

REPORT
ON

THE PARTICIPATION OF
INDIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

AT THE

58th COMMONWEALTH
PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

IN COLOMBO (SRI LANKA)
7-15 SEPTEMBER, 2012

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LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

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PREFACE

The CPA is an Association of Commonwealth Parliamentarians which pursues the positive ideals of Parliamentary democracy, rule of law, individual rights and freedoms.

CPA organizes various programmes to provide platform for regular consultation among Commonwealth members, fostering co-operation and understanding and promoting the study of respect for good Parliamentary practice.

The 58th annual CPA Conference was hosted by the Parliament of Sri Lanka from 7-15 September, 2012. About 550 Members and officials of Parliaments and Legislatures from approximately 170 Commonwealth nations, States, provinces and territories attended the Conference.

An Indian Parliamentary delegation was led by Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha to the 58th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. This report has been prepared highlighting the issues discussed in the Conference.

I hope the information contained in the report will be useful for Members while deliberating on similar issues in the Parliament or in any other relevant forum.

New Delhi
Dated
Agrahayan 1934 (Saka)

T.K. Viswanathan
Secretary-General,
Lok Sabha

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1. Introduction

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is composed of Branches formed in Legislatures in Commonwealth countries which subscribe to Parliamentary Democracy. At present there are 175 active national, State, provincial and territorial Parliaments are its member. Approximately 17,000 parliamentarians are Members of the Association.

2. The Mission of the CPA is to promote the advancement of Parliamentary democracy. CPA organizes various programmes like annual conferences, seminar and workshops on certain issues. CPA programmes provide the platform to the members of the Commonwealth Members to discuss, interact on burning issues concerning Parliament and humanity at large.

3. CPA has organized biennial Conference from 1948 to 1959. Since 1961 annual conferences are held. The summary of the main views expressed in conference debates is sent to Members, Commonwealth Governments, the United Nations and international agencies.

4. The 58th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference was hosted by the Parliament of Sri Lanka. Along with the Plenary Conferences the meeting of the CPA Executive Committee, meeting of CWP Steering Committee was held at the time of the Conference. The Conference was held in Colombo from 7 to 15 September, 2012.

5. An Indian Parliamentary delegation led by Smt. Meira Kumar, Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha attended the Conference.

6. From India Union CPA Branch following delegates attended the Conference:

1.	Smt. Meira Kumar, Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha	Leader of the Delegation and Regional Representative from CPA India Region
DELEGATES		
2.	Prof. P.J. Kurien, Deputy Chairman	Rajya Sabha
3.	Shri Pinaki Misra, MP	Lok Sabha
4.	Shri Dip Gogoi, MP	Lok Sabha
5.	Shri Kaptan Singh Solanki, MP	Rajya Sabha
6.	Shri T K Viswanathan, Secretary – General, Lok Sabha and Regional Secretary, CPA India Region & Member of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table	
7.	Shri S. Bal Shekar Additional Secretary Lok Sabha Secretariat	Secretary to the Delegation

DELEGATE & CWP STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER		
8.	Smt. Sumitra Mahajan	Lok Sabha
SOCIETY OF CLERKS-AT-THE-TABLE		
9.	Dr. Vivek Kumar Agnihotri, Secretary – General, Rajya Sabha & Member of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table	
OBSERVERS		
10.	Smt. Shalini Singh, Private Secretary to Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha	
11.	Shri Badruddin Khan, OSD to HDC, Rajya Sabha	
12.	Shri Surya Ranjan Mishra, Deputy Secretary, Lok Sabha Secretariat	
13.	Shri Rakesh Anand, Deputy Director, Rajya Sabha Secretariat	
14.	Shri Gian Chand, Protocol Officer, Rajya Sabha Secretariat	

15.	Shri Pankaj Kumar Sharma, Protocol Officer, Lok Sabha Secretariat	
16.	Shri Rajesh Mohan, Protocol Officer, Lok Sabha Secretariat	
17.	Smt. Deepti Talukdar LA to Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha	

Itinerary of the delegates are placed at Annexure I to VI.

