



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Report of the 68<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference

Bridgetown, Barbados  
5 October – 12 October 2025



(Left to Right: Stuart McMillan MSP, Roz McCall MSP & Jeremy Balfour MSP)

# Introduction

1. This is the report of the visit by the Scottish Parliament delegation to Bridgetown, Barbados from 5 to 12 October 2025 for participation in the 68<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) hosted by the Parliament of Barbados and CPA Barbados Branch. The delegation comprised of:

- Stuart McMillan MSP
- Roz McCall MSP
- Jeremy Balfour MSP

The delegation was accompanied and supported by Steven Bell from the International Relations Office (IRO). A nominated carer also travelled with the delegation to assist Jeremy Balfour MSP.

2. In addition to the CPC General Assembly and associated workshops, two members of the Scottish parliamentary delegation also attended the conference in their capacity as regional representatives of the CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR). These roles were:
  - a. Stuart McMillan MSP, BIMR representative on the CPA International Executive Committee (ExCo); and
  - b. Jeremy Balfour MSP, BIMR representative on the CPA Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities Network (CPwD).

## Background

3. The CPC is the largest annual gathering of Commonwealth parliamentarians who come together to discuss global parliamentary and political issues. Each year, the conference is hosted by a different Commonwealth Parliament. The 68<sup>th</sup> conference, hosted by the Parliament of Barbados and CPA Barbados Branch, was attended by over 500 parliamentarians and parliamentary officials representing Parliaments and legislatures from across the Commonwealth.
4. The CPC brings together Speakers, Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff representing the nine regions of the CPA – Africa; Asia; Australia; British Islands and Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic; India; Pacific; and South-East Asia.
5. The 68<sup>th</sup> CPC was hosted by the CPA President (2024-2025), Senator the Hon Reginald Farley JP, President of the Senate of Barbados; The Hon Arthur Holder MHA, SC, Speaker of the House of Assembly of Barbados and the Prime Minister of Barbados, The Hon Mia Mottley SC MP. This

was the second occasion that the Barbados Branch hosted a CPC, the previous being the 35<sup>th</sup> CPC in 1989.

6. The main theme of the 68th CPC was 'The Commonwealth: A Global Partner'. The Conference period included several elements, such as:
  - a. the General Assembly, the CPA's supreme authority constituted of delegates from each CPA Branch
  - b. meetings of the International Executive Committee (ExCo).
  - c. the CPA Small Branches Conference
  - d. the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference and associated meetings
  - e. meeting of the Regional Champions of the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) Network
  - f. meetings for parliamentary clerks and officials (Society of Clerks-at-the-Table - SOCATT); and
  - g. learning and development workshops for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff.
7. Members of the Scottish Parliament delegation wish to put on record their sincere thanks and appreciation to the President of the Senate of Barbados, The Hon Reginald Farley JP; the Speaker of the House of Assembly of Barbados, The Hon Arthur Holder MHA; the Prime Minister of Barbados, The Hon Mia Mottley SC MP, and all colleagues from the CPA Barbados Branch for their warm welcome and kind hospitality in Bridgetown.

## Programme

8. Over the course of five full days in Bridgetown the delegation attended a combined total of eleven meetings (inclusive of the all-day General Assembly and one bi-lateral), twelve workshops, and ten networking and other events (see Annex for full list). A summary of these meetings and events is detailed below in a broadly chronological order.

### Monday 6 October 2025

9. Stuart McMillan MSP attended a meeting of the CPA International Executive Committee (ExCo) as one of the British Islands and Mediterranean (BIM) Regional representatives on that body. The meeting was chaired by the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, Dr Christopher Kalila MP (Zambia). Stuart McMillan MSP once again thanked Dr Kalila for his recent visit to Holyrood at which he addressed MSPs at the Annual General Meeting of the CPA Scotland Branch.
10. The CPA Executive Committee Members discussed key governance issues and planning for the year ahead including updates to the CPA's legal status,

financial reporting and future activities. The CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg, and other staff from the CPA Headquarters also attended the meetings. In addition to a full meeting of ExCo members, Stuart McMillan MSP attended a meeting of the Planning and Review Subcommittee.

11. The Chairperson of the Executive Committee, Dr Christopher Kalila MP (Zambia) said ahead of the meeting that, “The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) provides a unique platform for inter-parliamentary dialogue to take place. The CPA’s membership comprises the national, state, provincial and territorial Parliaments of the Commonwealth. The diverse nature of the membership provides the CPA with a unique position within the parliamentary community to offer a comprehensive perspective on how to strengthen parliamentary democracy across the Commonwealth and to discuss new and innovative approaches on how to do so”.
12. Dr Kalila added, “the 68<sup>th</sup> CPC is the most prominent event in the CPA’s calendar, as it offers a unique opportunity for the representatives of the Association’s almost 180 Member Parliaments and legislatures to network with colleagues from other jurisdictions and discuss common issues of concern which affect Commonwealth Parliaments.”
13. During the meeting of the new CPA Executive Committee, Carmel Sepuloni MP, (Member of the Parliament of New Zealand and Regional Representative for the CPA Pacific Region) was re-elected to the position of Vice-Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee. The position of Vice-Chairperson is for a term of one year and the holder is also a Member of the CPA Co-ordinating Committee.
14. The election of the CPA’s future Treasurer also took place. Two candidates: Speaker Juan Watterson from the Isle of Man and Senator Sue Lines from Australian Federal Parliament. Senator Lines won by 15 votes to 11 votes. 10 members were not present to vote.
15. The Executive Committee were formally notified that South Africa Branch will host the 69<sup>th</sup> CPC in 2026. No Branch had, at the time of the meeting, come forward for the subsequent conference.
16. The various ExCo subgroups reported on their activities with the Finance Sub-Group reporting the membership payments are in good health, with outstanding debts now paid by one Branch from the Pacific Region and work progressing well on debt repayment with one Branch from the Africa Region. It was recommended by ExCo that the 4% increases in subscription fees over the next two financial years progress.
17. It was further noted at the meeting that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the CPA and the Women’s Political Leaders (WPL). However, the issue of Special Observer Status for Ukraine and Swaziland was taken off the agenda while further information was sought from those legislatures.

