prior to its departure, from staff of the Parliamentary Library and the government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The delegation wishes to record its thanks to all staff who contributed to these briefings and assisted with administrative arrangements for the visit.
- 1.10 The delegation wishes to thank also, the staff of the Parliamentary Relations Office, in particular Ms Lyn Witheridge, for their administrative assistance prior to departure.

Rwanda

- 1.11 The delegation wishes to thank Mr Paul Dziatkowiec, Australia's Deputy Ambassador to Rwanda, for his initial briefing and continuing assistance during the period of the delegation's visit. Mr Dziatkowiec was a valued companion to the delegation throughout its visit, and his ongoing support was most helpful to the delegation. The delegation also wishes to record its thanks to other staff of Australia's mission in Nairobi, Kenya, for their assistance in relation to the delegation's visit.
- 1.12 The delegation wishes to thank HE Mr Nicholas Cannon OBE, British Ambassador to Rwanda, for his hospitality and courtesy in providing a private briefing at the commencement of the visit. This meeting was of great value in providing a comprehensive geographical and historical context for Rwanda's current social, political and economic situation.
- 1.13 The delegation wishes to record its appreciation of the hospitality and courtesy extended to it by everyone at the Parliament of Rwanda, led by the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies HE Rose Mukantabana,

and the President of the Senate, HE Vincent Biruta. The delegation thanks them for the warmth of their welcome, for the opportunity to discuss matters of mutual interest and to strengthen the initial friendly relations between Australia and Rwanda.

- 1.14 In particular, the delegation thanks the Hon Gedeon Kayinamura and the Hon Agnes Mukabaranga who afforded enormous generosity and commitment by accompanying the delegation throughout its program of meetings and visits arranged by the Rwandan Parliament. The gracious presence of Mr Kayinamura and Ms Mukabaranga added significant warmth and depth to the delegation's experience throughout the period of the visit.
- 1.15 The delegation wishes to record its thanks also to officers of the Rwandan Parliament for the excellent administrative support provided to the delegation during the visit to Rwanda, and for their assistance on a range of matters.
- 1.16 The delegation wishes to thank the ministers and senior representatives of the Rwandan Government from a range of portfolios who made themselves available for meetings with the delegation. The briefings and discussions they provided to the delegation have contributed considerably to the members' understanding of Rwanda's situation and most significant issues.

Tanzania

- 1.17 The delegation wishes to record its appreciation of the work of the many staff of the National Assembly of Tanzania who contributed to the successful organisation of the 55th CPC.

Map of Africa

The equator runs along the top of Lake Victoria – the substantial striped area between Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. The meridian 30°E runs through the centre of Rwanda.





Bilateral visit to Rwanda

Introduction to Rwanda

Official Name	Republic of Rwanda
Form of State	Parliamentary democracy
Head of State	President HE Paul Kagame
Prime Minister	The Rt Hon Bernard Makuza
National Legislature	Parliament of Rwanda – bicameral legislature
Capital	Kigali
Languages	Kinyarwanda, French and English
Population	10.5 million (estimate in 2009)
Land area	26,338 square kilometres
Average per capita income	US\$330 (Atlas Method, World Bank 2007)
Average annual growth rate	8% (World Development Indicators, 2007)
Poverty level	60% below national poverty line (UN Statistics Division, 2000)

Subsistence farming	relied on by some 90% of the population
Average life expectancy	49.8 years (World Bank 2007)
Women dying in childbirth	750 per 100,000 (DHS, 2005)
Children dying before age 5	103 per 1,000 live births (Interim DHS, 2008)
Primary school education	95% (Ministry of Education, 2007)
Population aged 15–49 with HIV/AIDS: 3%	(DHS, 2005)
Access to safe, clean water	64% of the population (DHS, 2005)



Background

- 2.1 With a population of some 10.5 million, Rwanda is a densely populated and landlocked country which covers an area of 26,338 square kilometres, less than half the size of Tasmania (68,331 square kilometres). It is situated in central east Africa and is surrounded by neighbouring countries of Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
- 2.2 The Rwandan population is comprised of Hutu (84 per cent), Tutsi (15 per cent) and Twa (1 per cent) ethnicities and over 90 per cent of the population identifies as Christian. The average age is 18 years, with over 40 per cent of the population being born since the 1994 genocide.
- 2.3 The origin of division between Hutu and Tutsi groups is uncertain and explanations rely variously on genealogy, pre-colonial social structures and colonial divide and rule policies for their bases. Nevertheless, the division has been the most significant factor in central African development and politics over the past 100 years.
- 2.4 After World War I, Belgium took over administration of Ruanda-Urundi (one nation from 1890 to 1962) from Germany. The community was divided into a Tutsi monarchy and upper class, and Tutsi and Hutu lower classes. The administrators simplified the structure and concentrated power in the Tutsi minority, by declaring everyone who owned more than ten cattle to be Tutsi, and everyone else to be Hutu.
- 2.5 This concentration of power was sustained not only by the colonial administration, but also by the monarchy and the Catholic Church. The Hutu population resented their inferior position and an outbreak of anti-Tutsi violence in 1959 led to thousands of Tutsis being killed or driven into exile in neighbouring countries. The escalating violence led the Belgian administrators to divide the colony into Burundi and Rwanda, with elections being held in 1961. Over 70,000 people were killed in the conflicts surrounding independence and hundreds of thousands were displaced.
- 2.6 Following independence in 1962, Rwanda became a Hutu-led one party republic, and Burundi, a Tutsi-led constitutional monarchy. Both governments conducted ethnic based purges and cross-border incursions over the following decades.

Civil war and the 1994 genocide

- 2.7 In 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a group of primarily ethnic Tutsi rebels led by Paul Kagame, current Rwandan president, and living in Uganda (having fled to avoid violence years earlier), invaded Rwanda. Their complaints were that the government had failed to democratise and resolve the repatriation of the Tutsi diaspora. In 1993, Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana and Kagame signed a ceasefire, but fighting continued and the United Nations deployed its Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) to implement the agreement.
- 2.8 On 6 April 1994, President Juvenal Habyarimana and President Cyprian Ntayamira, of Burundi, were killed when their aeroplane was shot down as it prepared to land at Kigali airport. This incident triggered catastrophic attacks by the Rwandan army and the Interahamwe, or Hutu militias, on Tutsis and political moderates. Although the exact figures are not known, some 1 million persons, mainly Tutsis and up to 30,000 Hutus, are thought to have been killed in the following three months.
- 2.9 UNAMIR forces were not able to stop the genocide because of their limited mandate and small numbers. In June 1994, French forces deployed in south west Rwanda to stop the fighting, however, the role of the French forces has been criticised because many persons related to the genocidal activities used the French zone as an escape path to what was then Zaire (the DRC being established in 1997).
- 2.10 The killings ceased in July 1994, when the RPF defeated the Rwandan army, and they took control of Kigali and removed the Hutu government. The remaining defeated army members, the Interahamwe and two million refugees fled to the neighbouring countries of Tanzania, Burundi and Zaire. Most of these Rwandans have since returned home, with fewer than 100,000 Rwandans estimated to remain outside of Rwanda – they are considered to be the remnants of the former defeated army and the Interahamwe, and soldiers recruited in the refugees camps in Zaire/DRC.
- 2.11 The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was established in Arusha, Tanzania, in November 1995 to bring to account those responsible for masterminding the genocide. More than 80 people have been charged and some 17 of these have been convicted, and one person acquitted.

- 2.12 The bulk of the indictments have been left to Rwanda's national legal system. In 1996, Rwanda passed a law specifically to punish the crimes of genocide. The sheer number of the accused, some 100,000, meant the national court system would take another 100 years to hear the cases. In late 2001, voting was held for ordinary Rwandans to be elected members of traditional "Gacaca" courts (justice on the grass), with the aim of clearing the backlog of genocide cases. Under this system, lower courts are established in regional centres.
- 2.13 Since 2003, over 60,000 prisoners, most of whom have confessed to taking part in the genocide, have been released to ease crowding in the gaols. Pursuit of those accused of taking part in the 1994 genocide continues at all levels of the justice system.

Issues raised by the visit

Governance and democratic development

- 2.14 Although now a largely post-conflict country, Rwanda is still recovering from the devastating civil war and genocide of the 1990s. There is a risk of armed conflict and cross-border incursions between government forces and rebels along Rwanda's borders with Burundi in the south and the DRC in the north east.
- 2.15 Rwanda was governed by a coalition in transition from 1994 to 2003, at which time multiparty elections were held and Paul Kagame was elected President. A new constitution was adopted in 2003, and it provides that the President is popularly elected for a seven year term, renewable once, and that the different ethnic groups must be represented in government. Rwanda is a multi-party democracy with universal suffrage over the age of 18 years. Practically, the RPF dominates the political environment and the Tutsis dominate in the Parliament.
- 2.16 This report has referred above to the difficulties faced by Rwandans on the road to democracy. The Constitution contains provisions which address issues in Rwanda's recent history and which are critical for its future development. Rwanda's Constitution is based on two key principles of power sharing and consensus building, to guard against total dominance by the party with the majority of votes.

- 2.17 The Parliament is bicameral, consisting of a Chamber of Deputies (80 deputies) and a Senate (26 senators), and it has several unique features which reflect the power sharing and consensus building principles under the Constitution. Significantly, the Speaker of Parliament and the President of the Senate must be chosen from parties other than that of the President of Rwanda.
- 2.18 The delegation was privileged to be invited to visit the Parliament of Rwanda in Kigali, and to meet in the Senate Hall with some of the deputies and senators. The delegation was interested to learn about the features of Rwanda's political system.
- 2.19 The Constitution provides a 30 per cent minimum quota for women in all areas of decision making, including for parliamentarians. Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda (June 2003), article 9, paragraph 4:
- Building a state governed by the rule of law, a pluralistic democratic government, equality of all Rwandans and between women and men reflected by ensuring that women are granted at least thirty per cent of posts in decision making organs
- At the last elections, in September 2008, 56 per cent of members elected to the Chamber of Deputies were women. This impressive outcome confirms Rwanda as having the highest percentage of elected women parliamentarians of all national parliaments worldwide (the Inter-Parliamentary Union compiles statistics in relation to this <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>).
- 2.20 The Constitution also limits the ruling party to a maximum of 50 per cent of Cabinet seats, with the rest divided proportionally among other parties in parliament, and Cabinet ministers may not serve at the same time in parliament.
- 2.21 The delegation notes that the Parliament has introduced measures in support of good governance, including a Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit and also a Ministerial Code of Conduct.