Delegates from State CPA Branches (State Legislatures) also attended the Conference. The details are placed at Annexure- VII

2. Meeting of the CPA Executive Committee

7. The Constitution of CPA vests in an Executive Committee the control and management of the activities and business of the Association. The Committee consists of 35 members comprising the Officers of the Association, the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and three Regional Representatives from each of Region except Africa, which due to its size, has six Representatives. From India Smt. Meira Kumar, Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha, Sardar Harmohinder Singh Chattha, Minister of Finance, Government of Haryana and Shri Kiyanielie Peseyie, Speaker, Nagaland Legislative Assembly are the three members in the CPA Executive Committee.

8. Due to some engagement in India Smt. Meira Kumar, Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha could not attend the meeting. In her place Shri Dip Gogoi, MP (Lok Sabha) attended the CPA Executive Committee Meeting as an alternate member. A copy of the agenda of the CPA Executive Committee is placed at Annexure - VIII.

3. Meeting of the CWP Steering Committee

9. The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Steering Committee has 10 members. One member from each of the nine regions and an elected Chairperson. A President is nominated from the host branch.

10. Smt. Chandresh Kumari Katoch, MP (Lok Sabha) is the member from CPA India Region. Due to some engagement in India she could not attend the meeting and Smt. Sumitra Mahajan, MP (Lok Sabha), who was a delegate to the Conference, attended the CWP Steering Committee in her place. Smt. Sumitra Mahajan presented a report on the regional developments on women related issues. In the report she highlighted that the Constitution of India enshrines the principle of gender equality. It was mentioned in the Report that the Indian Parliament has consistently endeavoured to translate the ideas and ideals of the Constitution into reality. Over the years a lot of women specific legislations have been passed by Parliament of India.

11. Gender Budgeting in India, role of National Commission for Women (NCW), Joint Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women was also highlighted in the Report. The Report was circulated to all the participants. Smt. Sumitra Mahajan, MP also mentioned that 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution in 1993 were landmark events as these amendments ensured one third post of members and chairpersons in all elected offices in local bodies in both rural and urban areas are reserved for women. On the basis of these amendments there are 2.8 million representatives stand elected to these local bodies out of which 36.9% are women. The programmes and policies pursued

by Government which directly and indirectly concern women empowerment was also highlighted.

12. CWP Steering Committee also discussed CWP Strategic Plan for 2012-15.

The Strategic Plan propose to focus on the following:

- Work, family, Work Balance and Domestic work
- Women and Social Media
- Women and Health
- Women and Entrepreneurship
- Women and the Informal Economy

13. One Workshop in the Plenary Conference was on the gender related issues suggested by the CWP. The topic in the Workshop 'F' was "Engaging Political Parties to Improve Gender-responsive Government".

4. Opening Ceremony

14. Official opening of the 58th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference was held on Tuesday 11th September, 2012 in “Nelum Poluna”, Mahinda Rajapaksa Theatre. The Conference was inaugurated by His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and Vice-Patron of CPA. Mr. Chamal Rajapaksa, MP, Speaker, Parliament of Sri Lanka and President of CPA; Shri Kamlesh Sharma, Secretary-General, Commonwealth; Sir Rt. Hon. Alan Haselhurst, Chairperson, CPA Executive Committee; Dr. William F. Shija, Secretary-General, CPA were also present in the opening ceremony.

15. H.E. the President mentioned the delegates about the evolving CPA since 1911. Sri Lanka is actively involved with CPA. The 58th CPA Conference was the third CPA Conference to be hosted by Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is also actively participating in the CPA Asia Region and hosted a Regional Conference in the year, 2011. H.E. President mentioned that Sri Lanka has successfully curbed the terrorism and now intend to strengthen the bonds of friendship among all communities. He thanked all the Commonwealth nations who have supported Sri Lanka to fight terrorism.

16. On the topics earmarked for the Conference, H.E. President mentioned that all these topics are of great relevance to democracies. Praising the role of CPA H.E. President mentioned that CPA has achieved success in realizing the aims of the Strategic Plan 2008-12. While CPA will finalize its strategic plan for next four years, it should not confine itself to the theories rather than deal with practical difficulties faced by the common people. He also cautioned the

delegates that while seeking the advancement of democracy different values and cultures of different countries should also be appreciated.

17. Addressing the gathering Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa, Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka and President of CPA mentioned that members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association are bonded by a shared history. He also described how Sri Lanka has overcome the challenges of terrorism by fighting it for about 30 years.

