MINUTES OF THE 5th MEETING OF THE CPA SCOTLAND BRANCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29 JANUARY 2014 AT 12.45PM IN Q1.04

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Tavish Scott MSP.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 November 2013

The minutes were agreed.

3. Matters arising

59th Commonwealth Plenary Conference (CPC), South Africa

Members noted the additional network information from GlobalScot. Margaret Mitchell MSP requested contact details for this organisation.

4. SPCB review of the Scottish Parliament’s UK and International Strategy

The Chair welcomed Linda Fabiani MSP, Member of the SPCB and Paul Grice, Clerk/Chief Executive.

Ms Fabiani thanked Members of the Branch Executive Committee for the opportunity to outline the main points of the annual review of the Scottish Parliament’s International Strategy. Ms Fabiani mentioned that given the SPCB funded the CPA Scotland Branch, and that priority countries contained within the strategy were
members of the Commonwealth, it seemed appropriate that the SPCB should review the Strategy with the Branch Executive Committee.

Ms Fabiani explained the SPCB felt it was an appropriate time to take stock and discuss whether or not the Scotland Malawi partnership at parliamentary level was as effective as it could be. She emphasised that the SPCB wished to work with the Branch Executive Committee to ensure that the Scottish Parliament’s engagement was as effective as possible.

It was noted that the TAP2 programme with the National Assembly of Malawi had finished and now was the ideal time to review if this activity had achieved the initial aims and objectives. There were also concerns that the Parliamentary Pairing Initiative had not fully met the objectives which were set out at the start of the scheme. However, it was also noted that the interns’ programme was deemed extremely worthwhile. However there was no concrete evidence to ascertain if improvements had been made to the workings of the Assembly as a direct result of the programme. It was further suggested that officials should follow up with those interns who had taken part in the programme to establish if the intern programme had resulted in any impacts for the National Assembly. Patricia Ferguson MSP suggested that it might be worth exploring the possibility of establishing an academy for parliamentary officials. This would provide a platform for officials to become involved the programme, and possibly of providing a mentoring service for Malawian officials. It was suggested that officials accompanying the interns during their placement at the Scottish Parliament could visit the National Assembly to ascertain how the programme was strengthening practices and procedures within the National Assembly. The Clerk/Chief Executive suggested that this idea could be developed post 2014 elections in Malawi.

A discussion took place about the next proposed engagement with the National Assembly of Malawi. A Scottish Parliament delegation would be due to visit the National Assembly following the Malawian elections in May 2014. It was proposed that a joint SPCB and CPA Scotland Branch delegation should visit Malawi with a senior official to deliver post-election workshops, if invited to do so by the Malawian Speaker. It was further proposed that this delegation could possibly conduct a scoping exercise on how to proceed in the future. The Branch Secretary was asked to provide a paper setting out a proposal for such a visit to the National Assembly post-election.

Lastly, it was agreed that the Secretary would provide a paper at a future meeting, for consideration by both the Branch Executive Committee and the SPCB, which would explore the options on how best the Scottish Parliament could assist the National Assembly strengthen parliamentary democracy in the future.

5. **Forward Programme of Activities / Financial Paper**

No applications from MSPs had been received in relation to attending the 25th Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar in Tanzania taking place from 25 to 31 May 2014 but it was also noted that it was not yet known whether the Branch would have
a place at the seminar. It was therefore agreed that the Branch would wait to see if they received a place at the seminar and would then re-consider the position.

It was further agreed that the Branch Secretary would write to other CPA Branches inviting Members who are coming to the Commonwealth Games to visit the Parliament whilst in Scotland.

It was also agreed that the Members of the Branch Executive Committee would attend the British Islands and Mediterranean Region Annual Conference which will take place in Cardiff from 28 to 29 May 2014.

It was also agreed that agreement to hold a Members Debate on the Commonwealth Day theme *(Team Commonwealth)* should be sought. The Branch Secretary was asked to look at the possibility of arranging a low key reception for Members. It was further agreed that if a Members’ debate and reception could be arranged, the Glasgow 2014 Ltd team should be invited to bring the mascot to the event.

If arrangements could be put in place, it was also agreed that officials from GlobalScot could be invited to the debate and reception.

6. **Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Group**

This item was deferred.

7. **Glasgow 2014: 33/Fifty Programme**

Members of the Branch Executive Committee agreed that arrangements should be made to facilitate a visit of up to 2 participants in the 33/Fifty Youth Leadership Programme on 19 July 2014. It was noted that the Scottish Parliament would be in recess. However, it was agreed that at least one member of the CPA Scotland Branch Executive Committee would meet the group and that MSPs with an interest in low-carbon policies would also be approached to meet the group. It was further agreed that a tour of the building could be offered with a focus on the environmentally friendly features of the building and a Q&A session with MSPs be offered to the group.

8. **Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians BIMR CWP Conference**

The Members of the Branch Executive Committee were content with the arrangements made so far in relation to the BIMRCWP Conference. The Media Relations Officer outlined the communications plan which was agreed. Members of the Branch Executive Committee also agreed to meet informally to discuss their roles during the conference.

9. **AWEPA**
Agenda Item 2

26 March 2014

CPA Paper/S4/13-14/5/DM

It was agreed not to take forward any further involvement in AWEPA through the CPA Branch due to the potential for duplication of activity which the Branch was already supporting.

10. CPA Mentoring Programme

Due to time constraints, this item was not discussed at any length and it was agreed that the matter should be decided by e-mail.

11. Any Other Business

No matters were raised under this item.

12. Dates of next meetings

- Wed 26 February 2014 at 12.45pm in Room Q1.04
- Wed 26 March 2014 at 12.45pm in Room Q1.04
- 30 April 2014 at 12.45pm in Room Q1.04
- 28 May 2014 at 12.45pm in Room Q1.04
- 19 June 2014 Annual General Meeting at 1.00pm TBC
- 25 June 2014 at 12.45pm in Room Q1.04

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