Rwandan Women Parliamentary Forum

- 2.22 The delegation was very fortunate to be able to meet with the Rwandan Women Parliamentary Forum (Women's Forum). The Women's Forum was established in 1996 with the aim of strengthening the role of Rwandan women in parliament and in society as a whole. It was interesting to learn that it was one of the

first parliamentary networks to be established in the then National Transitional Assembly.

- 2.23 With a membership of all women senators and deputies from all political parties, the objective of the Women's Forum is to contribute to the capacity building of women parliamentarians and to facilitate the integration of gender in parliamentary deliberations and decisions. Achieving this objective will be a critical means of creating an environment conducive to reconstruction of a functioning civil society, characterised by equality, equity, inclusion and participation, as reflected in government laws, policies and programs.

Forum of Political Organisations

- 2.24 The delegation met with the Forum of Political Organisations and learned that this Forum was created following the 1994 genocide to contribute to good governance and leadership in Rwanda. The Forum played an important role in the first five years of governance transition, particularly in scrutinising and confirming the candidacy of persons proposed to join the National Transitional Assembly. The Forum was retained and established by the 2003 Constitution, which provides for its administrative and financial independence.
- 2.25 The aims of this Forum are to advise on national policy and facilitate the exchange of ideas of political organisations on major public policy issues, to mediate in conflicts arising within and between political organisations and to consolidate national unity.
- 2.26 There are nine parties represented in the Parliament and they are each represented in the membership of the Forum. Each party has a separate identity, which is symbolised in part by a party flag, and particular objectives of the Forum are to tolerate difference and diversity and to promote consensus and power sharing.

Rwanda Governance Advisory Council

- 2.27 The delegation met with Professor Shyaka Anastase, Executive Secretary of the Rwanda Governance Advisory Council (GAC), an autonomous institution with a mandate to conduct research in relation to public, corporate and civic governance. The GAC is led by a board of nine eminent persons, two from each of the public sector, private sector, civil society and faith based organisations and the executive sector, ex officio. This mix of backgrounds among the

board members provides coverage of all significant sectors in the economy and, the profiles of the board members provide a safeguard to the independence, integrity and ownership of the work of the GAC. The planned size of the secretariat is 22 persons.

- 2.28 The GAC's major responsibilities are to search for global innovations and best practices in governance to ensure that Rwanda achieves and maintains good governance and adopts appropriate reform policies; present, publish and disseminate its reports to individuals, organisations, the government and the public at large; provide advice on governance issues, based on research results, in the form of policy alternatives; liaise and affiliate with local, regional and international institutions with similar interests for the purposes of exchanging experience and learning; provide a constructive forum for the exchange of ideas and information between key stakeholders in the governance policy formulation process; and serve as an informed and independent voice on public policy debates in relation to governance.
- 2.29 Professor Shyaka, said that the GAC was trying to develop linkages with organisations such as the World Bank Institute, the African Centre for Strategic Studies and others. The delegation noted that currently the GAC receives funding from its government, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA).

The economic and social situation

- 2.30 The delegation met with staff of the Ministry of Finance, including Mr John Rwangombwa, Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury, and Mr Elias Baingana, Director General of the National Budget. The overview he and his staff provided of Rwanda's economy was very informative.
- 2.31 Prior to 1994, the economy of Rwanda was predominantly agrarian with agriculture accounting for 43 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). The revenue base was narrow, averaging up to 8.7 per cent of GDP, compared with the Sub-Saharan average of 17.7 per cent. Between 1985 and 1994, average real GDP growth was about 2.2 per cent, while the average population growth rate was 3.2 per cent. The real per capita GDP was declining by 1 per cent every year.

- 2.32 From 1994–2002, the transitional government established short term planning instruments that included social protection, and emergency and rehabilitation programs. During 1998–2000, Vision 2020 was formulated, and in 2002–2005 phase one of the government’s Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy was initiated, and has been followed by an extended development phase from 2007–2012.
- 2.33 For the last 15 years, after the genocide, Rwanda has registered significant improvements achieving an average real GDP growth of over 6 per cent (11.2 per cent in 2008). Tax revenues have increased from 8.7 per cent of GDP in 1990 to 12.1 per cent in the 2009–10 financial year. The share of domestic revenue to the total budget has increased from 23 per cent in 1994 to 52 per cent in 2009–10. At the same time, total expenditure as a share of GDP has increased from 16 per cent in 1994 to 28 per cent in 2009–10. Nominal GDP has increased from RwF 168.3 bn in 1994 to RwF 3,030.9 bn in 2009–10. Key contributors have been 8 per cent growth in the services sector (wholesale and retail trade, transport and communications), which now accounts for 42 per cent of GDP, and 16.4 per cent growth in food crop production, which now accounts for 30 per cent of GDP.
- 2.34 The government is trying to identify possible development projects to strengthen the economy, for example, pilot tests are taking place at Lake Kivu and its surrounds as a source of both methane gas and hydro-electric energy.
- 2.35 As referred above, gender has a high status in Rwanda and its National Gender Policy (2004) aims to make gender consideration part of the mainstream in all aspects of Rwandan governance and development strategies. Because of this high priority, Gender Responsive Budgeting has been adopted as a means of encouraging awareness of gender issues. In Vision 2020 and the poverty reduction strategy, gender issues are addressed in all of the priority areas and gender related indicators are set as important targets. There are also affirmative action policies in education and health.
- 2.36 Nevertheless, there is still a concerning level of disparity between males and females in regard to participation in national life. Only 14.8 per cent of women earn cash incomes, which has resulted in 60.2 per cent of households led by females being below the poverty line (set at US\$1 per day). Further, 85.5 per cent of the female unskilled labour force is engaged in agriculture, compared with 61.5 per cent for males. The delegation had observed for itself noticeably

higher numbers of females than males carrying water and working on the land during their visit.

Health

- 2.37 The delegation met with the Minister of Health, Dr Richard Sezibera. He explained the structure of the health system and outlined the general situation in relation to the current health services.
- 2.38 The distribution of health services is effected through two streams. The hospitals and other institutions are managed nationally, and all other services are managed on a community basis. The budget allocations reflect this structure, with 12 per cent of the health budget being allocated to the nationally managed institutions and 85 per cent of the budget being administered at to the community level (the remaining 3 per cent of funds being allocated to the Ministry of Health).
- 2.39 Rwanda's current population is some 10.5 million with a growth rate of 2.7 per cent and a fertility rate of 5.5 (a reduction from 6.1 in 2005 and 8.5 in 1985). Dr Sezibera explained that at current rates, the population would double in 26 years and emphasised that Rwanda's population growth was one of the biggest health sector challenges faced by the government. The government has set a target fertility rate of 4.5 by 2012 and supports a modern family planning campaign. Dr Sezibera identified education of women as a significant factor in achieving success with family planning and increased levels of female education is part of the government's strategy to address this issue.
- 2.40 In other health areas, Dr Sezibera referred to improved health outcomes over the last five years in relation to malaria. Malaria morbidity and mortality have reduced significantly and less than 3 per cent of the adult population now is infected. He cited a 60 per cent rate of improvement, with malaria being eradicated in some districts. Other challenges are HIV/AIDS, TB and communities recovering from trauma associated with the genocide, a particular problem as there are very few psychiatrists and psychologists.
- 2.41 The health policies are complimentary to the Government's objectives for the reduction of poverty, and they are defined in the first phase of the poverty reduction strategy and Vision 2020.

- 2.42 The challenges facing Rwanda in relation to improved health services are difficult geographic access, lack of facilities and reliance on overseas trained doctors, especially specialists. Recent health budgets have grown to over 9 per cent of the total budget and improvements have been achieved in all three areas.
- 2.43 There have been improvements in access to medical staff – now there is one doctor for 18,000 people, one nurse for 1,700 people and one pharmacist for 38,000 people. Some 90 doctors are pursuing higher degrees in the country, while more than 40 others were undergoing specialist medical studies outside the country.
- 2.44 Availability of quality drugs, vaccines and consumables in the health facilities has improved. Also geographical access has expanded with the construction of three new district hospitals and 14 new health centres.
- 2.45 Individual access to health care has greatly improved through the Community-Based Health Insurance system (CBHI) allowing the majority of the population better access to services and drugs (including referrals) after paying their annual contribution of RWF 1000 to the scheme. Of the targeted population, 85 per cent are now covered by CBHI, including some 800,000 of the poorest people with the help of collaboration from development partners.

Education

- 2.46 The delegation met with the Minister for Education, Dr Charles Murigande. He commented on the importance of education to all nations and particularly to Rwanda in this post conflict phase of its nation building.
- 2.47 Young people in Rwanda attend school until the ninth grade and this was funded by the government. The cost of the last three years of school, up to year 12, must be met privately. The population is young, with 2.4 million primary school age children, 400,000 secondary school students and 55,000 tertiary students.
- 2.48 Dr Murigande identified infrastructure as the biggest challenge. There is one national curriculum applying to schools, most of which are public. However, there are some private schools particularly at the secondary level and there are schools which operate under a joint venture arrangements within which the government pays teachers' salaries. There is a shortage of qualified teachers due in part to the low pay for teachers.