18. Hon. Mninwa Johannes Mahalangu, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, South Africa and Vice-President of CPA also addressed the gathering. He emphasized on the relevance of CPA which brings together countries with diverse social, political and economic backgrounds. He emphasized on the theme of the Conference. He commended all the participants to commit to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As public representatives all the Members of Parliament and Members of Legislatures are duty bound to see that resources that the nations have should be used effectively and efficiently for the development of people. Mr. Mahalangu also emphasized the role of CPA in pursuing the ideals of democracy, promoting good governance and respecting human rights and freedom. He encouraged CPA and Commonwealth to invest in its young people, educate them on the needs of democracy and growth. He also welcomed all the delegates to the 59th CP Conference to be held in South Africa in 2013.

19. Sir Alan Haselhurst, Chairperson, CPA Executive Committee also addressed the gathering. He praised the achievement of Sri Lanka being one of the most literate countries in the emerging world, economy growing at 8% low

unemployment, expanding industries. He also appreciated how Sri Lanka curbed terrorism and gaining peace for the people.

5. Workshops/Plenaries

Opening Plenary Session

20. The opening plenary session of the Conference was held on Tuesday 11th September, 2012. Secretary General of Commonwealth Shri Kamlesh Sharma and Secretary General of CPA Dr. William F. Shija addressed the gathering.

21. Dr. Shija mentioned that it is essential for CPA to come up with a dynamic process with the objective of promoting parliamentary democracy. Dr. Shija mentioned that the next Strategic Plan (2013-15) will be implemented through annual Business Plan with indicative and measurable objectives for implementation. Secretary General, CPA also gave details of CPA programmes like professional development Workshops for members and staff. CPA is encouraging participation of women representatives in CPA events. As the promotional events CPA organizes Annual Commonwealth Day Programme, Commonwealth Day and Youth Parliament, etc.

22. Hon. Shri Kamlesh Sharma, Secretary General, Commonwealth mentioned that CPA enhances the values of the Commonwealth with democracy, development and respect for diversity among the CPA countries. Parliaments lie at the heart of democracy and are held in high esteem in Commonwealth. Secretary General Commonwealth mentioned that Sri Lanka overcoming the forces of terrorism was a major achievement for Sri Lanka. Shri Kamlesh Sharma emphasized on the role and relationship of Government and opposition parties. Their relationship helps to create democratic framework, harmony and development. Democracy and development were

often referred to as the twin pillars by the Commonwealth. He was of the view that Parliament should be the primary forum where the voice of the people especially the poor and marginalized are heard.

The session also includes question and answer session.

Workshop A : Empowering Future Generations through access to Health, Education and Vocational Training.

23. The Workshop was Chaired by Hon Chandiana Weerakody, Deputy Speaker of the Sri Lanka Parliament. Prof. Carlo Fonseka, President of Sri Lanka Medical Council and the Chairman of National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol addressed the gathering on health. Prof. Foneska explained three reasons for progress of health care system in Sri Lanka:

- (i) Sri Lanka had inherited State intervention in health sector.
- (ii) Since 1931 universal franchise has been adopted and people have shrewdly used their voting power to extract more and more social power from competing governing elite.
- (iii) During World War-II State had vigorously intervened in food distribution and delivery of health care and this practice was continued after the war ended.

24. He was of the view that progress of health care system depended on the level of government intervention.

25. On education the discussion leader Dr. Sunil Jayantha Nawaratne, Secretary Ministry of Higher Education of Sri Lanka informed that education system in Sri Lanka is unique as it provides free education to all upto university level. Besides free education, free books, free uniforms, concessional transport are also provided.

26. Prof. Dayantha Wijeyesekera, Chairman, Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission and Chancellor of University of Vocational Technology

suggested that the degree syndrome post secondary education has to be eliminated and mindset has to be changed among secondary school students. Parliamentarians have great role in this area.

27. Delegates expressed interest to share the Sri Lankan experience of low unemployment rate, low infant and material mortality rates, adult literacy of 98% and consistent economic growth of around 6 % a year in recent years.

28. Shri Kaptan Singh Solanki, MP (Rajya Sabha) participated in the discussion.

**Workshop B : Should the Commonwealth Establish a Commissioner for
Democracy, the Rule of Law and Human Rights.**

29. The discussion in Workshop 'B' was Chaired by Hon. Marwick Khumalo, MP of Swaziland and Treasurer, CPA. Senator Fargoh Naseem of Pakistan and Mr. Hugh Bayley of UK were the Discussion Leaders.