18. Ahead of the official opening of the 68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Stuart McMillan MSP and other Members of the CPA Executive Committee were received by the President of Barbados, Her Excellency Dame Sandra Mason GCMG SC, who is also the Vice-Patron of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), at a reception at State House.
19. Later that evening, Jeremy Balfour MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP held an informal meeting with parliamentary colleagues from the National Assembly of Québec and the Northern Ireland Assembly: Lucie Lecours MNA and Speaker Edwin Poots MLA, respectively. This informal meeting on 'arrival day' provided a good opportunity to discuss the forthcoming conference and recent parliamentary and political developments in Members' respective jurisdictions.
20. It was mentioned during this meeting by Ms Lecours (and by other Canadian delegates MSP's spoke to throughout their time in Bridgetown) how much they appreciated Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP's contribution at that summer's Canadian regional conference.

## **Tuesday 7 October 2025**

### **Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Business Meeting and CWP Chair Election**

21. The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) is the network of women Members of the CPA's 180 Parliaments and legislatures and represents over 3,000 women parliamentarians. The CWP network provides a means of building the capacity of women elected to Parliament to be effective in their roles, improving the awareness and ability of all parliamentarians, male and female.
22. The CWP encourages parliamentarians to include a gender perspective in all aspects of their role - legislation, oversight and representation, to help Parliaments to become gender-sensitive institutions.
23. The 9th CWP Conference took place as part of the wider 68th CPC in Barbados and the election of a new Chairperson to the CWP was held. Under CPA election rules only women delegates to the 68<sup>th</sup> CPC and CWP Steering Committee Members could take part in the vote to elect a new CWP Chairperson. The post is for a three-year term.
24. The CWP election process was presided over by the CWP Steering Committee Member for the CPA Pacific Region, Lenora Qereqeretabua MP, Deputy Speaker of the Fiji Parliament. After three rounds of voting, Catherine Fife MPP (CPA Ontario Branch) was duly elected as the new Chairperson of the CWP network in succession to the outgoing CWP Chairperson, Dr Zainab Gimba MP, from the House of Representatives in the Federal Parliament of

Nigeria. It is the first time that a woman from the CPA Canada Region has held the role.

25. Upon her election to the post, Catherine Fife MPP pledged to renew the effort to increase women's representation and political participation in Parliaments across the Commonwealth with a focus on education for all. She also thanked the CWP membership for electing her to the role.
26. The Scottish Parliament delegation wishes to put on record their congratulations to Catherine Fife MPP for her election to this prestigious role, the first time that a woman from the CPA Canada Region has held this, and look forward to working with her over the next three years to assist the CWP in achieving its aims.
27. The main theme of the CWP conference was: 'Parliaments since Beijing +30: Progress, challenges and the road ahead for gender equality' which highlighted 30 years since the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, where the United Nations (UN) adopted the landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on gender.
28. The CWP Conference also brought together Members of Parliament to discuss equal representation in Parliaments through a series of workshops and governance meetings including four learning and development workshops for delegates.
29. The CWP Conference was opened by the outgoing CWP Chairperson, Dr Zainab Gimba MP, Member of the House of Representatives at the National Assembly of Nigeria, who welcomed delegates and gave an update on the activities of the CWP network.
30. The CWP President (2025), Marsha K. A. Caddle MP (Barbados) addressed conference about her experience as a legislator. She also highlighted that the Caribbean Region has been a leading advocate for gender equality and so it was particularly nice to welcome the CWP network to Barbados. Ms Caddle added that the Caribbean aims to be a beacon for peace and security in the world and this can be extended through the work of the CWP and the CPA.
31. The CWP Business meeting updated on the CWP network's activities during this year and the plans for the year ahead. The CWP Chairperson also pledged to renew the effort to increase women's representation and political participation in Parliaments across the Commonwealth.
32. Following the 9<sup>th</sup> CWP Conference, the CWP Steering Committee, representing the nine CPA Regions: Africa; Asia; Australia; British Islands and the Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic; India; Pacific; and South-East Asia, met to discuss activities for the year ahead as well as key themes for future conferences and meetings. The CWP Steering Committee also elected Deputy Sasha Kazantseva-Miller (Guernsey) as the CWP Vice-Chairperson for a one-year term.



