MINUTES OF THE 5th MEETING OF CPA SCOTLAND BRANCH
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3 MARCH 2010 IN
ROOM Q1.04 QBH at 12.45pm

Present: Karen Gillon MSP (Chair)
Jaime Stone MSP
Sandra White MSP
Margaret Neal (Secretary)

In attendance: Billy McLaren, Senior Parliamentary Relations Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Ted Brocklebank MSP.

2. Minutes from 4th Meeting and Matters Arising

The Secretary was asked to check that a letter had been sent to the Clerk/Chief Executive to ensure that the recommendations made in the Australia/New Zealand visit report were followed through.

Action (5.1): Secretary to check that PPS/PO had issued memo to C/CE.

3. CPA Governance

The Branch Executive Committee considered the BIMR Working Group Paper on CPA Governance and concluded that the proposal for setting up an Internal Audit Committee seemed to incorporate most of the recognised mechanisms for good corporate governance. No comments were provided to feedback to the Regional Secretary or to the BIMR representative. The Branch Executive Committee agreed to be kept in close touch with developments in this area and that CPA Scotland should contribute where appropriate.
4. **Malawi visit (Saturday 13 – Sunday 21 Feb 2010)**

*Oral update from Karen Gillon MSP*

Ms Gillon advised the Branch Executive Committee that the visit had went extremely well. A full programme had been organised involving more than 1200 miles of road travel. Ms Gillon reported that over 40 MPs attended the joint workshop with Fiona Hyslop on the changing role of parliamentarians. 23 Members attended the effective use of the media workshops in Blantyre, 15 Members in Lilongwe and 10 Members in Mzuzu. Feedback from attendees had been positive and there was scope to develop a TAP 2 project to build on the work started during the visit.

The Parliamentary Pilot Pairing Initiative (PPPI) had been arranged between 10 sets of partners. The geographic spread and selection of Members had been determined by the National Assembly. The original proposal had involved 9 partners however during this visit this had been increase to 10, at the request of the delegation, to reflect the Scottish activity in the northern region of Malawi.

Ms Gillon also reported that the delegation had been invited to attend a meeting of the Committee of Governance (CoG) which had taken place during the visit. The Committee on Governance comprises all development partners in Malawi providing support to governance. Currently the main issue for discussion between development partners and the Parliament is on the development of the Strategic Plan (2010 - 2014), which is being developed with support from UNDP and is due to be completed by March 2010. This should form the basis of all CoG support. Donors are planning to align behind the activities in this plan and to coordinate support better.

Ms Gillon had informed the CoG that CPA Scotland considered the branch to be partners with the National Assembly rather than donors. However the point was made that CPA Scotland were keen not to duplicate efforts made by others and would be happy to assist the efforts of members of the Committee wherever possible.

The meeting was interesting and informative. It broadened the understanding of the delegation on the efforts the international donor community is making to strengthen the National Assembly of Malawi.

The delegation had updated the group on the Parliamentary Pilot Pairing Initiative and DfID offered to facilitate video conferencing between the legislatures.

The courtesy call with the Speaker of the NAM had also went well. The Speaker is keen to continue the partnership and outlined some areas where he felt assistance could be provided. The Speaker mentioned it was a priority for the NAM to provide computers and training particularly for Chairs of Committees. The Speaker was also keen to provide learning opportunities for new Members on a range of topics particularly since feedback from MPs on the workshops had been positive. Conversations with MPs had suggested
that the “Changing Role of Parliamentarians” workshop and the “Effective use of the Media” workshops had been interesting, informative and well received by Members. A discussion took place about next steps to take on the learning outcomes from these workshops. A menu of possible future areas for collaboration would be highlighted in the draft visit report which would be available for discussion at the next Branch Executive Committee meeting.

Ms Gillon also advised that it was likely that the Branch President would receive an invitation to attend the opening ceremony for the new parliament building in May 2010.

Ms Gillon also was of the opinion that engagement with Members would prove invaluable in the future now that direct contact had been established.

Ms Gillon advised Members that both Michael Matheson and herself would meet the Clerk/Chief Executive to update him about the visit as it was likely SPCB staff would be involved in future activity.

Action (5.2): Secretary to draft visit report in time for the next Branch Executive Committee meeting.

Action (5.3): Ms Gillon to update Branch Executive Committee on discussions with the C/CE.

Action (5.4): The Secretary to draft a thank you letter to the Speaker and set out where the Scottish Parliament might help in the future and re-affirm that we are keen to continue with collaboration.

5. **UKIRO evaluation report on the visit by the PSC of the National Assembly of Malawi in November 2009.**  
CPA/S3/09-10/5/9

The Branch Executive Committee noted the contents of the report and asked the Secretary to put on record their thanks to the Parliamentary Relations Officer for providing an evaluation report for the visit.

