



# CWP

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PARLIAMENTARIANS

30th anniversary year 1989-2019



## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) 2019 Newsletter



# CPA

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ASSOCIATION

[www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cwp](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cwp)

The **Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP)** is the network of women Members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's Parliaments and Legislatures. The CWP, as an integral part of the CPA, works for the better representation of women in legislatures and for the furtherance of gender equality across the Commonwealth.

The CWP network provides a means of building the capacity of women elected to Parliament to be more effective in their roles, improving the awareness and ability of all Parliamentarians, male and female, and encouraging them to include a gender perspective in all aspects of their role - legislation, oversight and representation - and helping Parliaments to become gender-sensitive institutions.

In 2019, the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The network was founded in 1989 to increase the number of female elected representatives in Parliaments and legislatures across the Commonwealth and to ensure that women's issues are brought to the fore in parliamentary debate and legislation.

## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP)

### Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

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### MESSAGE FROM THE CWP CHAIRPERSON

2018 marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), a milestone document consisting of international human rights law based on the ideas of freedom, equality and dignity, a living text which is universal in scope and relevant to all individuals. Over the years, most principles stated in the UDHR have been fulfilled, many lives have been changed, history has been impacted, and people have been able to secure essential rights and freedom.

Nevertheless, there are issues around human rights that remain contentious today, including women's and gender issues such as the right to participate in the economy, pay inequality and exploitation. The wellbeing of women and girls is vital to the wellbeing of any country. Societies must invest in gender equality and gender equity to realise women's rights, and to allow women to be agents of change in their communities.

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) plays a crucial role in supporting women Parliamentarians to raise issues on gender equality. The CWP provides a platform for

capacity building to women Parliamentarians in upholding gender equality and women's rights in their role to legislate, maintain oversight and represent their constituents. The work of CWP continues to focus on the reduction of the gender gap and to promote gender equality in all its aspects in the Commonwealth.

The CWP three-year Strategic Plan 2017-2019 continues to be delivered and we saw many events in 2018 to achieve these objectives. Key highlights included the participation of the CWP in the Commonwealth Women's Forum ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM) in April 2018 which saw many CWP Members speaking at the forum on a wide range of issues and reflecting on some of the global challenges still faced by women and the focus on SDG 5.

I am also delighted that the CWP Alumni Champion, Dr Lesley Clark from Queensland, Australia, has begun her new role and I hope that CWP Members will support the new CWP Alumni network which will provide a framework for former women Parliamentarians to deliver mentoring, coaching and advice to the benefit of sitting



Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Chairperson, Hon. Dr Dato Noraini Ahmad, MP (2016-2019)

women Parliamentarians and to act as a resource for the wider network.

In 2019, the CWP network will mark its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and reflect on the many successes of the past three decades. The CWP envisions a world where women and men have equal access to opportunities – a world where women's voices are recognised and respected. I urge all Parliamentarians, with the support of the CWP network, to pursue this vision with continued dynamism and enthusiasm. Together we can and will build the future we want, working towards a future of equal rights, equal opportunities and progress for all.

As CWP Chairperson, I am pleased to present the CWP 2019 newsletter, and I look forward to working with the network to build on the successes highlighted in these pages.



## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians - International Activities in 2018

### Gender equality and overcoming barriers to political participation emphasised at 2018 Commonwealth Women's Forum

The 2018 Commonwealth Women's Forum emphasised women's positive political, economic and societal contributions ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM) in the United Kingdom. The three-day Commonwealth Women's Forum (CWF) saw many Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) speaking at the forum on a wide range of issues.

The 2018 Commonwealth Women's Forum held a number of workshop sessions reflecting on some of the global challenges still faced by women, as part of a commitment to 'leave no one behind' in the Commonwealth journey to achieving gender equality by 2030. The Commonwealth Women's Forum saw international delegates from the Commonwealth and



globally highlighting women's positive political, economic and societal contributions and establishing mechanisms for how women and girls will be key to building sustainable and resilient societies.