(Roz McCall MSP pictured with UK Members of the CWP)

## **CWP Workshop A: Good Practices and Strategies to Realising Gender-Sensitive Parliaments Across the Commonwealth**

33. Upon conclusion of the CWP conference and Chairperson elections, Roz McCall MSP and Jeremy Balfour MSP attended Workshop A: Good Practices and Strategies to Realising Gender-Sensitive Parliaments Across the Commonwealth'.
34. Chaired by the Hon. Nelly Mutti MP, Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia, with panellists including Deputy Taluca Kovacs, States Assembly of Jersey; Nomafrench Mbombo MP, Western Cape Provincial Parliament; and the Hon Leonora Qereqeretabua, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji.
35. During this workshop, Members were able to bring the recently published [Gender Sensitising Parliaments: A practical guide](#), to the attention of their parliamentary colleagues. The Parliament's International Relations Office (IRO) had previously circulated the guide to colleagues in the CPA HQ (and was [published on the CPA website](#) in February 2025) but the conference provided a unique opportunity to promote and discuss the document, as well as the wider [Report of the Gender Sensitive Audit](#), with key stakeholders, in person.
36. Jeremy Balfour MSP said, "I think there is much we can be proud of in the Scottish Parliament and the progress that has been made. The challenge is how deep that progress goes. At next year's election, for example, we do not know how many women will be returned and that is the ongoing challenge."

## **Official Opening Ceremony of the 68<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference**

37. All members of the delegation attended the official opening ceremony of the 68<sup>th</sup> CPC at the Wyndham Grand Barbados
38. The Vice-Patron of the CPA, Her Excellency Dame Sandra Mason GCMG SC, the President of Barbados, gave a keynote address to delegates, urging them to work together to uphold the values of the Commonwealth. She reflected on the theme for the 68<sup>th</sup> CPC on the role of the Commonwealth today, noting that the Commonwealth shines as a positive beacon of multilateralism and a good global partner. President Mason also emphasised that education and advocacy can help to promote the benefits of the Commonwealth and welcomed the recognition for youth in the CPC programme as they are the future of the Commonwealth.
39. Delegates to the 68<sup>th</sup> CPC were officially welcomed by the Hon Arthur Holder MP SC, Speaker of the House of Assembly of Barbados. Further addresses were then received by the Prime Minister of Barbados, The Hon Mia Mottley SC MP; the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Shirley Botchwey; the Leader of the Opposition in Barbados, The Hon Ralph Thorne MP; the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, Dr Christopher Kalila MP (Zambia), and the CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg, The Vote of Thanks was given by the CPA President (2024-2025), Senator the Hon Reginald Farley JP, President of the Senate of Barbados.
40. The opening ceremony also saw cultural performances and music by the Christ Church Foundation School Steel Orchestra, Celebration of Rhythms, Adrian Green (spoken word artist), Betty Payne (singer) and the Zuoave Marching Band.

## **Wednesday 8 October 2025**

### **Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) Regional Champions Meeting; CPwD Chair Election; and Townhall Outreach Event: How Parliaments Can Engage Civil Society on Disability Inclusion**

41. The CPwD network was established by the CPA to support parliamentarians living with disabilities to be more effective in their roles and to help improve awareness of disability issues amongst all parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. The network also seeks to address inequalities facing persons with disabilities and helps to raise awareness within the parliamentary context.
42. Jeremy Balfour MSP, as the British Islands and Mediterranean Regional (BIMR) Champion on the CPwD Network, joined other Regional

Champions and delegates at a town hall event at the Barbados Works' Union, Solidarity House, in Bridgetown examining how Parliaments can engage with civil society and representative organisations in shaping inclusive public policy.

43. Panellists at the town hall event included the Hon Kerryann Ifill, President of the Barbados Council for the Disabled (BCD) and former President of the Barbados Senate; the Hon Kirk D. M. Humphrey MP, the Barbados Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs; Mr Edmund G. Hinkson, former Member of the Parliament of Barbados; and Senator Andwele Boyce (Barbados). The event also heard opening remarks from local disabilities advocate, Janelle O'Dell.
44. Upon conclusion of the townhall event, Jeremy Balfour MSP and the other Regional Champions on the CPwD Network returned to the conference centre for a formal meeting of the group. At this meeting, they elected Senator Isaiah Jacob (Member of the Senate of Malaysia) as the new Chairperson of the CPwD network for a three-year term. Liesl Tesch MP (Member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly) was also elected as the CPwD Vice-Chair.
45. At the meeting, the CPwD Regional Champions also set the agenda of the network for the year ahead including the CPwD Capital Investment Fund which supports Commonwealth Parliaments to become more accessible.
46. Jeremy Balfour MSP highlighted the 'Disability Audit' due to take place in the Scottish Parliament later that month which was funded following a successful bid to the Capital Investment Fund during the previous financial year. He encouraged colleagues on the CPwD to highlight this fund to Members and staff in their home parliaments and noted it was a useful tool, and welcome additional resource, to help ensure CPA member legislatures are fit for purpose and serves the needs of all Members and staff.
47. Jeremy Balfour MSP, on behalf of the Scottish Parliament delegation, passed on the congratulations to Senator Isaiah Jacob and Liesl Tesch MP for their election, and noted that he, and his parliamentary colleagues, look forward to working with them over the next three years to assist the CPwD in furthering its strategic goals. He said, "The whole (CPwD) Group want to see the CPwD more integrated into the main programme with non-disabled Members coming to the sessions. The Group must not become a tick-box exercise but drive change across the jurisdictions."