30. The delegates were divided on the issue. Those in favour of the issue were of the view that the core values of the Commonwealth, as set out in the 1991 Harare Declaration are peace, democracy, global economic development, the Rule of Law and the liberty of individual citizens under the Law. The implementation of these values requires proper stewardship.

31. Those who spoke against the proposal mentioned that there were various voluntary organizations in the world including United Nations to ensure Human Rights, Democracy and the Rules of Law of the member countries. It was also viewed that such a move could create confusion among such organizations.

32. Shri Pinaki Mishra, MP (Lok Sabha) participated in the discussion and opposed the proposal.

Workshop C : The Politics of Constitution-making, the Role of Parliaments in Relation to the People.

33. Hon. Dr. Pambos Papageorgiou, MP (Cyprus) Chaired the above Workshop. Hon. Request Muntanga, MP (Zambia); Senator Lke Ekweremadu, (Nigeria), Hon. Prof. (Dr.) G.L. Peiris, MP (Sri Lanka) and Hon. David Musila, MP (Kenya) were the Discussion Leaders.

34. Hon. Muntanga was of the view that Constitution making process should represent the majority of the people and not only elite group. Constitution is the Supreme Law of a country and is a social contract between the rulers and the ruled. On the role of Parliament Mr. Muntanga mentioned that it should facilitate public involvement and provide citizens with a meaningful opportunity to be heard in the making of the laws that will govern them.

35. Sen. Ekweremadu stressed that a relationship between the people and parliamentary sovereignty was vital. Some factors negatively impact the Constitution making. These are inexperience, lack of knowledge of procedure, crisis of expectations and temptation to do so much at a time. Apathy, lack of democratic culture, ethnicity, lack of political will and lack of independence too are negative factors.

36. Parliament and people are related to each other on the basis of inclusiveness, participation, diversity, openness/transparency, accountability, autonomy and legitimacy. He was of the view that in a society which has limited experience with successful Constitutional governance the Constitution

makers must also popularize and educate the people about these concepts, for a people cannot be wedded to something which they do not understand.

37. Prof. G. L. Peiris, MP (Sri Lanka) mentioned that Parliament is the mirror of public opinion. He was of the opinion that Constitution should include a quota system for women with a view to providing women's rights.

38. Meaningful consultation with the people is crucial for building a Constitution's legitimacy so as the body of elected representative of the people, Parliament should ensure that it reflects the views of the people.

39. Members agreed that Constitution-making is a continuous process and it should be updated or re-visited to keep pace with social development.

40. Smt. Sumita Mahajan, MP (Lok Sabha) participated in the Workshop.

Workshop D : Ensuring Adequate Parliamentary Scrutiny of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

41. Hon. Dale Allison Graham, MLA (New Brunswick) Chaired the Workshop. The Discussion Leaders were Senator Stephen Parry (Australia); Senator Ian Gorst (Jersey); Senator Raynell Andrechuck (Canada) and Hon. Michael A. Peart (Jamaica).

42. The delegates in the Workshop acknowledged the complexity of dealing with foreign policy issues in Commonwealth countries, especially because this area has been in the exclusive domain of the executive arm of government and there is limited role of Parliament.

43. Foreign Policy is determined by country's national interests. Parliamentarians as the representatives of people should have say in determination of national interest.

44. Members emphasized on repositioning Parliamentary structures like Standing or Special Committees to make Parliamentary diplomacy through Parliamentary scrutiny.

45. Members were urged to share knowledge and experiences on best practices available.

46. Shri Harmohinder Singh Chatta, Cabinet Minister, Government of Haryana and member of the CPA Executive Committee was nominated to participate in the Workshop from CPA India Region.

Workshop E : The Role of Parliamentarians in Conflict Resolution and Peace-Building.

47. Hon. Julianna O' Connor-Connolly from Cayman Islands was the Chair of the Workshop. Mr. Devinder Shory, MP (Canada), Sri Allan Kemakez, MP (Solomon Islands), Hon. Datuk Ronald Kiandee, MP (Malaysia) were the Discussion Leaders.

48. Mr. Mitch O' Brian from World Bank Institute was an external expert.

49. The thrust of the views presented at the Workshop was that a Parliamentarian irrespective of being in Government or in opposition has the responsibility to establish peace and minimize violence at the grassroots level by practising the democratic values of the Parliament mainly the overseeing legislature and truce commissioning.