Key highlights included speeches by: the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, HE Sheikh Hasina and the UK Secretary of State for International Development, Rt Hon. Penny Mordaunt, MP

speaking about education empowering girls; UK Home Secretary, Rt Hon. Amber Rudd, MP and Commonwealth Secretary-General, Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland speaking about the SDGs; and CPA Vice-President, Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda on violence against women in elections.

The CPA's focus on SDG 5 is highlighted most clearly in the work undertaken by the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) in its mission for greater representation of women in legislatures and the CPA and CWP held a joint session at the CWF on 'Women's Political Participation at All Levels' in partnership with the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) and the CPA UK Branch.



The session was chaired by Rt Hon. Helen Clark, former New Zealand Prime Minister, UNDP Administrator and current Patron of CLGF who led the discussion on the challenges facing women's political participation in local and national government. Helen Clark also invited delegates to contribute pledges on what they will do to empower women and girls for leadership roles in their communities.

The Mayor of Makeni, Sierra Leone, Sunkarie Kabba-Kamara gave the keynote address and spoke of her inspiration from the women in her community who believed that the return of local democracy would help them and how she had mentored young women in Makeni. Delegates then heard from guest panellists on their experiences.

Hon. Angela Thoko Didiza, MP, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Africa

Regional Chairperson stressed the need to demystify politics for women and said: *"Like any other job, you need a support system around you."* Councillor Buumba Malambo from Zambia highlighted the importance of education and mentoring for women - *"more women need to be sat at the table not in the audience when it comes to taking political office."*

Hon. Maria Browne, MP, Minister of Housing, Lands and Urban Renewal in Antigua and Barbuda spoke about the role of men in helping to empower women in politics and Councillor Bev Esslinger, Chair of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Standing Committee on International Relations from Edmonton, Canada spoke of the need for more women in local government to be encouraged to stand for elections.

The session was summarized by Sarah Childs, Professor of Politics and Gender at Birkbeck University

and Director of the Centre for the Study of British Politics & Public Life. Members of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) including the CPA Chairperson, Hon. Emilia Lifaka, MP (Cameroon) also asked questions at the session.

Members of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) also met in London, UK in the margins of the 2018 Commonwealth Women's Forum.

The final session of the Commonwealth Women's Forum saw HRH The Duchess of Cornwall speak about the problems of domestic abuse across the globe and how this hidden problem needs to be tackled. Jude Kelly from the WOW (Women of the World) organisation also addressed delegates at the close of the Forum.

The conclusions of the workshop sessions at the Commonwealth Women's Forum were fed into the outcomes document presented to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM) 2018 which took place later the same week.







## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians highlight gender equality and women's representation in Parliaments to mark International Women's Day 2018

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) marked International Women's Day 2018 by highlighting gender equality and increasing women's representation in Parliaments.

International Women's Day (8<sup>th</sup> March) is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity, with the theme of International Women's Day 2018 calling for 'Progress for Women and the Vote in the Commonwealth'.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians across the nine regions of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association celebrated International Women's Day 2018 with a wide range of events and activities. To mark International Women's Day 2018 in London, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians attended a high-level panel discussion hosted by the Commonwealth

Secretariat at Marlborough House in London, UK at which the Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland spoke about gender equality in the Commonwealth.

To mark the occasion, the CWP launched a new video in which the CWP Chairperson and women Parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth speak about the CWP's work in gender equality and their own experiences of being in Parliament. The video also highlights the importance of reaching the Commonwealth target of 30% female representation in Commonwealth legislatures and the vital role of networks such as the CWP to achieve change.

The CWP video features interviews with: the CWP Chairperson, Hon. Dr Noraini



Ahmad, MP (Malaysia); CWP President – Hon. Sagufta Yasmin, MP (Bangladesh); CWP Africa Region – Hon. Thoko Didiza, MP (South Africa); CWP Australia Region – Hon. Jennifer Aitchison, MP (New South Wales); CWP British Islands and Mediterranean Region – Hon. Samantha Sacramento, MP (Gibraltar); CWP Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region – Hon. Shirley Osborne, MLA (Montserrat); CWP Canada Region – Hon. Yasmin Ratansi, MP (Canada); CWP South East Asia Region – Hon. Datuk Hajah Normala binti Abdul Samad, MP (Malaysia); CWP Pacific Region – Hon. Poto Williams, MP (New Zealand).