(British Islands & Mediterranean Regional CPwD Champion, Jeremy Balfour MSP, with other CPwD Regional Champions)

## **CWP Workshop B: Debate Not Hate: Not Accepting Abuse as an Outcome of Free Speech**

48. This workshop, attended by Stuart McMillan MSP, aimed to unite parliamentarians to combat harassment and violence within political and parliamentary spheres. It also aimed to provide a collaborative platform to explore how Parliaments and parliamentarians can foster respectful debate, safeguard political engagement and ensure that they are seen and heard without fear or harm.
49. It was noted during the session that free speech is a fundamental pillar of democratic societies, but it must not be misused as a shield for harassment, intimidation, discrimination, or threats.
50. It was further noted that across the Commonwealth, abuse and harassment in its many varied forms are eroding healthy political discourse and discouraging democratic participation. As technology permeates every corner of society, it is being weaponised to harm women and girls, posing serious threats to their safety and wellbeing, making it increasingly difficult for women to feel safe not only in public spaces but, with technology-facilitated violence, in their own homes too.
51. Every speaker highlighted the challenges women and girls face in political leadership roles. From violence to online targeted abuse, it is essentially a continuation of gender-based violence.
52. A delegate from Sri Lanka highlighted their National Convention on Women Plan. She suggested that Parliaments should have a zero-tolerance policy of abuse of female parliamentarians. She also highlighted work is underway with the Sri Lanka police on the issue of cyber harassment.

53. A delegate from the Republic of South Africa (RSA) highlighted that in the rural border areas between RSA and Mozambique and Swaziland, there is a great deal of domestic abuse. It was, she noted, not always reported to the police and on many occasions the perpetrator will go back home before being caught and dealt with.
54. To assist with the exchange of information on this important topic, it is recommended that the CPA Scotland Branch Secretary emails counterparts in the BIM Region after a new bill has been introduced in the Scottish Parliament, with a link to that bill.

### **CWP Workshop C: Parliamentarians Combatting Discriminatory Laws That Perpetuate the Disempowerment of Women**

55. This workshop, attended by Roz McCall MSP and Stuart McMillan MSP, launched a new handbook produced by UN Women, the CPA, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the World Bank Group's 'Women, Business and the Law'.
56. The handbook, titled 'Understanding, Assessing & Achieving Equality before the Law in the Commonwealth: A Practical Handbook for Change Agents with Historical Records, Statistical Data and Case Studies' provides up-to-date mapping of equality laws and highlights successful reforms.
57. It was noted during the workshop that vital, structured engagement with legislators enhances and strengthens efforts to address legislation, deepens public debate and enhances accountability in the movement towards greater gender equality and equity. Given this, the handbook serves as a practical tool for parliamentarians seeking to lead change.
58. The workshop also provided a unique space for parliamentarians to share reform experiences, discuss priority areas for legislative change and commit to concrete next steps. A few colleagues highlighted some examples of work in their respective Parliaments. A delegate from Sierra Leone, for example, advised that their Parliament recently removed discrimination laws for women and work. A delegate from Malawi stated that gender equality is now in the constitution and that there was a wider, more-established belief that discriminatory laws damage the country, socially and economically. A delegate from Nova Scotia advised that a new hate crimes unit was created and a colleague from India highlighted that Prime Minister Modi removed over 1000 laws that discriminated against equality for women.
59. Stuart McMillan MSP said, "It was heartening to hear of various legislative actions that have taken place in other Commonwealth Parliaments, however, there still remains societal and cultural challenges to engage

with to drive forward the change we would all wish to see. That can only come from within the relevant territories though.”

### **The Third Emilia Monjowa Lifaka Memorial Lecture**

60. All members of the Scottish Parliament delegation attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> Emilia Monjowa Lifaka Memorial Lecture, delivered by the Prime Minister of Barbados, the Hon Mia Amor Mottley SC MP. The CPA Lifaka Lecture was established in 2023 in memory of the Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, the late Chairperson of the CPA International Executive Committee and Deputy Speaker of Cameroon. The Hon Emilia Monjowa Lifaka was a passionate champion of the CPA, and the Lifaka Lecture is intended to provide a fitting tribute to her work.
61. The Prime Minister’s address focussed on Parliaments’ role in protecting democracy as well as the ongoing impact of climate change on small islands states. She urged the Commonwealth “to lead by example and demonstrate that democracy, even in the most trying times, remains the fairest and most effective path to peace, prosperity and human fulfilment”.
62. The Prime Minister gave an impassioned speech about why democracy matters. She said, “Let us move forward hand in hand, with courage and conviction, to build a Commonwealth where democracy is not a privilege of the few, but the birthright of all. This is not simply the work of government but the work of all of our citizens, and those of us who will know better must guide and prepare, to allow those who may not yet be awakened to this reality, the opportunity to join us in this battle that truly will determine whether we progress or whether we regress into the domination of countries and individuals by a few. It is against this backdrop that we address how we secure the rights and aspirations of our people within the boundaries of our nations. How we protect them from the excessive power of any Executive or any Parliament. How we build democracies that deliver for every resident. We know what we must do. Let us do it together.”
63. The Prime Minister also spoke of how democracy “was not a given” and that it was to “be protected and cherished”. Out of 180 nations, the Prime Minister noted that 89 were democracies compared to 91 autocracies. “Democracies and dissent must live under the same roof”, she said. [A link to the full speech can be found on the CPA’s YouTube page.](#)
64. Stuart McMillan MSP said, “Prime Minister Mottley’s address held the attention of everyone in the room throughout and her lecture generated a great deal of discussion afterwards. Out of the various experiences I have been offered via the CPA, this lecture stands out”.