50. It was widely believed that the valuable experience of Parliamentarians in building understanding among communities should be exploited both domestically and internationally to air grievances, resolve disputes and prevent conflicts as well as to reconcile opposing forces to end conflicts and prevent them from erupting again.

51. The Workshop also noted that Parliament must also campaign to depoliticize and strengthen other institutions such as the judiciary, the police and security forces. Commissions such as those to prevent corruption and to protect human rights must be established or strengthened.

52. Hon (Prof.) P.J. Kurien, Deputy Chairman Rajya Sabha emphasized that Parliamentarians are collectively duty bound to take multifarious initiatives for

creating peace and stability and process the interests of the people. He mentioned that Representative Democracy, with adequate space for inclusiveness, is an effective tool to mitigate the various causes of conflicts and facilitate the process of peace building. Democracy facilitates dialogue at various levels to work out amicable solutions. In India Parliamentarians often act as a crucial link between the Government and the people in resolving conflicts in society as and when the situation so warrants.

53. In the conclusion it was agreed that peace building was the prime responsibility of the Parliamentarian and it could be achieved when they are motivated to act in the interests of the future of the Nation.

54. Datuk Ronald Kiandee from Malaysia mentioned that Parliamentarians proved a legitimate channel for identifying and meeting popular demands as they mediate among conflicting interests in society through peaceful means. Dispute resolution is an essential foundation for preserving a society and Parliamentarians can provide behind-the-scenes negotiations. He drew the attention of delegates to a study that food aid does not work, it can prolong violent conflicts it is meant to resolve.

Workshop F : Engaging Political Parties to improve Gender responsive governance

55. Dr. Hon. Perpetua Sudharsahani Fernandopulle, MP (Sri Lanka) Chaired the session. Smt. Meira Kumar, Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha; Hon'ble Lindiwe Maseko, MPL (Gauteng- South Africa); Senator Helen Polley (Australia) were the Discussion Leaders. Ms. Kemi Ogunsanya (Commonwealth Secretariat) was an external expert.

56. Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha participated in the Workshop as a Discussion Leader. Hon'ble Speaker mentioned that most of the member nations of CPA have already made sufficient constitutional or statutory provisions guaranteeing women their rights without any discrimination. Numerous legislative and policy initiatives have been taken across the nations with a view to facilitating gender responsive governance. Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha mentioned that in reality women still face discrimination. They lag behind men in capacities and development in almost all the fields – be it literacy, professional advancement, primary entrepreneurship and top-ranking employments, skills, training and access to financial and monetary resources. Despite being major contributors in the household work, they have very little say in family decisions, land and property rights, as also their own lives such as fertility and reproductive rights, education and career.

57. Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha mentioned that it has set the target for Governments to increase women's representation to a minimum of 30 per cent in decision-making positions. This can only be achieved by creating a conducive climate for women, including young women, to seek and advance

political careers. Other measures such as encouraging political parties to adopt, 30 per cent, target for women candidates as part of their manifestos and to provide leadership training for women can also be explored. Governments who have already achieved 30 per cent must strive for higher proportions.

58. Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha mentioned that the number of elected women representatives which was 22 in 1952 has increased to 59 in 15th Lok Sabha and from 15 to 26 in Rajya Sabha. In 1992-93 Indian parliament amended the Constitution to ensure that no less than 1/3rd of the total members and of the Chairpersons are women in all elected offices in local bodies. Since then women's participation in decision making has significantly increased. Fourteen States in India have already increased reservation of women in Panchayats to 50%.

59 Hon'ble Ms. Lindiwe Maseko emphasized the importance of political parties in engaging activities to find solutions regarding participation of women in the democratic process. She mentioned that gender equality was a fundamental necessity. Ms Maseko mentioned that African National Congress had 30% of women representation in 1995 in 2007 it was 50%.

60. The External Expert Ms Kemi mentioned that there is a tendency of women to vote a woman. She stressed that it was a timely requirement to bring woman forward in politics and that civil societies have an important role to play in monitoring that task.

61. It was agreed that all members of the community, including men in political roles, should be engaged to ensure that gender equality is not seen as

a “women’s issue” but as a fundamental precondition to democracy, development and diversity. Active support should be provided to women in leadership roles across the political divide thorough mentoring, training and implementing policies that achieve gender equality.