- 2.49 As part of the Rwandan Government's plan for sustainable development as expressed in Vision 2020, optic fibre cables were being laid throughout the country and this would give added impetus to education services. There was a program aimed at distributing laptop computers to school students; 10,000 had been distributed and 100,000 more were expected shortly. Dr Murigande said the government was working with software companies to develop and provide support, and it was also working with the Indian Government to learn how to manage the program economically.
- 2.50 Dr Murigande told the delegation of the particular challenge when the government decided to make English one of its official languages, changing over from French, and for all education to be in English. The decision was taken in October 2008 under the impetus of Rwanda joining the English speaking East African Community. Of the 50,000 teachers, only 2,000 knew English, and there is an ongoing need for teachers who have competency in English.
- 2.51 The delegation visited Rwanda's oldest and biggest institution of higher learning, the National University of Rwanda. The Rector of the University, Professor Silas Lwakabamba, said that the university lacked sufficient infrastructure to cater for the student population, some 10,000 graduates since 1995. He also said that there was a lack of skilled academic staff and it was difficult to retain the few it had. The staff were highly valued and were often tempted away from the university to work in high level government positions.
- 2.52 Only 30 per cent of students at the university are female, and the levels were noticeably lower in the science subjects. The university received some international funding, for example from Sweden for a project which targeted the education of women.
- 2.53 In addition to students from throughout Rwanda, students also attend the university from neighbouring countries, including Burundi, DRC and Uganda. Consequently, student housing was in need of further development.
- 2.54 Professor Lwakabamba said that NUR was looking to establish connections with other universities, in particular to attract academics to work in Rwanda. He said while it was valuable of course for students who had the opportunity to study overseas, it would be of greater benefit if academics could teach students in Rwanda. This had benefits, including, student projects could

address local issues, and once studies were completed, there was a lower potential brain drain of Rwandan graduates.

- 2.55 The delegation was delighted to meet with Professor Shirley Randell AM, PhD, Director of the Centre for Gender, Culture and Development Studies at the Kigali Institute of Education. The delegation acknowledges Professor Randell's long and distinguished career in education, particularly in the field of international development assistance throughout the Asia-Pacific Region and in Africa.
- 2.56 Professor Randell informed the delegation that Rwanda had many needs in education. She spoke of her own advocacy of developing linkages between universities in Australia and Rwanda. Professor Randell also referred to a significant need for English language teachers in Rwandan educational institutions. In relation to women, she highlighted a particular need to develop and provide higher degree programs in Rwanda as women are not able to go overseas as readily as men.

Recommendations

The delegation recommends that the Australian Government urgently allocate funds to enable Australian institutions to support a range of education measures including:

- **English language teachers at all levels in the Rwandan education system;**
- **a funded program to sponsor Rwandan students to study in Australia, at the undergraduate and post graduate levels; and**
- **tertiary programs for students in Rwanda through a mixture of direct funding and provision of academic teachers.**

The delegation further recommends that all Senators and Members encourage educational institutions within their individual constituencies to engage directly with individual educational institutions in Rwanda and provide agreed support for the range of immediate and longer term needs they face.

Agriculture

- 2.57 The delegation met with the Head of the Department of Agriculture. Part of the Vision 2020 plan addresses the strategic transformation of agriculture and livestock production to achieve food security and contribute to the national economy. The plan addresses four main priorities – intensification and development of sustainable production systems, support for increasing producer professionalism, promotion of product chains and agro-industry development and institutional development. The aim is to develop from a subsistence agriculture base to a market oriented sector with high value surplus production.
- 2.58 The ministry and agencies are involved in district development plans, and their work is integrated with other ministries. Policies encourage people to build their houses together on the poorer land, so that the available land can be consolidated into larger, more productive parcels.
- 2.59 The delegation was interested to learn that many species of Australian trees are cultivated as building materials. Indeed, members observed on their travel through different areas of Kigali city and the countryside many healthy stands of eucalypts and silky oaks on the hillsides and lining the roads. Further, when visiting the National University of Rwanda (NUR) the delegation learnt a little of the history of Australian tree plantings in Rwanda, an activity that dates back some 80 years.
- 2.60 Current agricultural production includes coffee, cassava, beans, milk and meat. Rwanda is not self sufficient in rice but aims to move towards surplus production so Rwanda can export rice.
- 2.61 The delegation had a tour of the ICM, a Melbourne based firm, rice mill and had discussions with Mr Paul Talay, Director of Farming and Mr Jean-Calvin Kayiranga, Country Manager. As part of the rice project, supported by the World Bank, the Government of Rwanda invited ICM to investigate how Rwanda might upgrade and expand its domestic rice industry. ICM has provided a proposal for staged investment in long term, sustainable and profitable rice production in Rwanda.
- 2.62 There are some 21,000 farmers who contribute rice to the mill as members of a cooperative. The tour of the mill included the opportunity to watch rice being processed, dried, sorted and bagged. In terms of providing employment, the mill typically has 28

employees, plus casual workers during peak season, and the production chain provides work for others also because of the tasks involved in transporting and weighing the rice.

- 2.63 The delegation was interested to learn about some of the challenges faced in developing the rice product for market, the most important being that because of the local conditions there is a high proportion of broken rice. While this factor would mean a low quality product in terms of the world market, it is not a particular problem in Rwanda because it means a cheaper product for the domestic market. This is one aspect that is being examined given Rwanda's aims to become an exporter of rice.

Human rights and reconciliation

- 2.64 The delegation observed that an important part of the healing process for Rwandans is the recognition given to the victims of the 1990s civil war and 1994 genocide. There were several opportunities to learn of the policies promoted by the Rwandan Government which address human rights and reconciliation.
- 2.65 The delegation found its visit to the Gisozi Genocide Memorial profoundly moving. The Memorial has some mass graves of victims and places for respectful reflection on their deaths. The horror of the genocide was vividly portrayed through an extensive range of photographs and art. Senator Moore, Delegation Leader, made a short speech and laid a wreath in honour of the victims of the genocide.
- 2.66 The delegation visited a demobilisation camp in Mutobo established by the Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission (RDRC). More than 7,000 persons have undertaken a program there since December 2001, the overwhelming majority of whom are former Hutu soldiers who had been fighting in the DRC for the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). The goals of the RDRC are to contribute to reconciliation within Rwanda and to peace in the great lakes region of Rwanda, adjacent to the border with the DRC. The RDRC pursues these goals through demobilisation and support for the socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants. Ex-combatants attend a two month Pre-discharge Orientation Program (PDOP) at Mutobo Demobilisation Centre. The delegation observed that the camp consists of a modest community of corrugated iron buildings located in the midst of subsistence agricultural communities. The programs involve discussions on

social, economic and political opportunities and challenges in Rwanda and the region. Ex-combatants are being re-educated to coexist with their former enemies.

- 2.67 The RDRC also provides specialised support to special groups, including child, female and disabled ex-combatants. The child ex-combatants receive specialised assistance through rehabilitation at Muhazi Child Excombatants Rehabilitation Centre. By socialising with youth in the neighbouring communities, child ex-combatants re-establish linkages with their respective age groups and normalised community lifestyles. The Muhazi Centre also pursues family tracing and reunification, skills training, formal education, counselling and vulnerability support.
- 2.68 The delegation was able to see the situation of the camp, talk with the camp administrators and received a very warm welcome by the camp community including a cultural display of singing and dancing. On the day of the visit there were a total of 369 men and women (4) living in the camp.
- 2.69 On its one day tour to Butare, in the southern region, the delegation was privileged to visit a women's cooperative in Huye district. The cooperative, established in 1995 in Karama sector, is designated Ubutwari bwo Kubaho Association, which translates as 'determination to live'. The cooperative is made up of over 1,700 genocide widows and survivors, and wives of convicted genocide perpetrators. Also joining the cooperative are some 58 men who had been released from prison for admitting their genocidal crimes.
- 2.70 The delegation listened to the heart wrenching stories of loss and grief from the women and of how they were reconciling with the other women and families. The cooperative was making small improvements in the daily lives of people in the impoverished communities, for example they worked together to produce food and make soap. The money from these products is used to help pay school fees for children, establish a small shop and buy a minibus to help with transport. They have established a chain of giving, whereby when someone has a farm animal, the first baby is given to someone else to help them become more independent.
- 2.71 The delegation met with Madam Kayitesi Zainabu, Chairperson, and Mr Deogratias Kayumba, Vice Chairman, of the National Commission for Human Rights. The Commission is established under the 2003 Constitution, as amended, and its aim is to educate

all Rwandans about human rights, to receive and investigate complaints, and to protect the rights of detainees.

Regional security and peacekeeping

- 2.72 The delegation met with Mr Joe Felli, Head of Office, of the UN Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), which is headquartered in Kigali. MONUC was created in February 2000 to monitor the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, signed in July 1999. Practically, while there have been many steps since then, Hutu rebel forces in eastern DRC remain of concern for Rwanda. MONUC has a mandate for disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of combatants. It is authorised to facilitate humanitarian assistance and human rights monitoring, in particular for vulnerable groups including child soldiers.
- 2.73 The delegation learned that Rwanda is negotiating with several African countries, including Zambia, Malawi, South Africa, Burundi and the DRC to establish extradition treaties. The non existence of such treaties has caused difficulties in extraditing alleged genocide suspects.
- 2.74 The delegation also learned that Rwanda is a large contributor to peacekeeping forces in other African countries.

Rwanda's relations with Australia and the international community

- 2.75 The delegation found that Rwanda is keen to take its place in the international community and that it is making serious efforts to play a responsible role internationally. During the delegation's visit, President Kagame and the Minister of Foreign Affairs were visiting the United States for discussions with the G20 countries. President Kagame was meeting with the World Bank, other institutions and political and business leaders where he advocated regional economic integration as a means of expanding economic opportunity across Africa. President Kagame accepted an invitation from the World Bank to be a member of the 2011 Development Advisory Council and attended the inaugural meeting at World Bank headquarters in Washington.
- 2.76 Tourism is a small sector in Rwanda. Nevertheless, it is one of Rwanda's highest foreign exchange earners generating over

US\$200 m in 2008-09. Tourism related to gorillas and tours in various national game parks has been a catalyst for government policies on environmental protection and preservation, and for economic development.