## **CWP & CPwD Joint Workshop D: Overcoming the Barriers to the Involvement of Women with Disabilities in Politics**

65. Attended by both Roz McCall MSP and Jeremy Balfour MSP, this interactive workshop explored the unique barriers faced by women with disabilities in political life, with reflections of those with lived experience and those that advocate for their wider representation.
66. Delegates were also able to provide contributions and reflections during the collective dialogue in order to promote empathy, raise awareness and identify tangible pathways to support political participation of women with disabilities across the Commonwealth.
67. Roz McCall MSP was one of the panellists during this discussion and spoke of the experience of her parliamentary colleague, Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP, and the barriers she has faced on her political and parliamentary journey. Roz McCall MSP was joined on the panel by Liesl Tech MP, Parliament of New South Wales; and Kerrynn Ifill, Parliament of the Barbados Council for the Disabled and Former President of the Senate of the Parliament of Barbados.



(Roz McCall MSP addressing delegates at the CWP & CPwD Joint Workshop D: Overcoming the Barriers to the Involvement of Women with Disabilities in Politics)

## **CPC Workshop B: Leveraging Technology: Enhancing Democracy Through Digital Transformations and Tackling the Digital Divide**

68. Across the Commonwealth, legislatures are navigating the profound opportunities and challenges of the digital age. While digital transformation offers the potential to make institutions more efficient, transparent and accessible, the persistent 'digital divide' risks excluding citizens and deepening existing inequalities. Framed by a discussion on the broader

challenges of digital inclusion, particularly within the context of Commonwealth jurisdictions, this workshop aimed to move beyond theory to action.

69. CPC Workshop B, attended by both Roz McCall MSP and Jeremy Balfour MSP, explored this dual challenge, focusing on practical, innovative solutions that can enhance democratic processes for all. The discussion was led by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha (Parliament of India), the Hon Om Birla MP. The Speaker was joined on the panel by Mr João Alberto de Oliveira Lima from the Federal Senate of Brazil and Mrs Aubrey Wilson, of the VOXPOP Foundation.

### **Reception Hosted by the Prime Minister of Barbados**

70. Stuart McMillan MSP, Roz McCall MSP and Jeremy Balfour MSP attended a reception hosted by the Prime Minister of Barbados, the Hon Mia Amor Mottley SC MP, held in the Parliament of Barbados central courtyard. Members of the Scottish Parliament delegation were joined at the reception by delegates from all CPA branches represented at the CPC. The event provided an excellent opportunity to network and exchange news of parliamentary and political developments in delegates' respective Branches.

### **Thursday 9 October 2025**

#### **CPC Workshop C: A Look Ahead to CHOGM 2026: Championing the Human Factor from a Gender and Accessibility Lens**

71. In preparation for the 2026 CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting) that will be hosted by the government of Antigua and Barbuda, this workshop examined the significance of inclusion and representation of marginalised groups. Panellists explored how gender equality, accessibility and human rights can be further embedded into CHOGM outcome documents and policy, ensuring that the inclusion of those often underrepresented or marginalised is not an afterthought.

72. The discussion, attended by Roz McCall MSP, was chaired by the CPA Secretary-General, Stephen Twigg, with contributions from the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Antigua and Barbuda, the Hon Osbert Frederick MP, and the General Secretary of the Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum, Mr Richard Rieser.

#### **CPC Workshop D: Climate Change and its Threat to Global Health - Finding Sustainable Solutions**

73. This workshop examined the dynamics between climate change and its direct impact on physical and mental health, and what role

parliamentarians can play to tackle this global challenge. Panellists examined the profound health impacts of a warming planet across the Commonwealth, from the rising burden of vector-borne diseases to the devastating mental health consequences of extreme weather events. Delegates also had the opportunity to discuss related questions and share what their own legislatures were doing.

74. The presentations focused on climate change primarily from a West Indies perspective. Key global stats were highlighted including climate change happening presently at a rate of 1.1% but heading to 2%.
75. Attended by Stuart McMillan MSP, this workshop was chaired by the Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee, Dr Christopher Kalila MP (Zambia). Dr Kalila was joined on the panel by an expert in climate change from the University of the West Indies. In addition to a contribution from the floor by Stuart McMillan MSP on behalf of Scotland Branch, the session heard from other delegates from Belize, South Africa, Malaysia, Fiji, New Zealand and India.
76. Stuart McMillan MSP said, “This was a fascinating session from the perspective of the West Indies and not from a fully developed nation perspective. It was a strong reminder that we as politicians must fully consider our actions and how they also impact other countries.”

### **CPC Workshop E: Building Trust and Transparency in Democracy: Financial Transparency in Parliaments and Elections**

77. In an era of declining public trust, the financial integrity of political institutions has become a defining measure of democratic legitimacy. Allegations of opaque campaign financing, weak parliamentary oversight and a misuse of public resources continue to challenge confidence in Commonwealth governments.
78. This workshop, attended by Jeremy Balfour MSP, was chaired by Senator Andrew Cardozo from the Canadian Federal Parliament. Senator Cardozo was joined on the panel by Senator the Hon. Alvina Reynolds, President of the Senate, Parliament of Saint Lucia; Mark Furner MP, Queensland Parliament; and Mr Geoff Dubrow, Founder, Nexus PFM Consulting.