Workshop G : Terrorism- the threat to Democracy and Security

62. Workshop G on “Terrorism- the threat to Democracy and Security” was held on 12th September, 2012. The Workshop was moderated by Hon. Elijah Okupa, MP (Uganda). The Discussion Leaders were Hon. Jim Muhwezi Katugugu, MP (Uganda), Senator Syed Muzaffar Hussain Shah (Pakistan) and Ms. Irene Ng, MP (Singapore).

63. Initiating the discussion Hon. Jim Muhwezi Katugugu, MP (Uganda) mentioned that Governments have recognized the effectiveness of collective action in combating terrorism which is great hindrance to democracy. Mr. Katugugu also explained that poverty, unemployment, unbalanced development, unfair distribution of wealth, corruption, nepotism and gender imbalance create space for terrorism. The terrorists have no religion.

64. Senator Syed Muzaffar Hussain Shah of Pakistan mentioned that terrorism is no more a local problem as it has developed to become a global problem. Mr. Shah suggested that terrorists should be isolated and their funding should be blocked.

65. Ms. Irene Ng (Singapore) was of the view that terrorism is a ideological issue and not merely a law and order problem.

66. The delegates agreed that there should be zero tolerance towards terrorism by all the Governments. Members also mentioned that preventive measures against terrorism must address social distributive justice by implementing national policies to alleviate alienation and deprivation.

Offending countries must be isolated, and their funding and resources should be blocked.

67. Parliamentarians must reach out to the community and develop deeper relations with citizens.

68. Smt. Sumitra Mahajan, MP (Lok Sabha) and Shri Pinaki Misra, MP (Lok Sabha) participated in the Workshop.

Workshop H : Tackling youth unemployment.

69. Workshop H on “Tackling youth unemployment” was chaired by Dr. Nafisha Shah MNA (Pakistan). Two Discussion Leaders were Hon. David Amers, MP (UK) and Hon. Wade mark, MP (Trinidad & Tobago). Mr. Gregory de Paepe, Policy Analyst, Europe, Middle East and Africa Unit, OECD and Mr. Donglin Li, Country Director, ILO country office for Sri Lanka and Maldives were external experts.

70. According to Mr. Wade Mark there were 6 million unemployed youth in his country Trinidad and Tobago. This is due to instability of the social, economic and political system. He suggested programme for skill development.

71. Mr. David Amess, MP (UK) mentioned that unemployment problem was a global problem. He emphasized on vocational training. He informed that UK has allocated one billion pounds to vocational training under “Youth Contact Scheme” in 2012.

72. Mr. Donglin Li, mentioned that after the financial crisis in 2007 most of the countries of CPA were affected.

73. Shri Kaptan Singh Solanki, MP (Rajya Sabha) participated in the discussion.

74. Members participating in the Workshop agreed that as policy makers of their respective countries, it was their duty and responsibility to create employment opportunities to overcome youth unemployment problem. The role of private sector in creating jobs for the youth was emphasized. It was also felt that agriculture sector has capacity to absorb more labour.

75. Members emphasized that along with unemployment the issue of under employment should also be given adequate attention. Government sector is not able to absorb all the labour force.

76. Members also emphasized that along with unemployment, under unemployment should also get adequate attention. Government sector cannot absorb all the unemployment.

Final Plenary: The Role of Social Media in Modern Day Politics.

77. The final plenary was held on 14th September, 2012. Hon'ble Chamal Rajapaksa, Speaker, Parliament of Sri Lanka and President of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association chaired the Plenary. Dr. P.J. Kurien, Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha was a Discussion Leader. Mr. Russ Hiebert, MP (Canada), Prof. Tim Unwin (Commonwealth Telecommunication Organization) and Hon'ble Aminu Tambuwal, MHR (Nigeria) were the other Discussion Leaders.

78. Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha mentioned about the benefits of social media in the field of sharing information and connectivity. It provides platform to unite for a purpose or a cause. It offers low cost and user friendly means of conducting and ongoing dialogue between citizens and their representatives. This helps decision makers to have a more sophisticated and improved understanding of the public's interests and needs. This in turn helps in higher quality policies and programmes. As social media used mostly by the youth they can be involved in democratic process more actively. Government should use social media as a tool to promote public education and engagement. Dr. Kurien mentioned that the new technologies such as IT undoubtedly promote accountability transparency and public engagement with political leaders and institutions but there is a danger of transforming politics into a marketing game dominated by special interests and well resourced political actors.