- 2.77 The delegation is aware that the formal relationship between Australia and Rwanda is very young. Diplomatic relations between Australia and Rwanda were established in 2006. Australia's first Ambassador to Rwanda is resident as High Commissioner in Nairobi, Kenya, similarly, Rwanda's Embassy in Tokyo is accredited to Australia, with an Honorary Consul in Melbourne.
- 2.78 The social and commercial contacts between Rwandans and Australians are so small as to be almost negligible. The Rwandan community in Australia is very small indeed. The 2006 census counted 202 Rwandan born persons.
- 2.79 Since 1995-96, the Australian Government has provided over A\$13m in development and humanitarian assistance to Rwanda, including \$600,000 in 2007-08. Recent assistance has been through scholarships, Australian NGO projects and a partnership with the World Bank Water and Sanitation Program.
- 2.80 From 2006-09, under a three year partnership with the World Bank's Water and Sanitation Program, Australia assisted 12 countries in southern and eastern Africa, including Rwanda, providing funding of \$5.5 m. The delegation was able to observe small communities through its visits program and noted that there is still widespread daily demand for water to be carried from a central community pump to people's dwellings, typically in large plastic containers on the heads of women and children.
- 2.81 The level of Australian Government assistance appears to be growing. Rwanda could be eligible under Australia's development assistance program in Africa, with \$163.9 m allocated for 2009-10. This program will support progress in Africa towards selected Millennium Development Goals where Australia has a comparative advantage, such as agriculture and food security, maternal and child health, and water and sanitation.
- 2.82 The delegation notes that Australia has offered limited support for education, one scholarship to Rwanda in each of 2008 and 2009 under the Development Scholarships program. There are fewer than 20 Rwandan students studying in Australia.

- 2.83 Hopefully this might soon change following a visit to Australia in June 2009 by Foreign Minister Museminali, which included discussions with several Australian universities about exploring possible education partnerships with Rwandan universities. Also, AusAID is following up on requests from Rwanda for technical assistance in a range of areas including mining, agriculture and education.
- 2.84 In 2010, Rwanda is one of eight African countries able to nominate for 55 scholarships under Australia's program. In addition Rwanda will be eligible for one of 24 new mining industry fellowships program to help develop their industries.
- 2.85 The delegation met with Revered Joel Sengoga, Director of Hope Rwanda, an aid organisation founded by Australians in 2004. Hope Rwanda has official charity status in Australia. It is a faith-based, non-profit organisation that aims to restore hope and justice to the people of Rwanda. The members of the advisory board share faith and otherwise come from various walks of life with a focus of assisting in the education, health, business and trade sectors through numerous community based projects.
- 2.86 The delegation notes that a small number of Australians are living and travelling in Rwanda, both on long and short term bases, and met informally with several. For example, during the second leg of the delegation's visit at the 55th CPC in Arusha, Tanzania (refer chapter 3), members had a brief meeting with a number of lawyers who were working with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). In recognition of the potential challenges faced by persons in Rwanda, the delegation wishes to encourage all Australians living and travelling in the region to contact Australia's mission in Nairobi and ensure their contact details and itineraries are registered there.

Rwanda's affinity with the Commonwealth

- 2.87 Rwanda has demonstrated a longstanding interest in joining the Commonwealth, having first applied in 1996, and interests also in developing closer relationships with Commonwealth and English speaking countries. These interests reflect Rwanda's increasingly close association with other Commonwealth members in the East African Community, including neighbours Uganda and Tanzania and nearby Kenya. As referred earlier, to underscore this

commitment, Rwanda adopted English as one of its official languages in 2008.

- 2.88 The delegation had several discussions during which Rwanda's ambition to join the Commonwealth was raised. Moreover, the issue was often raised in the context of expressing thanks for Australia's support for Rwanda's application.
- 2.89 The delegation was told that Rwanda's application to join the Commonwealth would be on the agenda for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) to be held in Trinidad and Tobago in November 2009. The members of the delegation were delighted to learn that one of the outcomes from CHOGM had been to admit Rwanda as a new member, the 54th member of the Commonwealth, and only the second after Mozambique to be admitted without a British colonial past or constitutional link. During discussions with the Rwandan parliamentary delegation that visited Canberra in 2010, as referred below, the members of that delegation confirmed the high levels of satisfaction that had followed Rwanda's admission to the Commonwealth. They felt this was recognition of the considerable progress Rwanda had made during the past 15 years.

Conclusions

- 2.90 The delegation considered that its busy program in Rwanda enabled it to achieve the objectives of its visit.
- 2.91 Rwanda has been through, and continues to go through, a difficult transition to a fully established democratic political system. The delegation gained an insight into some of Rwanda's history, the difficulties being experienced and also the strong desire to ensure that democracy achieves a firm foundation in Rwandan political culture. In support of this, the delegation believes there is considerable opportunity for cooperation on many fronts between the two countries.
- 2.92 The delegation was fortunate to be able to visit the National Museum of Rwanda and to tour its culture and history exhibits. In addition the members were privileged to view several fine performances of traditional dancing, singing and drums. It is clear that the strength of Rwanda's people and culture has persisted through some very difficult periods.

- 2.93 The delegation is delighted to know that its visit to Rwanda was the first by an Australian parliamentary delegation. Further, the members of the delegation welcomed with pleasure the return visit to Canberra by a delegation from the Parliament of Rwanda which took place from 8 to 14 March 2010.
- 2.94 The delegation considers that building relationships at the parliamentary level was an important achievement of the visit, at this early stage of the formal relationship between Australia and Rwanda.
- 2.95 While the Australia – Rwanda bilateral relationship is young, the goodwill and friendship experienced throughout the delegation’s visit indicate that the growing relationship is developing a strong foundation of goodwill and can’t help but prosper in the years ahead.
- 2.96 The delegation would like to encourage further interchanges between the two parliaments. To this end, the delegation members undertake to establish a parliamentary friendship group between Australian and Rwanda as soon as possible. Delegation members look forward to contributing to this developing relationship, and particularly now that Rwanda is a member of the Commonwealth there will be a greatly increased number of opportunities to do so.

55th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference – Tanzania

Introduction

- 3.1 The 55th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference was held in Arusha, Tanzania from 28 September to 6 October 2009. The Conference was hosted by the Parliament of Tanzania and led by the Hon Samuel J Sitta MP, Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania and President of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).
- 3.2 The CPA is an association of Commonwealth parliamentarians. The aims of the CPA are to promote knowledge and understanding about parliamentary democracy and respect for the rule of law and individual rights and freedoms, irrespective of gender, race, religion or culture.
- 3.3 The CPA is composed of branches formed in parliaments and legislatures in Commonwealth countries which subscribe to parliamentary democracy. There are over 170 branches at national, state, territory and provincial levels in 52 of the 53 Commonwealth countries, representing approximately 17,000 members. Branches are grouped, geographically into nine regions: Africa; Asia; Australia; British Islands and Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean; Americas and Atlantic; Pacific; and South-East Asia.



- 3.4 Some 1000 delegates, observers and officials from member parliaments attended the conference. The Commonwealth of Australia Branch of the CPA was represented by a parliamentary delegation attending from 1 to 6 October and consisting of two Senators and two Members of the House of Representatives, led by Senator Claire Moore (see p. v for a list of delegation members); Senator the Hon Alan Ferguson, Deputy President of the Senate, and Australian CPA Region representative, was also in attendance. In addition, a number of delegates attended from other Australian parliaments.
- 3.5 The theme of the Conference was 'The Commonwealth and the CPA: Meeting future global challenges'.
- 3.6 The conference encompassed a number of components and associated activities. These were:
- meetings of the Executive Committee of the CPA;
 - two plenary sessions and eight workshops;
 - the annual general assembly of the CPA;
 - meetings of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee and of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians;

- meetings of regional groups of the CPA;
 - the 29th Small Branches Conference of members from small legislatures; and
 - the 46th General Meeting of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table, comprising parliamentary officials.
- 3.7 In addition, many members participated in the mid-conference tour to one of four destinations: Ngorongoro National Park, Lake Manyara National Park, Tarangire National Park or Kilimanjaro National Park.

Business of the Conference

Opening ceremonies and speeches

- 3.8 The official opening of the conference was held on Friday, 2 October 2009.
- 3.9 The President of the CPA and Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania, the Hon Samuel J Sitta MP made his remarks and read a message of goodwill from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth and Patron of the CPA.
- 3.10 The guest of honour at the opening, His Excellency Jakaya M Kikwete, President of Tanzania, formally addressed the gathering of participants and officially opened the Conference.
- 3.11 The business of the conference commenced with addresses to the plenary from the CPA Secretary-General Dr William F Shija and Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General Mrs Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba. The text of these speeches is at Appendix B.

Plenary and workshop sessions

- 3.12 The principal business part of the conference comprised eight workshops and two plenary sessions with the following topics:
- Workshop A: Coalition Governments: Parliamentary Democracy in Dilemma?;
 - Workshop B: Policy Responses to the Global Financial Crisis;
 - Workshop C: Role of Commonwealth Parliaments in Combating Terrorism;

- Workshop D: The Role of Parliament in Shaping the Information Society;
 - Workshop E: The Role of Parliamentarians in the Elimination of Violence Against Women with Particular Reference to Domestic Violence;
 - Workshop F: Climate Change – Are Policy Solutions Working?;
 - Workshop G: Developing Mechanisms to Remedy Root Causes of Political, Economic and Social Conflicts;
 - Workshop H: The Commonwealth and Youth – How to Engage Future Generations in Representative Democracy;
 - Plenary 1: Commonwealth Matters, followed by questions and answers; and
 - Plenary 2: Can Trade Liberalization Benefit the Commonwealth in the Current Economic Climate?
- 3.13 Members of the Commonwealth of Australia Branch delegation attended plenary and workshop sessions and participated in the discussions. A summary report of the workshop and plenary sessions is at Appendix C.

General Assembly

- 3.14 The 55th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference included the annual general meeting of the Association, the General Assembly of the CPA held on 5 October 2009. The main business of the meeting was the consideration and adoption of the Association's annual report and financial statements and the election of office bearers and regional representatives.