### **British Islands and Mediterranean Regional (BIMR) Meeting**

79. All delegates from the BIMR gathered ahead of Friday's General Assembly to be briefed by their regional representatives on the International Executive Committee, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee and Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities Network; Stuart McMillan MSP, Deputy Sasha Kazantseva-Miller (Guernsey) and Jeremy Balfour MSP, respectively.

80. Deputy Adrian Gabriel (Guernsey), as Small Branches Vice Chair, also spoke at this meeting. Deputy Gabriel indicated that he would be speaking at the General Assembly on behalf of Sark who had applied to join the CPA's Small Branches Network. He also highlighted that the Regional Initiative Fund (RIF) and the Technical Assistance Fund (TAF) are available for small branches to bid against.

81. The whole BIMR Group took the opportunity to thank Stuart McMillan MSP for his hard work and commitment over the past 7 years as Regional Representative on the International Executive Committee (ExCo). They also took the opportunity to welcome Natasha Asghar MS to her new role on the committee.

82. Stuart McMillan MSP said, "It has been a privilege representing the Scottish Parliament as well as highlighting some of the work of our Parliament. It was also clear to me that Scotland and our Parliament is held in high regard by many across the CPA. This manifested itself in many discussions and dialogue about political and cultural activities taking place here and shared wider respectively. The Scottish Parliament's International Relations Office do an outstanding job with inward and external engagement, and where CPA colleagues have had that engagement, they were always fulsome in their praise of our team."

83. Stuart McMillan MSP added, "I would like to pass on my thanks to all colleagues I have worked with in the past and also wish present, and future Regional representatives, every success."

84. Lastly, it was noted that the next BIM Regional Conference will be hosted by Gibraltar Branch, expected to take place in June 2026.



(Photo of Stuart McMillan MSP, Roz McCall MSP and Jeremy Balfour MSP and all other British Islands and Mediterranean Regional delegates at the 68<sup>th</sup> CPC)

## **CPC Workshop F: National Parliaments vs Provincial, Territorial and Devolved Legislatures: Protecting and Preserving the Separation of Powers**

85. This workshop examined the distribution of powers in multi-level governance systems within the Commonwealth, focusing on the balance between national and sub-national legislatures. It emphasised the importance of institutional responsibility and non-encroachment, drawing on the Commonwealth Charter and the Commonwealth Latimer House Principles.
86. Delegates also had the opportunity for group discussions looking at solutions which could tackle unique and broader challenges faced by Parliaments.
87. This workshop, attended by Stuart McMillan MSP, was chaired by Natasha Asghar MS (the Senedd, Parliament of Wales). Natasha Asghar MS was joined on the panel by a Member of the Indian Parliament and Ms Lydia Buchanan, Deputy Head of Programmes, CPA Secretariat

## **CPC Workshop G: The Role of the Commonwealth in Good Governance, Multilateralism, and International Relations**

88. This workshop, attended by Roz McCall MSP, explored how the Commonwealth can remain a credible actor in an increasingly fractured world by strengthening its commitment to good governance, championing multilateral cooperation and supporting parliamentarians as key agents of international engagement.
89. Drawing on the Commonwealth Charter, the Harare and Millbrook Declarations and the Commonwealth Latimer House Principles, the discussion highlighted how Parliaments can resist democratic backsliding, navigate geopolitical and economic turbulence and respond to global challenges such as climate change, Artificial Intelligence and disinformation.
90. This workshop was chaired by His Excellency Mr Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, Chairman, Senate of Pakistan. The Chairman was joined on the panel by the Hon Carmel Sepuloni MP (New Zealand Parliament and CPA Vice-Chairperson); the Hon Aristos Damianou MP (House of Representatives of Cyprus); Dr Elizabeth Macharia, Legal Advisor, Commonwealth Secretariat; and Ms Latoya McDowald-Hurley, Legal Officer, Commonwealth Secretariat.

## **Bilateral Meeting with the Speaker of the Zambian National Assembly, The Hon Nelly B.K. Mutti MP**

91. Members of the Scottish Parliament delegation held a bilateral meeting with the Speaker of the Zambian National Assembly, the Hon Nelly B.K. Mutti MP. The Speaker was joined at this meeting by her parliamentary colleagues Mischeck Nyambose MP, Joel Chibuye MP, Davison Mung'andu MP and Emeldah Munashabantu MP. The meeting was chaired by the CPA Chairperson (and fellow Zambian parliamentarian), Dr Christopher Kalila MP.
92. This discussion in Bridgetown was a continuation of the dialogue started at the CPA Scotland Branch AGM in Holyrood with Dr. Christopher Kalila MP, focusing on an improved working relationship between the Scottish and Zambian Parliaments.
93. Given the many historical links between Scotland and Zambia (which were also discussed during this short meeting) the Parliament's delegation indicated to Zambian colleagues that their suggestion of further engagement on parliamentary practices and processes was welcome and, in this regard, undertook to take it back to the Branch Executive Committee for further consideration.
94. Stuart McMillan MSP said, "The bi-lateral meeting was timely as we found out the First Minister was due to visit Zambia and Malawi the following week. Our links with Zambia are strong and engagement between our two Parliaments could prove beneficial for both."