**To view the video interviews with the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians please visit [www.cpahq.org/cpahq/iwd](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/iwd).**



## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Alumni Champion begins new role

In accordance with the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Strategic Plan, the CWP Alumni network has been launched by the CPA Headquarters with the objective of providing a framework for former women Parliamentarians to deliver mentoring, coaching and advice to the benefit of sitting women Parliamentarians and to act as a resource for the CPA.

Dr Lesley Clark, a former Member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland in Australia has been nominated to the position of CWP Alumni Champion and she will act as an Ambassador for the CWP network and will share her experience and expertise. Dr Lesley Clark was Member of Parliament from 1989 to 1995 and again from 1998 to 2006. Like many Members of Parliament, she was involved

with local politics before entering Parliament, serving as a member of the Mulgrave Shire Council. During her parliamentary career, she held many positions and served on numerous Parliamentary Committees, giving her a wealth of experience. Since retiring from Parliament, she has held the position of the Director of Equity and Diversity at James Cook University in Queensland and now works as a consultant in international development to increase women's parliamentary representation.

**To contact the CWP Alumni Champion please email [hq.sec@cpahq.org](mailto:hq.sec@cpahq.org).**



## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Chairperson at CPA Headquarters



The Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), Hon. Dato' Noraini Ahmad, MP (Malaysia) visited the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Headquarters Secretariat to be briefed on the ongoing activities of the CPA and CWP and also to meet with the CPA Secretary-General, Mr Akbar Khan and CPA Headquarters Secretariat staff in London, UK.

## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee teleconference



The Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), Hon. Dr Dato' Noraini Ahmed, MP (Malaysia) also held a teleconference of the CWP International Steering Committee during the margins of the CPA Executive Committee meetings held in London, UK in November 2018. The CWP Chairperson and CWP Steering Committee representatives from four out of nine CPA Regions joined the teleconference to discuss future activities on gender equality in Parliaments and planning for events in 2019.



## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians - Regional Strengthening Activities in 2018

### CWP AFRICA REGION

#### CWP Africa Workshop presents opportunity to share experiences in KwaZulu-Natal

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians representing over fifty national and provincial Parliaments from across the Africa Region gathered in January 2018 at Zimbali Conference Centre in Ballito, outside Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, to discuss the issues of gender equality, women empowerment and the emancipation of women. The two-day workshop, organised by the CWP Africa Region and hosted by the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature, was held under the theme of: 'Mechanisms to Strengthen Gender Equality'.

Opening the Regional Gender Sensitisation Workshop, the Chairperson of the CWP Africa Region, Hon. Thoko Didiza, MP (South Africa) said that the gathering was an opportunity for women Parliamentarians to share practices and experiences



on women's empowerment and emancipation as well as ideas on what can be done to increase women representation in parliament and in government. "The discussions in this workshop will motivate and inspire us to achieve the goal of gender equality and women empowerment," said Hon. Thoko Didiza.

The CWP members who attended the workshop included Speakers, Deputy Speakers, Committee Chairpersons as well as Members of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures. The CPA Africa Region Chairperson, Hon. Lindiwe Maseko, MP (South Africa)

who was one of the guest speakers said public policy was another mechanism for change and gender equality. She said that Parliamentarians should heed a call to ensure that the legislative process was open and transparent for women to participate.

Hon. Lydia Johnson, MPL, Speaker of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature told her colleagues to focus on what the different Parliaments were doing to increase women participation in development matters and ensuring gender equity. "Today, as we are meeting here under the theme: 'Mechanisms to Strengthen Gender Equality' we need to focus on what we as Parliamentarians are doing to strengthen mechanisms for gender equity. The CWP was founded to enable women Parliamentarians with an opportunity to discuss strategies to increase representation in Parliament and work towards mainstreaming of gender considerations in all CPA activities and programmes.



Many countries including South Africa have also made strides towards improving women's representation in Parliaments, but we are not yet there."

She also said that the establishment of the CWP was in response to the call of increasing women's representation in political institutions. "CWP international encourages us as women Parliamentarians to work and focus on equipping women Parliamentarians with the skills or tools to lobby for the better representation of women for women's issues; share experiences and information and learn about obstacles affecting women Parliamentarians and women's representation in politics."