Executive Committee

- 3.15 The Executive Committee met on 30 September, and 1 and 5 October. The Australian Region was represented at these meetings by the Deputy President of the Senate, Senator the Hon Alan Ferguson.

Small Branches Conference

- 3.16 The Small Branches Conference was held 30 September and 1 October. Discussions focussed on policy responses to the Global Financial Crisis in small economies, utilising committees in small parliaments and the issues and challenges facing small states from

machinery of government. A summary report of the conference proceedings is at Appendix C.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Meeting

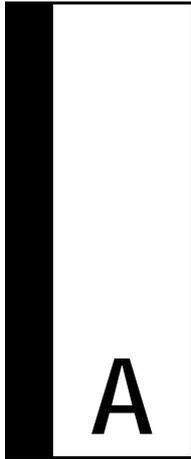
- 3.17 The theme of the meeting of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians was the impact of the Global Financial Crisis on women. A summary report of the meeting is at Appendix C.

Meeting of the Society of Clerks-at-the Table in Commonwealth Parliaments

- 3.18 The annual meeting of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table was held concurrently with sessions of the Conference. The then Clerk of the House, Mr Ian Harris, attended the meeting, and the delegation secretary, Ms Claressa Surtees, Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms, Department of the House of Representatives also attended a number of the sessions. The society aims to foster mutual interest among its members through the exchange of information, views and experience to assist them to exercise their professional duties in relation to their respective legislatures. The Parliaments of New South Wales, Norfolk Island, Queensland and Western Australia were also represented at the meeting.

Concluding comment

- 3.19 The Australian delegation once again extends its thanks to the Tanzanian Parliament for its work in hosting the 55th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference and congratulates it on the success of the Conference.



Appendix A

Delegation program to Rwanda

Saturday 26 September 2009

Australian Parliamentary delegation led by Senator Claire Moore, arrives at Kigali airport

Introductory discussions with The Hon Gedeon Kayinamura and The Hon Senator Agnes Mukabaranga from the Parliament of Rwanda

Sunday 27 September

Embassy briefing by Mr Paul Dziaukowiec, Deputy Ambassador of Australia to Rwanda

Visit to and tour of Gisozi Genocide Memorial

Private briefing by HE Nicholas Cannon OBE, British Ambassador

Lunch hosted by The Hon Gedeon Kayinamura and The Hon Senator Agnes Mukabaranga

Travel to Mutobo, by car (2 hours)

Visit Mutobo ex-combatant reintegration camp and meet Mr Jean Sayinzoga, Chair, Rwandan Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission

Return to Kigali

Welcome dinner hosted by HE Rose Mukantabana, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies

Monday 28 September

Visit Senate Plenary Hall and meet with the Parliament Bureaus and Chairpersons of committees of both Chambers

Meet with Forum for Women Parliamentarians

Meet with United Nations Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), Kigali, Mr Joe Felli, Head of Office

Meet with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Mr Eugene Munyakyanza, Permanent Secretary

Meet with National Commission for Human Rights, Mrs Kayitesi Zainabu, Chairperson

Meet with Ministry of Finance, Mr John Rwangombwa, Permanent Secretary

Meet with Rwanda Governance Advisory Council, Professor Shyaka Anastase, Executive Secretary

Tuesday 29 September

Travel to Butare, Southern Province, by car (2 hours)

Visit to the National University of Rwanda, Professor Silas Lwakabamba, Rector

Visit to “Ubutwari bwo Kubaho” Association (“determination to live”, a project bringing together genocide widows and wives of perpetrators), Karama

Visit to and tour of National Museum (exhibits Rwandan culture and history), Celestin, Director

Return to Kigali

Reception hosted by delegation

Wednesday 30 September

Meet with Forum of Political Organisations, Mr Anicet Kayigema, Executive Secretary

Meet with Minister of Education, Dr Charles Murigande

Meet with Ministry of Agriculture, Mr Ernest Ruzindaza, Permanent Secretary

Meet with Minister of Health, Dr Richard Sezibera

Departure to Eastern Province, by car (30 mins)

Visit to ICM Agribusiness (Rwamagana) rice project, Messrs Paul Talay and Jean-Calvin Kayiranga, Heads of Project

Return to Kigali

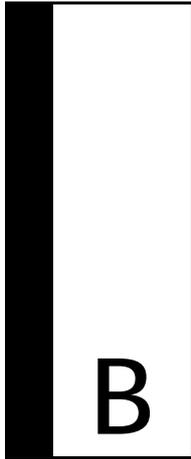
Farewell hosted by HE Vincent Biruta, President of the Senate

Thursday 1 October

Meet with Hope Rwanda, Pastor Joel Sengoga, Office Manager

Meet with Professor Shirley Randell AM, Director, Centre for Gender, Culture and Development Studies Kigali Institute of Education

Depart Kigali for Arusha, Tanzania



Appendix B

**Addresses to the 55th Commonwealth Parliamentary
Conference by —**

Dr William F Shija, CPA Secretary–General, and

**Mrs Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba, Commonwealth
Deputy Secretary–General**

55TH Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference

Address by the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association—Dr William F Shija

Mr President, may I start by expressing, on behalf of the Executive Committee, my deepest condolences at the loss of life and property following the sunami that hit Samoa two days ago. Our thoughts and prayers are with all those that have lost family or loved ones in these tragic circumstances.

In my remarks to you today, let me first say that I am happy to join the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, His Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, the Hon Samuel J Sitta, our esteemed Host, the Speaker of the Tanzania National Assembly and my fellow Tanzanians in welcoming you distinguished delegates to Arusha, Tanzania, where the 55th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference is being held this year.

In a special way, I also join our Host in extending a warm welcome to Mrs Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba, the Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General, and her delegation. Her presence at our annual conference is indicative of the strong partnership that our two organisations enjoy as we advance the principles and values of the wider Commonwealth. Besides, Mrs Masire-Mwamba's home country, Botswana, has had excellent relations with Tanzania, in the context of the contribution by both countries to the growth of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Africa and the Commonwealth at large.

This year happens to be the 10th anniversary of the death of the father of this nation, Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere who continues to be remembered by Tanzanians as having worked selflessly and sacrificed so much for the development of the nation called Tanzania. I personally would not have had the benefit of access to education had it not been for Mwalimu Nyerere's policies of unity, free education for all, and social development. I wish to join all those Tanzanians and others in Africa in remembering this great son of Tanzania and Africa.

I believe that many of us need to continue remembering our founding fathers, such as Kwameh Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, Kenneth Kaunda, Nelson Mandela, Samora Machel and many others, for the sacrifice and dedication in the struggle for democracy and development in the continent of Africa. As students of history we know that they endured suffering, humiliation and

pain trying to bring about democratic rule and development for their people. Long live the founding fathers of Africa!

In a similar manner there are many founding fathers in the developing world including Asia and the Caribbean who need to be remembered for their role in pursuit of democracy and development. Today happens to be the occasion to remember the contribution of a great son of India, Ghandi Jayanti, popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi who worked tirelessly, using non-violent means, for the development of democracy. We wish to join our colleagues of India in saluting this great leader of Asia and the world.

Secondly Mr. President, This year is particularly special for us all as we mark 60 years of the modern Commonwealth. Thus, the theme “The Commonwealth at 60: Serving a New Generation” could not be a more fitting tribute to the future of the Commonwealth; that is, the young generation.

I wish to sincerely thank His Excellency, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania for what I consider to be his most encouraging message to the youth in the Commonwealth and the CPA. I believe it is the spirit of serving the new generation which influenced the Speaker of the Tanzania National Assembly to seek government’s decision to host this important Parliamentary conference in Tanzania for the first time in the 98 years history of the Association, including the first period when the CPA was known as the Empire Parliamentary Association (EPA).

On behalf of the CPA Chairperson, the Hon Dato' Seri Mohd. Shafie Apdal, MP, and Members of the Executive Committee and delegates, I wish to thank you Mr President for the contribution you have made to the Association during your presidency. I also wish to thank the Clerk of the Tanzania National Assembly, Dr. Thomas Kashillilah, who is also the Regional Secretary of the CPA Africa Region, and your staff, who, for the past seven to eight months, have tirelessly worked with us to put together the details of the 55th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, to ensure the delegates’ comfort during their stay in this tourist city of Arusha, and Tanzania in general.

Mr. President, I welcome and thank all the representatives of Commonwealth and international organisations such as the UN Habitat, the World Bank, and others, for their participation and willingness to assist us at this conference, either as Workshop Presenters, Discussion Leaders, or both. The CPA indeed values and appreciates the partnerships we have built over the years and we look forward to continued collaboration in our various areas of work. For our achievements since the conference in Malaysia, I sincerely thank the Chairperson and members of the Executive Committee for their guidance and policy decisions throughout the year.

To the Regions and Branches, I thank you most sincerely for your cooperation and participation in the activities and programmes of the Association. In all my regional and branch visits, your reception and hospitality have been wonderful indeed. Over the past year, you have supported us to successfully conduct and deliver programmes such as Post Election Seminars, Parliamentary Seminars, Parliamentary Visits, Staff Training and others in the areas of Parliamentary Reform in Africa and Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures.

Accordingly, I would like to commend the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians who have devised a work programme which will be carried out at Commonwealth, Regional and Branch levels. Since the last conference in Malaysia the CWP Africa, Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic, and Canada Regions have held successful meetings; in Cameroon for the Africa Region; Nevis for the Caribbean Region and Toronto, Canada for the Canada Region. There are numerous other plans and we look forward to serving you as Members in existing and new programmes. Apart from some of the core programmes I have mentioned, we also work closely with partners in the areas of education, health, agricultural development and the welfare of children in accordance with our current strategic plan for 2008 – 2012.

As you may be aware, the Executive Committee, earlier this year, approved a new programme policy, popularly known as “Extra-Budgetary Programmes/Projects” under the initiative of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, the Hon Shafie Mohd. Apdal, MP. The new policy initiative is intended to deliver tangible facilities to our branches, and for the Association’s work to be seen on the ground for the promotion of democratic principles, particularly in developing countries. The first funds are to benefit our Branches of St Lucia, Zanzibar, Bougainville, Kwara State in Nigeria and Namibia.