(Stuart McMillan MSP, Ros McCall MSP and Jeremy Balfour MSP pictured with the Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia, the Hon Nelly B.K. Mutti MP [centre], and her parliamentary colleagues)

## **Reception Hosted by His Excellency Simon Mustard, British High Commissioner to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean**

95. Stuart McMillan MSP, Roz McCall MSP and Jeremy Balfour MSP attended a reception hosted by the British High Commissioner to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, H.E. Simon Mustard, at his Official Residence in Bridgetown. Members of the delegation were joined at the reception by Members and officials from the other UK based legislatures represented at the CPC, namely Westminster (House of Commons and House of Lords), the Welsh Parliament, the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Assemblies and Parliaments of the Crown Dependencies as well as members of the local Bridgetown community. The delegation wishes to put on record their sincere thanks to the High Commissioner and his wife for their warm hospitality and generous welcome. They also wish to thank the High Commissioner for the private briefing he provided to all UK based delegates prior to travelling to Barbados.

## **Friday 10 October 2025**

### **CPA General Assembly**

96. Alongside parliamentarians from 120 other CPA Branches, Members of the Scottish Parliament delegation attended the 2025 CPA General Assembly presided over by the CPA President (2024-2025), Senator the Hon Reginald Farley JP, President of the Senate of Barbados. The CPA General Assembly is the Association's supreme authority and is constituted by delegates to the annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

97. During the General Assembly, CPA delegates approved the nomination of Senator the Hon. Sue Lines, President of the Senate of Australia, as the new CPA Treasurer for a three-year term. The post holder oversees the finances of the Association and works closely with the Trustees and Finance team at the CPA.

98. Some of the key decisions and outcomes from the 2025 CPA General Assembly included:

- a) The approval of the new CPA Strategic Plan 2026-2029 which sets the priorities for the Association for the next three years.
- b) An update on the progress of the new legal status similar to an international, interparliamentary organisation following the UK Parliament passing the 'Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and International Committee of the Red Cross (Status) Act 2025' and progress on the UK Government's secondary legislation.
- c) An update on changes to the CPA's structure and the creation of the CPA Charitable Funds (CPACF).

- d) Approval of the 2024 CPA Annual Report (including the audited Financial Statements), the CPA Membership Report, the CPA Budgets and Financial Management Reports.
- e) The endorsement of reports from the three CPA networks - the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) and the CPA Small Branches.

99. The 2025 CPA General Assembly also approved the Chief Pleas of Sark as a new CPA Branch. One of the smallest legislatures in the Commonwealth, the CPA Sark Branch joins the CPA British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIM).

100. Delegates also confirmed that the next Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference – the 69th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) – is to be hosted in 2026 by the CPA South Africa Branch and Parliament of South Africa. Dates to be confirmed.

101. The CPA General Assembly also included a topical debate on ‘The Commonwealth – A Global Partner’ with presentations from the following CPA Branches: India; Kenya; Sri Lanka; Canada Federal; Cyprus; Maldives; Australia Federal; Pakistan; Jersey; Punjab, Pakistan; Guernsey; Fiji; Singapore; New Zealand; Cook Islands; Bermuda; Malta; and Balochistan.

102. At the conclusion of the 68th CPC, the CPA President (2024-2025), Senator the Hon Reginald Farley JP, President of the Senate of Barbados, was presented with a commemorative silver salver by the CPA Chairperson, Dr Christopher Kalila MP (Zambia), to thank the CPA Barbados Branch for the hosting of the conference.

103. The Scottish Parliament delegation wishes to once again add their own thanks to the President of the Senate of Barbados, the Hon. Reginald Farley JP, and all his parliamentary colleagues, for the warm hand of friendship extended to them for the duration of their time in Bridgetown, and for organising such an excellent conference.



(L-R: CPA Scotland Branch representatives Roz McCall MSP, Stuart McMillan MSP and Jeremy Balfour MSP in the Main Conference Hall, CPC General Assembly)

### **Official Closing Dinner Hosted by the Prime Minister of Barbados**

104. The final official engagement of the CPC was a dinner hosted by the Prime Minister of Barbados, The Hon Mia Mottley SC MP, in the grounds of her official Bridgetown residence. The delegation welcomed this opportunity to network with colleagues from the wider CPA family after a very busy period of meetings and engagements.

**International Relations Office**  
November 2025

## Annex: Programme

DEL = Delegation

SM = Stuart McMillan MSP

RM = Roz McCall MSP

JB = Jeremy Balfour MSP

### **Sunday 5 October (SM)**

07:35 Depart Glasgow on BA1475 to LHR

09:10 Arrive LHR

11:25 Depart LHR on BA0255 to Bridgetown, Barbados

15:15 Arrive Bridgetown, Barbados

16:30 Arrive Hotel

### **Monday 6 October (RM, JB)**

07:00 Depart Edinburgh on BA1461 to LHR

08:35 Arrive LHR

11:25 Depart LHR on BA0255 to Bridgetown

15:15 Arrive Bridgetown, Barbados (BGI)

16:00 Transfer to Hotel

16:30 Arrive Hotel

19:30 Delegation dinner and meeting with National Assembly of Québec and Northern Ireland Assembly delegations

