MINUTES OF MEETING OF CPA SCOTLAND BRANCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 12 NOVEMBER 1.45PM ROOM TG.22, SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

Present: Ted Brocklebank MSP
Karen Gillon (Chair)
Jamie Stone MSP

In attendance: Paul Grice, Clerk/CE
Jane McEwan, PPS/Presiding Officer
Billy McLaren, UK & International Relations Office (UKIRO)

1. Apologies

1.1. Sandra White MSP, Margaret Neal (Secretary).

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

2.1. Minutes were not yet available.

Action (1): Secretary to progress and circulate to Members.

3. Matters Arising

3.1. As above.

4. CPA Annual Plenary Conference and Society of Clerks-at-The-Table: Tanzania, 1-6 October 2009

4.1. Paul Grice had attended the conference and produced a very helpful report – attached at Annex A, for information. The Group discussed a number of points related to the report, including:

- the useful contacts made
- the idea of extending an invite from the Presiding Officer to the Secretary General, Dr William F. Shija, to visit Scotland
- participation in the Commonwealth Conversation, and
- governance issues.

4.2. Given the ground covered at the Conference(s) it was agreed there is a high importance for a political presence at next year’s annual event in Kenya, expected to be September/October.
**Action (2):** UKIRO to prepare a draft letter for Presiding Officer (cleared through CPA Executive members) inviting the Secretary General of CPA to visit Scotland.

**Action (3):** UKIRO to urgently prepare a response letter for Presiding Officer (cleared through CPA Executive members) on the Commonwealth Conversation.

**Action (4):** UKIRO to report back on the final list of names from Malawian delegation that attended the Conference in Tanzania.

5. **Discussion and Evaluation of Recent Visit of Malawian Parliamentary Standards Commissioners to Scotland**

5.1. The chair passed on her thanks to UKUKIRO for the new approach on briefing used for this visit and the subsequent evaluation of the visit now produced. The evaluation generated a number of discussion points for the next item of business.

6. **Discussion on proposed visit to Malawi of Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government in February**

6.1. The Chair outlined a proposal for a joint Scottish Parliament/Scottish Government event in Malawi in the February Recess. Following discussions with the Government Minister (Mike Russell MSP) the principle is to hold an event (as part of the Government’s wider visit programme in February) on the effective transference of Members’ roles between the governing party and in opposition. It is felt this would be timely given that the recent Malawian elections and the resulting turnover of Members.

6.2. As Mike Russell MSP and Karen Gillon MSP had effectively shadowed each other, during various periods of their respective parties being in government/opposition, it was agreed this would make for a unique partnership to highlight under a visit programme.

After discussion a number of areas were agreed to enable the visit to now progress to a full project plan:

- Karen Gillon MSP should lead the delegation as a cross-party representative of the CPA Scotland branch.
- An additional Member should also be invited to attend.
- The event would be for 2 days – with one day beforehand possibly focusing on the twinning presentations given to date.
- On twinning we should focus on around a dozen members, looking at linking up Members with North/South/Central geographical focus; with Urban/Rural interests and involving a broad range across all parties.
• The second day would involve the full participation of the Minister.
• The programme should also provide the opportunity for events at start and end, such as paying a visit to a local programme helping women/young people in literacy and numeracy skills (building up the principles around a second TAP - see below); use of the Mothers Union; visiting the constituencies of the Parliamentary Service Commissioners, as a follow-up to their recent visit. Other suggestions could be taken forward and a number of other ideas have been proposed.
• Karen Gillon’s intern (who has Malawian experience) will also attend the visit, with all costs met by that individual herself.
• The Group also agreed with Paul that we build on the work that our broadcasting unit had started, in the most recent visit. He felt that part of the programme could have direct involvement and attendance by a member of the broadcasting unit and will be keen to explore that within the plan. The NAM had also expressed interest in media handling and corporate planning.

6.3. The Group also agreed that we should make a formal bid for a new programme of funding from the CPA (a technical assistance programme known as TAP). The new TAP would build on the successes and evaluation of the previous 3 year TAP, with a focus moving to the following:

• Assistance for women’s groups at parliamentary level, in particular supporting newly elected Members and through a woman’s caucus.
• Assistance in Malawian society to help promote the role and confidence of women to engage with parliamentary issues.
• Assistance for hard to reach young people, mirroring our efforts in Scotland to engage this group in the parliamentary process and efforts around Youth Parliamentarians.
• A focus on information and advice and not direct financial support.
• Building on the twining arrangements between MSPs and Malawian MPs, already proposed.
• As a milestone to work to we should try to progress this in time for the new Malawian Parliament opening (indicated at present for around June 2010) and the setting of Malawi’s first national budget, possibly as part of another delegation attending that event at invitation of the NAM.

**Action (5):** UKIRO to establish email contacts in Malawi for the Government and Opposition Chief Whips and recent Parliamentary Service Commissioners (perhaps through the Clerk or recent accompanying officials).

**Action (6):** UKIRO to draft letter using above contacts, for Karen Gillon MSP to send on to help progress twinning arrangements, prior to visit in February. Secretary to include *Twinning Form* previously developed.
Action (7): Secretary to discuss arrangements with Karen Gillon MSP on another volunteer Member, from across the Parliament, to be nominated for the visit.

7. AOB

7.1. The Group agreed to a suggestion from the Events and Exhibitions Team that the CPA Scotland Branch support a panel event for next year's Festival of Politics – this would hopefully be a follow-up to this year's Annie Lennox event and she hopes to return. This could link into the proposed new TAP programme to assist women and young people in the parliamentary process.

Action (8): UKIRO to work with EET and PO’s office to build up proposed activity for a CPA sponsored event with Annie Lennox at the Festival of Politics.

7.2. It was also agreed that there should be urgent follow-up to the planning of a visit to Stormont in Northern Ireland, as the invitation had been offered some time ago.

Action (9): UKIRO to get in touch with colleagues in Northern Ireland to develop a visit programme for next year.

8. Dates of next meetings

Action (10): Secretary to schedule a meeting for before the Christmas break, which the Presiding Officer would attend to feedback on the Australia and New Zealand visit programme. A further meeting should be arranged for March, to discuss feedback on Malawi and 2 further meetings arranged early in diaries to the Summer break for 2010.
Annex A

20091103 CPA letter.doc (59 KB)

Tanzania report.doc (105 KB)