South Africa's Communications Minister, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane also spoke at the workshop and said that women's participation in the Information Communications Technology (ICT) sector was woefully low, more especially in the countries of the South. "It is important to encourage young women to

consider careers in areas such as the science and ICT sectors. Studies show that women still have limited access to education and therefore fewer women are able to enter the ICT sector."

Emphasising the importance of ICT in accelerating women's empowerment, Kubayi-Ngubane said the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) called for speedy transformation in the ICT sector. "With the dawn of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, women's empowerment is no longer an option. We need to enact policies that will ensure that there is an increased and affordable access to internet connectivity. The Fourth Industrial Revolution can provide women with broader access to online services such as health care and education. It can eliminate the gender digital divide which remains most severe in poorer countries. Lack of awareness about the ICT benefits for women is a huge barrier to entry for women's empowerment."

#### Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Africa Regional Workshop in Eastern Cape discusses women's economic empowerment

The CWP Africa Region have held a three-day workshop

and women's parliament dialogue for Commonwealth Parliamentarians at the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature in South Africa from 18 to 20 June 2018. The objectives of the CWP Africa Regional workshop were to expand accountability by Members on women's representation; to mobilise the active participation of women in government programmes; to ensure the involvement of women in the Africa 2063 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals with a view to mainstream gender in the budgetary process. The dialogue also aimed to raise awareness and debate towards the emancipation of women and representation of women in leadership.

The Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Africa Region and the Deputy Chairperson of Committees in the South Africa Parliament, Hon. Thoko Didiza, MP, gave a keynote address under the theme of 'Women at the centre of radical economic transformation'.

Delegates attending the CWP Africa Regional workshop included Speakers and Members of Parliament, Government Ministers, Members of Provincial Legislatures, councillors from local municipalities, civic society organisations, academic institutions, businesses and student organisations.





## CWP AFRICA REGION

### Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians East Africa Regional Gender Sensitization Workshop in Uganda focuses on mainstreaming gender in parliamentary business

The CWP Africa Region held a four-day gender sensitization workshop for Commonwealth Parliamentarians from the East Africa region at the Parliament of Uganda in Kampala from 21 to 26 July 2018. The Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Africa Region and the Deputy Chairperson of Committees in the South Africa Parliament, Hon. Thoko Didiza, MP, gave a keynote address under the theme of 'Mainstreaming Gender in Parliamentary Business'.

The CWP workshop was attended by Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda and former Chairperson of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians International; Hon. Lindiwe Maseko, MP,



(South Africa), Chairperson of the CPA Africa Region; and Hon. Mary Karoro Okurut, Minister of Gender Labour and Social Development of Uganda. Delegates attending the CWP Africa Regional workshop included Speakers and Members of Parliament and Government Ministers.

### CWP Africa Region Chairperson supports Malawi Women's Role-modelling Conference to inspire future Women Parliamentarians ahead of elections

The Malawi Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare in partnership with UN Women, the UNDP and the South African High Commission to Malawi, has convened a role-modelling conference for aspirant women Parliamentarians from 20 to 21 November 2018, in Lilongwe, Malawi. In preparation for the upcoming

2019 Malawi Tripartite General Elections, the Ministry of Gender has been working with the Women's Caucus to encourage women to take part in the upcoming elections with over 800 women showing interest. This is in addition to the 32 women who are serving as Members of the Malawi Parliament, who have also expressed their intention to run for office once more.

As part of their strategies, the women's multiparty caucuses in Malawi have been visiting each other's constituencies as a way of supporting women and expressing solidarity.

The women's role-modelling conference was convened to give women the opportunity to share the dialogue amongst each other and to hear from those who are currently in Parliament, those who are aspiring to become Parliamentarians



and those that are part of the broader movement. The conference was held on the overall theme of: 'Women in Politics: Learning from Mama Albertina Sisulu: A woman of fortitude'. As part of celebrating the centenary of Mama Albertina Sisulu, an activist as well as one of the first women MPs during the first democratic Parliament in South Africa, the organisers of the conference also felt that sharing her life as a role model will inspire women aspirants.

The Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Africa Region, Hon. Angela Thoko Didiza, MP, spoke as the guest speaker at the conference about the work of the CWP and its programmes across the Africa Region and beyond. The CWP Chairperson also paid tribute to the life and work of Mama Albertina Sisulu.

During the conference, many women shared their experiences of campaigning

within their constituencies. One of the hinderances shared was the lack of support from political parties. In some instances, this lack of support extends further to lack of resources and mobilization for campaign materials. However, through commitment and determination towards women's emancipation, other women candidates have and do stand as independent

candidates and have won their seats.

Culture and religious stereotypes were seen as huge barriers to women's participation in Parliament. Malawi women have had support from the women's movement and non-governmental organisations as well as male champions for gender equality. Some academics and lawyers have been of great support in assisting women, even giving pro bono legal representation. At the end of the conference, many women delegates were confident that they will be able to gain some expertise through the experiences shared by serving women Parliamentarians, the Women' Caucus as well as the Ministry of Gender, Children and Disability, UN Women and the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Africa Region.







## CWP AFRICA REGION

### Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians help to strengthen Women's Parliamentary Caucuses in Lesotho

The Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Africa Region, Hon. Angela Thoko Didiza, MP, visited Lesotho to share experiences of gender equality and to help to strengthen the Women's Multi-Party Parliamentary Caucus. This initiative aims to help Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians to appreciate their role in advancing women's interests through legislation and to work across regional and national borders to share positive experiences that can advance women's interests and equality.

Addressing the Women's Parliamentary Caucus in Maseru, Lesotho on 31 August 2018 on the functions



of national women's caucuses, Hon. Angela Thoko Didiza, MP said that women can achieve more when they work together even when it is across party lines. The CWP Africa Region Chairperson also spoke about the work of the CWP and its programmes across the Africa Region and beyond and concluded by saying: *"It might be the end of Women's*

*Month in terms of the calendar, but every day must be Women's Month. Particularly with issues of gender-based violence, men need to partner with women to ensure that we actually remove this scourge in our society."*

In response, the Chairperson

of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus in Lesotho, Hon Matšepo Ramakoae said that women play an important role in society although they are aware of the many challenges facing Basotho women and girls which include poverty, child marriage, gender-based violence and maternal death.

Hon Matšepo Ramakoae said: *"We are many in numbers, we are the ones who go for elections, we are the ones who are bringing up families and if we don't do that, we are not going anywhere. So, if the Commonwealth has realised that, I think we are going somewhere else. We are going to go to a point where this region or the African continent will change from where it is, if we, as women, stand up to the point where we want to go."*



## CWP AUSTRALIA REGION

### International Women's Day 2018 in Australia Region

In New South Wales, Australia, Hon. Jenny Aitchison, MP, Chair of the CWP New South Wales Branch attended a UN Women International Women's Day Breakfast in Sydney where she heard from inspiring speaker, Janelle Weissman, Executive Director of UN Women Australia. The event was attended by many school students.

The CWP New South Wales also gathered women Members at Parliament House in Sydney and many attended the International Women's Day March through the streets of Sydney to campaign for an end to all violence and harassment towards women. and community and business leaders.

### Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Australia Region activities in 2018

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Australia Region continued their activities in 2018 including the *Stepping Up* Programme and other activities.

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians in the Parliament of Western Australia participated in 'Girls Takeover Parliament' in October 2018 to tie in with the International Day of the Girl Child. In 2018, the programme had expanded to include more participants and had partnered with the Girl Guides WA. The

programme aims to inspire more young women and girls to become involved in politics and empower them to run for office in the future.

The CWP representative at the New South Wales Parliament, Jenny Aitchison, MP worked with Tamara Smith, MP to produce a video featuring short interviews with women MPs from Pacific Island nations, who speak about their experiences of the Pacific Women Parliamentary Partnerships (PWPP) Programme which encourages more women Parliamentarians in the Pacific and partners women with Members of Parliament from the Australia Region.