6. General Assembly

79. The General Assembly of CPA met on 14th September, 2012 at BMICH. Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa Chaired the meeting as the President of CPA. Rt. Hon'ble Sir Alan Haselhurst, Chairperson, CPA Executive Committee; Dr. F. William Shija, Secretary-General CPA; Hon. Marwick T. Khumalo, Treasurer, CPA; Dr. Nafisha Shah, Vice-Chairperson, CPA Executive Committee were on the dais. Smt. Meira Kumar, Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha along with other members of the delegation from India attended the General Assembly.

80. A minute of silence was observed for the Parliamentarians and staff who have passed away and properties lost due to national disaster across the Commonwealth.

81. Minutes of the last meeting of General Assembly held in London was approved. A copy of the agenda of General Assembly is placed at Annexure-IX.

Following are the major items in the agenda which was approved:

- Report of the Executive Committee
- The Membership report
- Audited Accounts and Balance Sheets for the year ending on 31st December, 2011
- Report of the Working Party
- Secretary-General, CPA presented the Strategic Plan of the association for the year 2013-17
- General Assembly also received the report from the 32nd Conference of Members of Small Branches

- Report from Women Parliamentarians
- Report from the youth Parliament

82. Members retiring from the CPA Executive Committee were presented plaques acknowledged their service to the Association. Smt. Meira Kumar, Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha completed her term in the General Assembly and she also received a plaque.

7. Meeting of the Society of Clerks at the Table

83. The 49th Meeting of Society of Clerks was held on 12th and 14th September, 2012. Shri T.K. Vishwanathan, Secretary General, Lok Sabha and Dr. Vivek Agnihotri, Secretary General, Rajya Sabha participated in the Meetings.

84. Secretary General, Lok Sabha presented a Regional Development Report from India Region and also on the topic "Information Management: Changing Needs of Parliament". Dr. Agnihotri, Secretary General, Rajya Sabha presented a paper on "Profile of the Work of Secretaries General".

85. From State legislatures Secretaries attended the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table Meeting. List is placed at Annexure- X.

8. Social Functions

86. Indian delegation attended various social functions during their stay in Colombo. Dinner was hosted for the delegates by H.E. the President of Sri Lanka Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, Hon'ble Speaker of Parliament of Sri Lanka, Leader of Opposition, etc.

87. The host branch also arranged one day tour for delegates to the following places in groups:

- (i) Kandy
- (ii) Jaffna
- (iii) City Tour Colombo
- (iv) One day tour to Koggala
- (v) One day tour to Sigiriya

88. Indian delegates, except Hon'ble Speaker, joined tour as per their preference.

High Commission of India hosted a dinner for the delegates and other participants from India.

9. Bilateral Discussions

89. Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha called on H.E. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of Sri Lanka at his office Temple Trees. Other members of the delegation also accompanied Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha.

90. Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha appreciated the arrangement made by Government of Sri Lanka for the delegates attending the 58th CPC in Colombo. She thanked H.E. President of Sri Lanka for receiving her delegation. Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha expressed her happiness for the overwhelming response the sacred Kapilvastu Relics received in Sri Lanka. H.E. President thanked Government of India for agreeing to extend the period of exposition for the Relics by a week and conveyed that over 3.5 millions Sri Lankans had paid their respects to the Relics.

91. Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha welcomed H.E. President of Sri Lanka to India and she mentioned that it would be a useful opportunity to exchange views of common interest. Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha congratulated H.E. President on his party's victory at elections.

92. Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha referred to the visit of All party Parliamentary Delegation led by Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, Hon'ble Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha to Sri Lanka in April, 2012. This visit has generated an impression about the positive developments in Sri Lanka.

93. Hon'ble Rajapaksa briefed Indian delegation about the resettlement of IDP.

94. Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha called for greater cooperation in education and tourism. H.E. President mentioned that 1,75,000 Indian tourist has visited Sri Lanka last year.

95. Shri Pinaki Mishra, MP (Lok Sabha) referred to historical connection between Sri Lanka and Odisha and emphasized on people to people contact.

Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha also discussed bilateral issues with Hon'ble Prof. G.L. Peiris, Minister of External Affairs, Sri Lanka.

New Delhi

Dated

Agrahayan 1934 (Saka)

T.K. Viswanathan
Secretary-General,
Lok Sabha