COMMONWEALTH WEEK 2012

1. The purpose of this paper is to ask Members of the Branch Executive Committee (BEC) to agree a proposal for the CPA Scotland Branch celebration of Commonwealth Week. Members agreed at the previous meeting that a programme involving the Special Envoy should be developed and are invited to:

   a) Note that the Commonwealth Day theme for 2012 is “Connecting Cultures”;
   b) To agree that Her Majesty’s Commonwealth Day message is circulated to all Branch members on Monday 12 March;
   c) Consider a draft programme for the main event on Wednesday 14 March which is attached at Annex A;
   d) To consider hosting the Special Envoy event in the Garden Lobby followed by a reception for all invited guests;
   e) To consider a draft guest list attached at Annex B;
   f) To agree to invite the Branch President to host a dinner for all High Commissioners, members of the Commonwealth Consular Corps in Scotland and representatives from the British Council Scotland;
   g) Consider the possibility of lodging a motion for a Members Debate to take place on either Wednesday 14 or Thursday 15 March, focussing on the Commonwealth Day theme;
   h) To agree that negotiations should begin to secure a space in the Parliament to mount a Commonwealth Day photographic exhibition, and
   i) To consider the invitation from the Secretary-General, to invite 2 young people to participate in the Commonwealth Secretariat’s Commonwealth Day celebrations in London on March 2012. A copy of the invitation is attached at Annex C.

Background

2. Commonwealth Day is an annual event during which all the 54 member countries of the Commonwealth celebrate their links with one another. Commonwealth Day is held on the second Monday in March, and the day is celebrated around the world. Theme for Commonwealth Day 2011 is Connecting Cultures.

3. The Scotland Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) usually celebrates Commonwealth Day on the Wednesday following Commonwealth Day, because the Scottish Parliament does not sit on Mondays.

4. As previously mentioned elements of the Commonwealth Week programme have already been agreed. For example, Members have already agreed that an event involving the Special Envoy should be arranged and representatives from the International Development community in Scotland should be invited to attend.
5. The following are points for discussion and consideration, in association with the draft programme at Annex A:

- The Special Envoy is trying to arrange her schedule to visit the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 14 March.
- The suggestions that an event with the Special Envoy would include guests linked to the CPA, the Commonwealth and including the Scottish Parliament’s cross party groups on International Development, Malawi and the Caribbean.
- That the theme for the evening could be *Connecting Cultures*.
- Following discussions with relevant officials, the proposal to hold the event in the Chamber has proven to be problematic. The Events and Exhibitions Team have however suggested an alternative proposal, fully utilising the Garden Lobby. This proposal involves inviting between 200-300 guests who will be seated during the Special Envoy’s presentation. Invited guests will then have the opportunity to ask questions from their seats.
- Immediately after the presentation, guests would move into the Staff Restaurant area for drinks whilst chairs are removed from the Garden Lobby.
- Following the event the Special Envoy will proceed to the Members Restaurant and join Members of the BEC for dinner with the Branch President.
- It is envisaged that entertainment with a lively Commonwealth flavour will be provided during the evening.
- Even with this proposal we will need to consider a contingency plan in the event of extended parliamentary business and other possible risks.
- Given that invitations for these events will have to be sent out soon, Members are therefore asked to approve a final programme at this meeting.
- By convention, in January, CPA Scotland Branch begin the process of lodging a motion for a Members Debate during Commonwealth Week. Business Managers are usually sympathetic to the request, although during years preceding Scottish Parliament elections, CPA Scotland Branch has not been successful in securing a Members’ Debate. This helps maintain a profile for the Commonwealth and the CPA and provides an opportunity for Members to promote Malawi and other areas of interest within the Commonwealth.

**Costs**

6. Costs are as advised under the Forward Programme of Activities and Finance paper.

7. Members of the Branch Executive Committee are, of course, invited to attend all main events in the programme

Margaret Neal  
Secretary, CPA Scotland Branch  
The Scottish Parliament  
Email: margaret.neal@scottish.parliament.uk