With the focus globally on making Parliaments safe and respectful workplaces for women, the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Australia Region wrote to all Party Leaders and the Presiding Officers in each of the Parliaments of Australia to ask what action they are taking or intend to take to ensure that women work in safe and respectful environments.

In March 2018, the Parliament of Tasmania made history when it became the first Australian



State to return a female-majority House of Assembly. The results marked a significant change in the make-up of the Members of Parliament and was a significant moment in Tasmanian and Australian politics. It was hoped that the results would encourage more women to enter politics and stand for election in other jurisdictions.

The CWP Australia Region completed a busy year with the appointment of the CWP Australian Regional Chair, Hon. Michelle O'Byrne, MP (Tasmania) as the Vice-Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians International Steering Committee for the coming year.







## CWP BRITISH ISLANDS AND MEDITERRANEAN REGION

### Vote 100: UK Parliament celebrates a century of women's voices

In the United Kingdom, on 6 February 2018, to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Representation of the People Act 1918* and the first women to gain the vote, the UK Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Theresa May, MP officially launched the UK Parliament's *Vote 100* programme at a reception in Westminster Hall with all female Members of Parliament past and present being invited. The UK Parliament's *Vote 100* project is a year-long programme of events celebrating a century of women's voices in the UK Parliament, the journey towards universal suffrage and the first women MPs.

Immersive and interactive technologies were used to tell the story of women and Parliament. Lost historic spaces which were used to segregate women from the business of Parliament were

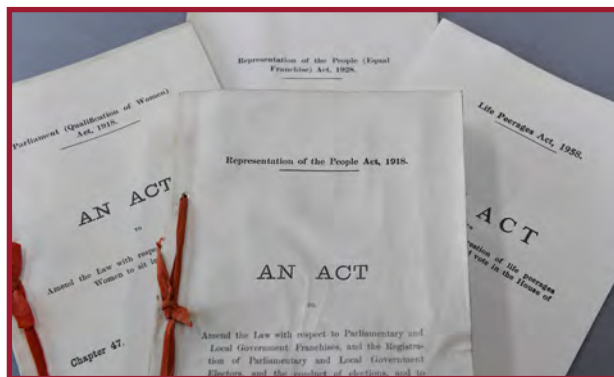


recreated and the story of those crucial campaigners and trailblazers retold. Throughout 2018, *Vote 100* celebrated milestones in women's suffrage and the contribution of women to politics in the UK, with a series of events, exhibitions and educational programmes including its main exhibition *Voice & Vote*.

The *Voice & Vote: Women's Place in Parliament* exhibition was staged in Westminster Hall and covered the campaign for votes for

women to the representation of women in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Throughout the exhibition, rare and previously unseen historic objects, pictures and archives from the Parliamentary collections and elsewhere were on show. Together with immersive and interactive technologies, the exhibition told the story of women in Parliament, the campaigning, the protests and the achievements. Women have now occupied the highest positions in the UK Parliament, including Rt Hon. Baroness Betty Boothroyd, the first woman Speaker of the House of Commons and Rt Hon. Baroness Hayman, the first Lord Speaker in the House of Lords.

Visit [www.parliament.uk/vote100](http://www.parliament.uk/vote100) for more information.



### Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Conference held in London

The United Kingdom Parliament and CPA UK Branch hosted the annual British Islands and Mediterranean Regional Conference for Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) on 26 and 27 April 2018. The theme of the conference was '*Women in Parliament: Past, Present and Future*' and it was attended by over 25 Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians from across the region. The conference focused on the centenary of the UK Parliament passing the *Representation of the People Act*, alongside topical issues such as sexual harassment and online abuse.

UK Parliamentarian, Hon. Meg Hillier, MP delivered the keynote address and spoke about her role as Chair of



the UK House of Commons Public Accounts Committee and the importance of gender representation on Parliamentary Committees. Rt. Hon. Maria Miller, MP spoke about her work as Chair of The UK House of Commons Women and Equalities Select Committee and conference delegates also heard from the CWP BIM Regional Chairperson, Joyce Watson, AM (Wales).

hear about the issues affecting young women. Members heard from London school girls about their experiences of social media and also examined how to engage young women and girls in politics.