The second stage of this initiative is known as “The Little Acorns” project, which will be launched during this conference starting with three beneficiaries in Tanzania - one school in Arusha, another school in Zanzibar and a third school in Dodoma. The Little Acorns project aims to equip educational institutions with information technology facilities for the purpose of promoting democracy and good governance among the youth. It is hoped that with the assistance of partners and your usual cooperation, this project will continue to grow and benefit more Branches.

I also wish to inform you that the Executive Committee has already approved the planning to mark the centennial celebrations for the CPA in 2011 when the conference will be held in the United Kingdom. To flag off a few areas for the advance information to Members, we expect to do the following: to organise the Commonwealth Youth Parliament at both Branch and pan-

Commonwealth levels; to produce commemorative items and souvenirs; to run a CPA essay competition; and to prepare special books and commemorative publications on Commonwealth legislatures and Women parliamentarians. There are other activities I cannot list further but the CPA Secretariat will begin to communicate with Regions and Branches soon after this Conference.

Thirdly Mr President, Under the theme of this year's conference "The Commonwealth and the CPA: Meeting Future Global Challenges", distinguished delegates will have the opportunity to debate various issues in Parliamentary Democracy, the Global Financial Crisis, Climate Change, Terrorism and Youth Engagement in Representative Democracy; all of which affect large and small countries; poor and rich nations; and women, men and children. These issues are very important to all of us as we team up to re-assert Parliament's constitutional mandate of representation, legislation and oversight in the development and management of national and international affairs including the resolve to stamp out corruption. Most of us would know that development and management are not easy and developing countries have to make hard choices in a ruthless globalised world.

For example many of us in Tanzania fondly recall the words of Founding Father, Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, who once told the Tanzania National Assembly in 1991 that small and under-developed countries run the risk of being ignored and marginalised if they failed to cooperate.

It is in this regard that this conference is meeting at a time when several other fora have debated and continue to debate the same issues as those we have here in Arusha. For example, the Heads of State and Government met at the United Nations in New York in June this year to discuss the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development. They observed that a globalised economic order has now evolved to contain elements that are under-regulated, unsupervised and unequal; and the order has proven to be unstable and unsuited for the demands of the 21st Century.

The Leaders further noted that developing countries are now bearing the brunt of this crisis, for which they are least responsible. The recent and ongoing food and fuel crises have only compounded the effect of the financial and economic collapse, and exacerbated the burdens and sorrows of the developing world.

They have argued that short-term stabilization measures must protect the poor, and long-term measures must ensure sustainable financial flows while simultaneously reducing the likelihood of future crises. At this point we can place our hopes on the recent G20 Pittsburgh Resolutions to implement measures that protect the poor, but we can only hope.

I say this because recent media reports show that research by Oxfam revealed that sub-Saharan African countries alone face a huge deficit likely to reach £43 billion this year, because of the economic crisis, leaving African governments increasingly unable to protect their citizens from falling trade, investment, remittances, hunger and the impact of climate change.

According to the European Network on Debt and Development, it is estimated that one billion people across the planet are now hungry and the promised £30 billion bailout for poor countries at the G20 London meeting in April 2009 appears not to have been fully delivered. Consequently schools and health clinics are also at risk.

The crisis, as resource persons observed at this year's regional conferences of the United Kingdom and the Mediterranean in Guernsey, the Caribbean, the Atlantic and Americas in Georgetown, Guyana and Africa, in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, requires urgent and better government intervention in the economy to safeguard the interests of both the market and the public. We all recognise the efforts so far made by the international community in this regard.

Parliamentarians here should feel free to contribute and critique what the United Nations and other agencies are doing to establish a global response to this crisis, including the processes of reforming the United Nations and the world economic, financial and trading system to prevent a repetition of such a crisis.

Mr. President, another topic that has continued to attract your interest and one that the world is highly passionate about is that of Climate Change.

At the 54th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Malaysia last year, there was general agreement that solutions to combat the impact of climate change could only be achieved through international co-operation between all states, large and small. Further to this consensus, and in response and support to the global concern on climate change, the CPA Executive Committee this year approved the formation of a Climate Change Task Force to formulate actions to combat the impacts of climate change.

Also, in July this year, the CPA UK Branch convened a conference on Climate Change, in London, the outcome of which will most likely be shared with delegates at this conference. Similar discussions on climate change were held during the Regional Conferences of the Africa and Caribbean Regions.

As we count down to Copenhagen, I have been most encouraged to read that the United Nations Climate Change Chief, Yvo de Boer, feels hopeful that, that climate change conference in December this year will most likely close with agreements on four political essentials. These include how much

industrialized and major developing countries would reduce contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions and how to finance the needs of developing countries for climate friendly technology.

It has been observed that among the developing countries, those in Africa continue to bear the extreme negative impacts of climate change, taking into consideration the levels of development. Because of this frustration, what is now being demanded, as reported last month, is that major polluters of the environment such as the United States, the European Union, Japan and others should compensate Africa to the tune of US\$ 67 billion a year, a demand which may be lodged at the climate change summit in Copenhagen this December.

I am also delighted that delegates at this conference will debate the issue of terrorism, which continues to be a peril of immense social and economic consequences for both developing and developed countries. The impact of terrorism includes: the diversion of foreign direct investment, destruction of infrastructure, redirection of public investment to security and the limitation of trade. Terrorism, like civil conflicts, may cause spillover costs among neighbouring countries, as a terrorist campaign in a neighbour dissuades capital inflows, or a regional multiplier causes lost economic activity in the terror-ridden country to resonate throughout the region. Some of our regions such as Asia and India are currently feeling the most recent effects of terrorism. I hope that this conference will provide not only an opportunity for the sharing of experiences but devising more legislative and other mechanisms to combat terrorism at national, regional and international levels.

Mr President, Distinguished Delegates, I wish to believe that as we deliberate these and other issues, we have to ask ourselves what our responsibilities and responses, as Commonwealth Parliamentarians, should be towards the many global issues particularly those that impact on our young and mature democracies, for the benefit of our present and future generations. In the Commonwealth, Parliamentarians need to work with others in the global community for the purpose. Although this conference does not usually produce communiqués or resolutions, we need to come up with a strong and clear message on what we consider to be the best solutions to the issues under discussion. In this case, we need to record in our conference summary what our conference in Arusha generally deliberated upon, including what we can do to assist our governments to make informed but hard decisions today for a better world tomorrow.

Finally Mr President, as we all know, an event like this does not happen overnight. It requires planning and a bird's eye for detail. This conference has been fortunate enough to be hosted by Tanzania and supported by a team of hardworking and dedicated members of staff of the CPA Headquarters

Secretariat. They were willing to take on the completion of tasks beyond their normal working hours. I wish therefore to sincerely congratulate and thank them all for the wonderful support. Our team's work is solid, our accounts are clean, and our sincerity and enthusiasm are every ready.

Distinguished Delegates, I wish you successful and fruitful deliberations over the next few days.

Asante Sana (Thank you very much)

Karibuni Sana (You are all most welcome)

Address by the Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association—Mrs Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba

I am very honoured to be here, and to be given the opportunity to address you today, as part of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's 55th Annual Conference.

I would like to thank Dr William Shija, the Secretary-General of the CPA for the invitation to participate at this important conference.

I bring with me the warm greetings of the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr Kamallesh Sharma who is currently attending the Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting in Cyprus, Greece where a collective response to the global economic situation, with particular reference to the challenges of small states and vulnerable states, will be explored.

He has, therefore, asked me to express his sincere apologies and his good wishes for the success of this important conference.

We are also grateful to Hon. Samuel Sitta, Speaker of the Tanzanian Parliament, for hosting this event which provides the platform for Parliamentarians, who are critical stakeholders in the democratic process, to interact and exchange views.

Importance of Parliaments and Parliamentarians

Parliament as an institution is the very embodiment of democracy in a country. And Parliamentarians are at the heart of the democratic process.

In a system where legitimacy is predicated upon the will of the people, national Parliaments, state assemblies and local councils are where the people's representatives gather, serving the people, holding governments accountable and ensuring democracy delivers for all the people.

At the Commonwealth Secretariat we often refer to democracy and development as the twin pillars of our work. We pursue both, seeing the benefits of both and acknowledging the interrelationship between the two.

Sometimes the democracy agenda is pushed to the detriment of development, at other times it is vice versa. For me they are like food and water. If you demand just one it is not long until you demand the other! They reinforce each other, they sustain each other, and we need both.

It is the Parliament of a country which is at the forefront of a country's willingness and capacity to deliver. Parliament is where governments and opposition come together face-to-face to discuss, to disagree, to find compromise, to win some political battles, but lose others.

And so I applaud the work CPA does, in seeking to enhance the capacity, the integrity of parliaments across the Commonwealth, by providing support, advice and solidarity to its Members.

We work closely with the CPA, for instance by co-operating on capacity-building work in support of strengthening Parliaments. In the recent past we have done this in Uganda and Guyana. We have also jointly organized a series of workshops on Government and Opposition, most recently in West Africa in June 2008. This workshop brought together representatives from across the region to discuss the roles and responsibilities of government and opposition parties - in short how to make them partners in the development of the democratic process, and not adversaries.

I had the privilege of participating in the West Africa workshop, which was my first as Deputy Secretary-General. It was a motivating and worthwhile experience for me. During the workshop, it was clear that there are key elements that can strengthen a Parliament and ensure it is a place where both government and opposition can work collaboratively to improve the lives of the people.

To achieve this goal, it is imperative that we help to create strong and enduring democratic institutions. Visionary leaders play a vital role, but there needs to be a stress on the importance of institutions, not just of leadership. Ultimately it is strong, credible and independent institutions which will endure and ensure the fruits of democracy are for the many and not just the few.

Of course no one size fits all, and democracy around the Commonwealth takes on varied forms, reflecting national circumstances. However we all know that certain ingredients are essential to any democracy.