6. **CPA resources and forward programme of activity – review**  
CPA/S3/09-10/5/10

The Committee discussed the updated forward plan of activity. Main points included:

- Fuel costs in Malawi were exceedingly high however the overall cost for the visit to Malawi would be within budget.
- Commonwealth Day celebrations would be modest and it was likely savings would be made from that event.
- The impact of the revised inward visits policy was beginning to show with a reduction in the number of inward visits from Commonwealth countries which in turn would reduce hospitality costs.
The Branch Executive Committee was generally content with the forward programme.

7. **41st BIMR Regional Conference, Isle of Man: Monday 10 May to Friday 14 May**  
   **CPA/S3/09-10/4/7 Revised**

The Committee considered amendments and approved the draft notice to Members inviting applications.

The Branch Executive Committee expressed concern that the Isle of Man Branch intended to include a cultural day free of charge which seemed to contravene the decision made at the BIMR AGM in Guernsey. The Branch Executive Committee agreed that Members of CPA Scotland Branch should be asked not to participate in the cultural day. Furthermore the Secretary was asked to ascertain if the Isle of Man Branch received permission before the decision was made at the AGM in Guernsey.

The Branch Executive Committee agreed that the delegation when selected would be briefed by the Branch Executive Committee before attending the Conference.

Action (5.5): The Secretary was asked to contact the Regional Secretary to ask why a free cultural day had been included in the programme and to ascertain if the Isle of Man Branch received permission before the decision was made at the AGM in Guernsey.

8. **Commonwealth Day 2010**

The Secretary reported that the Consul Generals and Honorary Consuls from Commonwealth countries had been invited to attend a dinner hosted by the Presiding Officer. UKIRO would provide a briefing note prior to the dinner outlining objectives aligned to the revised international strategy which would provide focus for discussion during the dinner.

Sandra White reported that she had lodged the motion and asked the Secretary to provide some bullet points around the theme for inclusion in the opening speech.

Action (5.6): The Secretary to provide bullet points/support to members of the Branch Executive Committee in relation to the Members’ Debate in the usual way upon request.

9. **Any other business**

(i) **Swaziland/Gambia**

The Secretary advised that an informal approach from the CPA had been received to provide technical assistance to either the parliaments of the Gambia or Swaziland. To date no detail had been provided however it was
envisaged that this assistance would be a one-off and that there was no expectation that CPA Scotland would maintain or grow a relationship.

The Branch Executive Committee agreed that this was an interesting idea and asked the Secretary to obtain more detail before the visit by the Secretary-General on 24 March.

Karen Gillon raised concerns, that given the likely increase in activity over the next 12 months with the National Assembly of Malawi, there could be resource implications - particularly for the branch secretariat - however was content for the Secretary to find out more detail of what would be involved.

The Branch Executive Committee agreed that the Secretary should note interest in Scotland Branch participating in the project but with no commitment at this stage.

Action (5.6): The Secretary to contact CPA Secretariat for more detail about the TAP before the visit by the Secretary-General on 24 March and to note interest in Scotland Branch participating but with no commitment at this stage.

(ii) CPA Branch Subscriptions

The Secretary tabled the letter received from the CPA setting out ideas for revising the formula for setting annual subscriptions for branches. The Secretary highlighted that figures for sub-state branches had not been included in the lists; however, methodology 2 as outlined seemed to be the cheapest option for Scotland Branch if the increases for CPA UK were passed on proportionately to the devolved branches. The Secretary advised that methodology 3 was the fairest option but would likely work out more expensive. The Branch Executive Committee were of the view that branches who could afford to pay more should pay more. The Secretary was asked to contact the CPA to ascertain if they could calculate what Scotland Branch might pay.

The Senior Parliamentary Relations Officer suggested that the CPA might wish to consider Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics if UN statistics for the devolved branches are not available to calculate revised costs for Scotland Branch under methodology 3.

Given that the deadline for a response was before the next meeting the Branch Executive Committee agreed that the Secretary should e-mail Executive Committee Members with updated information.

Action (5.7): The Secretary to contact the CPA to ascertain if they could calculate what Scotland Branch might pay and to relay updated information to Members of the Branch Executive Committee by e-mail.
10. Dates of future meetings

- Wednesday 28 April, 12.45pm to 1.45pm, Room Q1.04, Jamie Stone MSP to chair
- Wednesday 26 May, 12.45pm to 1.45pm, Room Q1.04, Sandra White MSP to chair
- Wednesday 23 June, 1.00pm - 1.45pm, AGM - CR1, Presiding Officer will chair

The Branch Executive Committee agreed that the AGM should take place in Committee Room 1 to avoid difficulties which might arise if the Chamber is required.

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