### First statue of woman unveiled in UK's Parliament Square to commemorate 100 years of women's vote

The first statue of a woman has been unveiled in Parliament Square opposite the United Kingdom Parliament. The statue commemorates the life of the suffragist, Dame Millicent Fawcett, who campaigned for women's right to vote in the United Kingdom during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and is seen as one of the most influential feminists of the past 100 years.

The bronze casting, which has been created by the artist Gillian Wearing, features Millicent Fawcett holding a banner reading '*courage calls to courage everywhere*'. The UK Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Theresa May, MP, attended the







## **CWP BRITISH ISLANDS AND MEDITERRANEAN REGION**

statue's unveiling together with the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan. The UK Prime Minister said the work would serve as a reminder of Dame Millicent's extraordinary life and legacy. The statue was commissioned as part of the centenary of the *1918 Representation of the People Act* - which gave some women over the age of 30 the right to vote in the UK.

The statue unveiling has followed a long campaign by the feminist writer and activist Caroline Criado Perez, who also led a successful campaign last year for the writer Jane Austen to appear on the UK ten-pound note. She said she came up with the idea for the statue when she was out running on International Women's Day in 2016 and realised the only historical figures commemorated in the UK's Parliament Square were men. The eleven existing statues include Winston Churchill, Nelson Mandela, Abraham Lincoln, William Gladstone and Mahatma Gandhi.

Dame Millicent Fawcett formed the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies in 1897. The organisation used peaceful tactics to campaign, including non-violent demonstrations, petitions and the lobbying of MPs. They shared the same aims, but had different methods, to the suffragettes - the more radical group led by Emmeline Pankhurst. Dame Millicent died in 1929, a year after women



were granted the vote on equal terms to men.

### **Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians UK Members hold panel discussion on empowering women's voices during UK Parliament Week**

Members of the CWP from the CPA UK Branch held a panel discussion event as part of the UK Parliament's *'Parliament Week'* on *'Empowering Women's Voices in Parliament'*. The panel debate was held against the background of the *Vote100* campaign celebrating the centenary of women's suffrage in the UK.

The panellists were: Rt Hon. Maria Miller, MP, Chair of the Women and Equalities Select Committee who highlighted the Committee's work; Baroness Jenkin of Kennington who discussed the importance of encouraging and supporting women to stand for public office; and Hon. Angela Rayner,

MP who spoke about her journey in becoming an MP.

A key focus of the CWP's work is achieving representative democracies by helping women promote themselves in Parliaments across the Commonwealth, and developing the skills they need to succeed in their work. The panel event also looked at how women can effectively access, connect with and influence politics both outside and inside Parliament.

### **Celebrating Women's Suffrage in the Isle of Man**

The CPA Isle of Man Branch was proud to host the United Kingdom Suffragette Flag in September 2018, part of the Suffragette Flag Relay arranged by the UK Cabinet Office. The flag relay was a component of the one-year campaign of events through the Suffrage Centenary Volunteer group and activities linked to the centenary of the UK's *Representation of the People Act 1918*: the law that gave

some women the right to vote for the first time in the UK. The Suffrage Centenary Volunteer group won the Championing Gender Equality Award at the UK Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Awards 2018.

The visit of the Suffragette Flag provided an opportunity for the Isle of Man to reflect on its own journey towards universal suffrage. It is still not widely known that the Isle of Man was the first place in the world where women could vote in a national election. As a result of its constitutional position as a Crown Dependency, the Island was able to enact reforming legislation a generation before the same changes were made in the United Kingdom. By 1918, women householders in the Isle of Man had been able to vote in elections to the House of Keys for 37 years, and women leaseholders had been able to for 26 years. A year later, in 1919, all women residents in the Isle of Man would be given both the vote and the right to stand for election, regardless of their property status.

To celebrate enfranchisement and promote the commencement date of the *Isle of Man Equality Act 2017*, the UK Suffragette Flag was taken to Island secondary schools where the President of Tynwald and the Isle of Man's Equality Champion, Hon. Jane Poole-Wilson, MLC spoke to 16 and 17-year-olds to examine these important topics. The planned events were part of the outreach programme organised by Tynwald to encourage



involvement in democracy and to promote the right to representation.