Much work remains to be done, but we remain committed and optimistic.

The Commonwealth and Democracy

When one considers the scale and diversity of the Commonwealth, it is intriguing to behold that we have found consensus on such a broad range of issues. This is one of the unique features of the Commonwealth.

As you will be aware, we have the Commonwealth Declarations of 1971 and 1991, which set out our fundamental political values. Further, our "Latimer House" principles of 2003 define and differentiate the roles of the three branches of government: the executive, the Legislature and the judiciary.

Democracy is a journey not a destination. It is therefore imperative that we avoid complacency and consolidate the democratic gains we have recorded in recent times. Democracy needs constantly to be nurtured, protected and promoted.

It is therefore imperative that political leaders resist the temptation to restrict the democratic space in their countries. In this regard, Parliaments have a critical role to play in safeguarding political freedoms and civil liberties. This is more so because we have seen situations where media freedoms have been limited, civil society constrained and state institutions and resources used for the benefit of the ruling party. In extreme cases, attempts have been made to amend the Constitution for partisan political purposes. Ultimately, this can only undermine the credibility of democratic institutions and political processes and make people lose faith in democracy.

A key focus of our work over the years has been on elections. Of course democracy is about so much more than elections, but it is during an election or as a consequence of an election that tension, conflict and violence can come to the fore.

The Commonwealth Secretariat, in collaboration with the CPA and other partners, will continue to provide democracy advisory services and explore ways to offer additional support particularly in the conduct and operations of election management bodies.

Our goal is to create a commonwealth of democracies where a genuine, credible election, reflecting the will of the people, determines the credibility and legitimacy of the elected legislature and the government. We must also focus attention on the issue of participation. If Parliaments and politics are to be representative and inclusive then we have to make sure that all sectors of society can and do participate.

Two areas which are of particular importance are women and youth. The Commonwealth target of at least 30 per cent of women in positions of

decision making by 2015 is a good starting point and we would encourage member states to continue to strive to attain this goal.

On youth issues, it is estimated that nearly half of the Commonwealth's citizens are youth. The future is theirs, so we need to make sure they are involved in the decisions of today because they will live with the consequences. Indeed, the theme of this 60th anniversary year is "Serving a New generation". So, one of the objectives of the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Port of Spain in December is to refocus attention on youth in a more practical way.

At CHOGM, besides the global economic challenges, leaders will also deliberate on topical issues such as climate change where leaders are expected to send a strong political message to the Copenhagen Summit in December.

Conclusion

During the Government and Opposition workshop in West Africa I mentioned earlier, where Dr Shija was also present, one of the participants presented us with a challenge. In reflecting on the state of politics at this time in West Africa, in this instance, he said: "We have not failed. The question is where we are going and what do we need to get there."

This view point is both realistic and optimistic. But it is the kind of open-eyed but open hearted approach that we need.

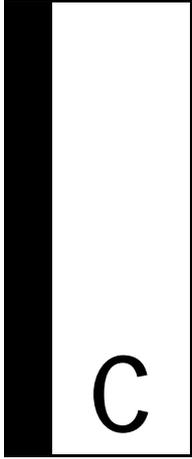
Organizations like the Commonwealth, and its constituent parts, have a key role to play in helping to define where we are going and what we need to do to get there. You, the Parliamentarians of the Commonwealth are at the heart of this important journey.

Before I conclude, I would like to draw your attention to a recent initiative led by the Royal Commonwealth Society called the Commonwealth Conversation. The initiative aims to raise awareness about what the Commonwealth is and does.

The Commonwealth Secretary-General has welcomed the initiative and looks forward to the new ideas that it will bring. As representatives of the people, your support in ensuring continuing dialogue about the Commonwealth and through this initiative will be invaluable.

I wish you well during the days of this conference and in the vital roles you all fulfil in your respective countries.

I thank you.



Appendix C

Summary Report of the 55th CPA Conference



55th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference
Arusha, Tanzania
28 September – 6 October, 2009

**The Commonwealth and the CPA:
 Meeting Future Global Challenges.**

Summary Statement

Recommendations for effective policies to counter the global financial crisis and such threats as climate change and terrorism, and to strengthen public participation in parliamentary democracy so government responses to these and other challenges have public support, were presented by Members attending the 2009 Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

The 55th annual Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), hosted by the Parliament of Tanzania from 28 September to 6 October, put forward policy alternatives to resolve global problems as over 800 Members and officials considered solutions to issues affecting the approximately 170 Parliaments and Legislatures of Commonwealth nations, states, provinces and territories.

The meeting in Arusha, chaired by Hon. Samuel Sitta, MP, Speaker of the Tanzanian National Assembly, included the CPA Small Branches Conference on 30 September and 1 October and the meeting of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians on 4 October. Summary Statements from all three conferences appear below.

**55th Commonwealth
 Parliamentary Conference**

**Workshop A: Coalition Governments: Parliamentary Democracy
 in Dilemma?**

There were divergent views concerning the emerging trend of coalition government in Africa. Some speakers argued that coalition governments are a result of failed democracies

and failures in the democratic process, especially the electoral process. Coalitions are bound to fail as they are governments of convenience. Other delegates, especially those from India and Malaysia, said coalition governments mandated by the people result in economic successes and political stability, as exhibited in their countries. However, they said in order for a coalition government to work effectively, underlying conditions are required, such as:

- The government should work within agreed policies and rules,
- There must be transparency and the rule of law in the running of that government,
- It should always strive to serve the interests of the people and
- There must be a continuous communication among the Members to the coalition in order to avert disputes.

Some delegates concluded that when coalition governments fail, states should resort to proportional representation and move away from the politics of competition to the politics of complementarity which in turn leads to inclusiveness and makes those in power servants of the people and not masters of the people.

The definition and implementation of democracy varies between countries. Democracy in Africa before colonization was not through voting; rather, elders sat under a tree and deliberated on important matters affecting the community. It can therefore be argued that the learning process had destroyed the original democracy that existed.

Workshop B: Policy Responses to the Global Financial Crisis

Economic stimulus packages to inject money into national economies were highlighted as a common government policy response to the global financial crisis; but participants in this workshop also stressed the need for better government oversight and regulation of financial institutions, including oversight at the international level.

Women were urged to be more active in agitating for policies to benefit them as there was a consensus that women are suffering more than men from the effects of the recession.

The critical factors that led to the current crisis were identified as including such failings as: insufficient government regulation of the financial sector, an overdependence on flawed conventional economic policy, inadequate accounting and inaccurate financial readings by government. These were coupled with flawed monitoring of the state of national economies by previously trusted watchdogs such as the International Monetary Fund whose inaccurate reports misled governments as to the true state of economies, said Members.

The ineffectiveness of governments was often overlooked as a cause of the crisis, but it was reflected in the absence of oversight and the passage of legislation which in many cases represented the interests of a few as opposed to the interests of the majority.

The infusion of government money to stabilize and energize economies could improve the macroeconomic environment, said Members, adding that this should lead to a reversal of the misfortunes now affecting small states. While participants noted that the effects of the recession were widely felt in such ways as massive unemployment, bank failures, huge indebtedness, a lack of growth in the real economy and a fall in tourism, they also predicted that the effectiveness of policy responses will vary from country to country.

Workshop C: Role of Commonwealth Parliaments in Combating Terrorism

In addressing the issue of the role of Commonwealth Parliaments in combating terrorism, participants accepted that any new security or counter-terrorism measure must be

very carefully considered prior to implementation to ensure it does not impact negatively on the freedoms and liberties so cherished by the citizens of the Commonwealth. New security policies must be inclusive and sensitive to regional needs so all citizens of that region feel empowered and protected.

Parliaments have a significant role to play in ensuring the safety and security of those they represent. The effectiveness of Parliaments in performing this role may be enhanced by greater co-operation and information-sharing among member jurisdictions.

The workshop explored the root causes of terrorism, including poverty, and the relationship between the developed and developing world. The question of what constitutes terrorism and the difficulties associated with defining terrorism were recurring themes. The practical and economic effects of terrorism were discussed and several specific examples were provided of counter-terrorism measures which had been introduced.

Other recurring themes included: the loss resulting from certain acts of terrorism, an act of terrorism is local but the effects are far-reaching, the problem is unquestionably an international one and that good government in one region may not necessarily be seen as good governance in another.

Workshop D: The Role of Parliament in Shaping the Information Society

Parliamentarians must generate the political will among governments to make information and communications technology (ICT) – including older technology such as radio – accessible to all as part of a good governance campaign to improve transparency and expand citizen access to governments and Parliaments, argued Members in the workshop.

Recognizing that the infrastructural costs of access and the challenge of improving literacy in developing countries have to be overcome, workshop participants noted the positive examples of parliamentary support for improved access to information in both the Commonwealth's developed and developing nations. The establishment of the Lok Sabha's own television channel in India, e-learning programmes in Australia, parliamentary support for the expansion of ICT in Zambia and freedom of information legislation before the Nigerian National Assembly demonstrated that advances in communications can be accomplished by all countries. The greater use of radio attracted wide interest as a medium which overcomes deficiencies in literacy.

Parliament must not allow governments to use a lack of development in other areas as an excuse for not expanding ICT accessibility, it was argued. ICT is an important tool to strengthen participatory democracy as it enables Parliamentarians to interact with citizens instead of just communicating information to them.

Workshop E: The Role of Parliamentarians in the Elimination of Violence against Women with particular reference to Domestic Violence

Commonwealth women legislators strongly condemned domestic violence against women, indicating that it is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women which prevent the full advancement of women. Parliamentarians called upon governments to come up with a national strategy to address the issues.

CWP Members emphasized that, while civil society has a significant role to play, governments must be the movers of initiatives against domestic violence and MPs must lobby governments to do that. As long as governments do not have the political will, domestic violence will continue to be an issue. Governments must start eradicating the problem.

A need for training of those in the legal system was identified, from Supreme Court justices to public defenders and prosecutors to social workers and support personnel who deal with women whose rights have been violated.