### **Monday 6 October (SM)**

08:15 Gathering and departure to Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Center

09:00 Conference registration opens

13:00 Networking lunch

14:00 CPA Planning and Review Subcommittee

18:00 Reception and Dinner, State House, Government Hill, St. Michael

### **Tuesday 7 October**

08:15 Gathering and departure to Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Center (DEL)

09:00 CPA International Executive Committee Meeting (SM)

11:30 CWP Business Meeting and CWP Chair Election (RM)

13:00 Networking lunch- Project Discovery Barbados: Give the Youth a Chance (DEL)

14:00 CPA International Executive Committee Meeting, cont'd (SM)

14:00 CWP Business Meeting cont'd with Host Branch Topical Discussion: From the Executive to the Legislature and Back: Who Holds the Key to Advancing Gender Equitable Law and Policy? (RM)

16:15 CWP Conference Official Opening: Parliaments since Beijing +30: Progress, Challenges and the Road Ahead for Gender Equality and CWP Workshop A: Good Practices and Strategies to Realising Gender-Sensitive Parliaments across the Commonwealth (RM, JB)

18:00 Official Opening Ceremony of the 68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference followed by the Welcome Reception (DEL)

22:00 Reception ends and return to hotel

### **Wednesday 8 October**

- 08:15 Gathering and departure to Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Center (DEL)
- 09:00 CPwD Outreach Townhall Event: How Parliaments Can Engage Civil Society on Disability Inclusion (JB)
- 09:30 CWP Conference Workshop B: Debate Not Hate: Not Accepting Abuse as an Outcome of Free Speech (SM, RM)
- 11:00 CWP Conference Workshop C: Parliamentarians Combatting Discriminatory Laws that Perpetuate the Disempowerment of Women (SM, RM)
- 12:00 CPwD Regional Champions Meeting & CPwD Chair Election (JB)
- 13:00 3rd Emilia Monjowa Lifaka Memorial Lecture (DEL)
- 14:00 Networking lunch (DEL)
- 15:00 CWP & CPwD Joint Workshop D: Overcoming the Barriers to the Involvement of Women with Disabilities in Politics (SM, RM, JB)
- 16:45 CPC Workshop A: Strengthening our Institutions to Support Democracy (RM, JB)
- 16:45 CPC Workshop B: Leveraging Technology: Enhancing Democracy through Digital Transformations and Tackling the Digital Divide (SM)
- 18:30 Briefing for All Delegates, Secretaries and Observers (DEL)
- 20:00 Reception hosted by Prime Minister of Barbados (DEL)
- 22:00 Reception ends and return to hotel

### **Thursday 9 October**

- 08:15 Gathering and departure to Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Center (all)
- 09:00 CPC Workshop C: A Look Ahead to CHOGM 2026: Championing the Human Factor from a Gender and Accessibility Lens (RM)
- 09:00 CPC Workshop D: Climate change and its Threat to Global Health - Finding Sustainable Solutions (SM)
- 09:00 CPC Workshop E: Building Trust and Transparency in Democracy: Financial Transparency in Parliaments and Elections (JB)
- 11:00 BIMR Regional Meeting (DEL)
- 13:00 Networking Lunch (DEL)
- 14:00 CPC Workshop F: National Parliaments vs Provincial, Territorial and Devolved legislatures: Protecting and Preserving the Separation of Powers (SM)
- 14:00 CPC Workshop G: The Role of the Commonwealth in Good Governance, Multilateralism, and International Relations (RM)
- 15:45 Bilateral meeting with Zambian Speaker and parliamentarians (DEL)
- 17:00 Return to hotel
- 19:00 Evening Reception with British High Commissioner to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, His Excellency Simon Mustard (DEL)
- 21:30 Reception ends and return to hotel

### **Friday 10 October**

- 08:15 Gathering and departure to Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Center (all)
- 09:00 CPA General Assembly, The Commonwealth – A Global Partner (DEL)
- 12:00 Networking Lunch (DEL)
- 12:00 CPA General Assembly, The Commonwealth – A Global Partner cont'd (DEL)
- 16:00 Return to hotel

18:00 Official Closing Dinner (DEL)  
22:00 Closing dinner ends and return to hotel

**Saturday 11 October (SM)**

14:00 Transfer to airport  
17:05 Depart Barbados on BA0254 to LHR

**Sunday 12 October (SM)**

06:20 Arrive LHR  
09:50 LHR on BA1476 to Glasgow  
11:15 Arrive Glasgow

**Saturday 11 October (RM, JB)**

AM Cultural Day – arranged by the Parliament and Government of Barbados  
18:30 Delegation dinner at Champers Restaurant (RM, JB)

**Sunday 12 October (JB)**

14:00 Transfer to airport  
17:05 Depart Barbados on BA0254 to LHR

**Monday 13 October (JB)**

06:20 Arrive LHR  
09:05 Depart LHR on BA1438 to Edinburgh  
10:30 Arrive Edinburgh

**Sunday 12 October (RM)**

17:30 Dinner with colleagues from the Welsh Parliament (RM)

**Monday 13 October (RM)**

14:00 Transfer to airport  
17:05 Depart Barbados on BA0254 to LHR

**Tuesday 14 October (RM)**

06:20 Arrive LHR  
09:15 Depart LHR on BA1438 to Edinburgh  
10:40 Arrive Edinburgh