Parliamentarians should advocate the empowerment of women by urging ministerial budgets to have gender-based programmes to eradicate poverty. A lack of economic resources underpins women's vulnerability to violence.

Women Parliamentarians suggested that the "International Elimination of Violence Against Women's Day" on 25 November each year should be commemorated by the CPA.

Workshop F: Climate Change – Are Policy Solutions Working?

All areas in the Commonwealth are experiencing the adverse effects of climate change on their local environments, confirmed Members at this workshop.

These effects are manifest in extreme weather events and apparent changes in weather patterns which present differently in different regions, including: severe reductions in the levels of precipitation in some regions, exceptionally heavy rainfall in other regions and a general increase in temperatures around the world. The recent natural disasters in the Asia and Pacific regions have been caused or exacerbated by the effects of climate change. The severe threats to peoples and the environment in various regions come from inundation of land in low-lying nations and the loss of habitat for humans, animals and vegetation.

A high level of concern about climate change was registered by Parliamentarians, who agreed Members would benefit from an ongoing CPA dialogue on the subject. This would enable MPs to exchange experiences and become better informed in all aspects of the debate, including analysis of trends, predictions of outcomes and proposed policy approaches.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Task Force on Climate Change

Parliaments and Parliamentarians must lead the world in addressing the problems arising from climate change, working through a parliamentary network to enable individual jurisdictions and regions to better share information on how to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions at a local level, agreed Workshop F participants who continued their discussions to form the CPA Commonwealth Parliamentary Task Force on Climate Change. This exchange of information would enable individual Parliaments and Parliamentarians to facilitate practical action to implement changes at the local and global levels.

CPA Members should lead global collective action now, including by contributing to the upcoming meeting in Copenhagen and beyond, to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change. Members expressed a desire for an ongoing dialogue on climate change so that Parliamentarians can develop better access to information so they can engage with their communities, the private sector and the media and contribute to responses to climate change over the long term.

The Task Force agreed to establish a programme to provide support to Parliaments and Parliamentarians in developed and developing countries to formulate action plans to establish legislation and policies that will respond effectively to climate change issues.

Workshop G: Developing Mechanisms to Remedy Root Causes of Political, Economic and Social Conflicts

Members at this workshop called for appropriate institutional structures and good practices to prevent conflicts and to lead to their peaceful resolution should they arise.

Speakers recommended the passage of constitutional and other legal instruments to guarantee a free, representative and transparent electoral process. The strengthening of the

rule of law should be undertaken through institutional reforms where necessary to guarantee impartiality and efficiency in both the judiciary and law enforcement agencies.

At the parliamentary level, broad consultation processes should be put in place so laws respect the interests of all sections of society. Members argued that Parliament should be enabled to effectively exercise its executive oversight function to guard against abuse of power and corruption.

To make resources accessible to all, Parliaments should ensure that the distribution of national wealth and the planning of development spread benefits fairly around different regions and social groups. To prevent social exclusion, Parliaments and their Members must make certain that all policies and programmes promote tolerance and respect towards different ethnic and social groups and guarantee equal access to employment opportunities, education, health and other services.

Workshop H. The Commonwealth and Youth – How to Engage Future Generations in Representative Democracy.

The workshop agreed that demonstration of responsible and accountable leadership is vital if young people are to be allowed to have faith in the system. In discussing the best means of engaging young people in representative democracy, Members called on the political leadership to see youth as partners rather than as competitors for power. In particular, education is a key component of ensuring greater awareness of the possibilities of politics for creating solutions to the problems facing young people, especially at the secondary level. To achieve this, the school curriculum should be expanded to suit local conditions which vary considerably among different jurisdictions.

The process of engaging young people should be transparent. It should be available to all young people. Engagement with the young must be genuine and involve changes to the internal structures of political parties. Young people must see representative democracy not as a means of getting a job but as means of serving.

A need was seen for structures within the Commonwealth and the CPA to engage with youth comparable to the structures for improving participation of women in politics.

Plenary: Can Trade Liberalization Benefit the Commonwealth in the Current Economic Climate?

The move toward a global free market for goods, services and expertise should be strengthened with safeguards to ensure equitable terms of trade and prevent abuses but should not be sacrificed by a return to protectionism in government responses to the global financial crisis, said Members speaking at the final plenary session.

Arguing that reverting to a new age of protectionism and subsidies will not help domestic economies to recover, participants called for the expansion of the global free market led by Commonwealth governments and Parliamentarians. But world trade must take place in an environment in which all benefit. Appropriate safeguards must prevent abuses of free trade which Members said are continuing and are appearing in new forms in government responses to the financial crisis.

Bank bail-outs, agricultural subsidies, the dumping of cheap goods and the exploitation of cheap labour in developing countries should end as should other tariff and non-tariff barriers to free trade. All people should benefit from the reduced prices and the provision of better goods and services which will come from an expanded global free market.

Several Members acknowledged that subsidies and other forms of government intervention in free market economies will continue to be required to raise developing economies to a point where they can compete internationally on an equitable basis, or to deal

with periodic fluctuations which are part of all free market economies. These interventions should be recognized as legitimate but interim measures as genuinely free and equitable trade is the best route out of poverty.

29th Small Branches Conference

1st Plenary: Policy Responses to the Global Financial Crisis in Small Economies

Delegates attending the first session agreed that the global financial crisis affects all countries present, albeit in very differing ways as the economic bases of the jurisdictions represented are extremely varied.

Members from several small jurisdictions explained how economic stimulus programmes have been put in place to respond to the global financial crisis for matters such as infrastructure improvement, aid to the tourism industry or assistance to banks. Some of these have been possible because funds had been set aside during periods of economic prosperity so money was available in any downturn. The stimulus programmes vary according to the jurisdictions represented, but they are all designed to create employment and stimulate the economy while waiting for a global economic recovery. Delegates nevertheless agreed it is essential that stimulus packages should be carefully targeted, timely and temporary to ensure that they do not create long-term revenue costs which have to be met on an on-going basis, nor simply increase dependence on imported labour in countries where relevant expertise is not available to undertake the chosen project.

It was recognized that many small branches are extremely vulnerable to matters outside their control, such as international commodity prices for their exports or the price of imported goods such as fuel. It is therefore important for countries to work together through the downturn and smaller jurisdictions look for support and assistance from larger nations.

Many delegates pointed out that it is important for government and the private sector to work closely together through the downturn. Examples of this included assistance given to the private sector to improve the infrastructure of the tourism industry. It was also recognized that large multi-national companies might use the downturn as an unjustified excuse for increasing prices of goods for sale or reducing the price of goods purchased for commodities such as milk, thereby impacting greatly on the economies of small states.

2nd Plenary: Utilizing Committees in Small Parliaments

The second plenary session addressed the structure of government, the organization of ministries, allocation of portfolio responsibilities and functions within departments. Discussion ranged widely with delegates addressing issues and challenges which all governments face in their efforts to meet the needs of the people whom they represent.

Topics ranged from electoral allowances to the use of personal charity, government accountability, how elections are held, constitutional committees, party politics and optimal representation. What was clearly apparent is that all systems are evolving and developing and Parliamentarians are continuously seeking better ways to service their communities.

3rd Plenary: Machinery of Government in Small States: Issues and Challenges

While there was general agreement that committees are the “engine room of Parliament”, Members considered aspects of committee operations including the challenges of populating and supporting committees in small Parliaments and the need to strike a balance between committees that are so powerful as to undermine ministerial responsibility and so powerless as to not have any meaning in the machinery of government. The vast and important differences in the ways committees operate and are supported in the Commonwealth small Houses were also examined.

The following were identified as important characteristics of an effective committee system: adequate time in the parliamentary calendar for committee work, independence from the executive branch of government, public understanding of the role of committees, trained and objective support staff, multi-party participation and the need to table committee reports in Parliament and generate a response from government.

4th Plenary: The Vulnerability of Small States: What Technical and Practical Advice Can the Commonwealth Offer?

Discussion leaders Ms Constance Vigilance, an Economic Advisor with the Commonwealth Secretariat, and Mr Ross Bohlin, MLA, of the Northern Territory in Australia outlined the problem of vulnerability of small states and provided practical and technical solutions to address this issue.

Ms Vigilance examined the current terminology used to define small island nations, whereby terms such as SIDS (small island development states), small economies and small states are terms used interchangeably. The second area focused on the concepts and measurements of vulnerability. Subsequently, this was followed by an analysis of the current development issues that exacerbate the vulnerability of small states. The technical and practical advice offered by the Commonwealth Secretariat to assist small states and development prospects and viable opportunities currently available were also discussed.

Mr Bohlin’s description of the issue of illegal immigration generated much discussion. Data compiled on this revealed there has been a dramatic increase in illegal immigrants over the past two years. He questioned the “real” vulnerability of smuggler clients who travel to the Northern Territory by boat and the issuance of protection visas to these illegal immigrants. The encroachment of illegal fishermen from larger countries into Australia’s fishing waters also present another set of challenges and further add to the territory’s vulnerability, he said.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Meeting

Plenary: The Impact of the Global Financial Crisis on Women

Participants in the CWP session noted that, due to the financial crisis, women are facing: reductions in export potential; decreases in social, education and health services; limited access to microcredit; increased debt load; reduced income; increased infant, maternal and child mortality rates and diminished household welfare. Women must therefore have

access to microfinance under minimal interest rates. The CWP will approach the World Bank and Commonwealth nations to propose increased regulations of microcredit institutions.

While the financial crisis affects all nations, women delegates argued that the developing world is most at risk. In order to address the financial crisis and its effects on women, they recommended that the CWP promote gender-based budgeting to ensure that fiscal stimulus packages benefit women at the grassroots level. At the request of the CWP, the Commonwealth Secretariat will distribute guidelines on gender-responsive budgeting to member governments to ensure sustainability for all women. There is a need for capacity-building on gender-based budgeting in the regions, so delegates called on the CWP to work with its partners to enhance programmes and information-sharing in support of gender-based budgeting.