Women in the Isle of Man may have had the right to stand for election for nearly 100 years but until the General Election in 2016 and the Legislative Council election in 2018, there had only been 12 women Members of Tynwald in total. Hon. Jane Poole-Wilson, MLC was re-elected to the Legislative Council in 2018, one of five women to be elected in March. As Equality Champion, she attended many of the planned events for the week. She said: *"The opportunity to share the history of women's suffrage and the fight for equal representation is an important story to tell. The Isle of Man was pioneering in giving women the right to vote in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As Equality Champion in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, I want to make sure discrimination is an issue of the past and we are an Island of opportunity and inclusion for all."*

A member of the Commonwealth Women

Parliamentarians (CWP), Hon. Ann Corlett, MHK attended University College Isle of Man to chat with students about her role as a Member of the House of Keys and her journey to becoming a Parliamentarian. This has started a new educational and outreach relationship between Tynwald and University College as students were inspired by the story of suffrage and their direct engagement with Mrs Corlett. She explained: *"Visiting University College Isle of Man and meeting young people at the start of their careers was a great opportunity to answer their questions and share my story as a female Parliamentarian. Talking candidly to students has led directly to follow-up engagement efforts by staff at University College and the Office of the Clerk of Tynwald, which gives me great hope for future female candidates standing for the House of Keys or Legislative Council."*







## CWP CANADA REGION



### International Women's Day 2018 in Canada Region

In Canada, the CPA Canada Federal Branch Chairperson, Hon. Yasmin Ratansi, MP attended a number of International Women's Day events including a community panel debate and an event with Equal Voices Canada.

The Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories in Canada celebrated

International Women's Day 2018 with Members' statements to the House focusing on the IWD theme and a motion titled *'Increasing women's participation in the Legislative Assembly'* was also proposed by Ms. Julie Green, MLA. During the sitting, the Clerks-at-the-Table in the chamber were all female for the session.

### Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Canada Region launch new website highlighting forthcoming priorities

During the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Canada Regional meetings which took place on 23 July 2018, the CPA Chairperson, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP together with CWP Canada Regional Chair, Hon. Laura Ross, MLA launched the new CWP Canada Regional website at [www.cwpcanada.ca](http://www.cwpcanada.ca).

The CWP Canada Regional Steering Committee meeting took place on 23 July 2018 during the 56<sup>th</sup> CPA Canada Regional Conference in Ottawa, Canada from 22 to 27 July 2018.

The CWP Canada Region held a regional meeting and workshop sessions introduced by the CWP Canada Regional Chair, Hon. Laura Ross, MLA (Saskatchewan). The meeting provided Members with the opportunity to hear about activities over the previous year, and to think about priorities for the upcoming year.

Hon. Laura Ross, MLA said: *"I was honoured to launch the CWP Canada Region website alongside the CPA Chairperson. Our webpage is a useful information tool where we are able to share information of who CWP is and what our mission and vision are."*

The CWP Canada Chair gave her report emphasising



the importance of the CWP Canada Regional Steering Committee continuing their efforts to promote CWP in Canada on a variety of platforms, including social media. The importance of continuing to build ties with other groups who promote the role of women in Legislative Assemblies was also emphasised.

At the conclusion of the 56<sup>th</sup> CPA Canada Regional Conference and as Canada marked the centenary of women's suffrage in Canada's federal elections, four Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) – the CPA Chairperson, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP (Cameroon); CPA Vice-Chairperson, Hon. Alexandra Mendes, MP (Canada Federal); Hon. Yasmin Ratansi, MP, Chair of the CPA Canada Federal Branch; and CWP Canada Regional



Chair, Hon. Laura Ross, MLA (Saskatchewan) – were photographed at the *'Women Are Persons! - Famous Five'*

monument at Parliament Hill recognising the campaign for gender equality.







## **CWP CARIBBEAN, AMERICAS AND THE ATLANTIC REGION**



### **12<sup>th</sup> Caribbean Regional Conference of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) takes place in the Cayman Islands**

The 12<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) of the Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic (CAA) Region took place ahead of the 43<sup>rd</sup> CPA CAA Regional Conference in George Town in the Cayman Islands in June 2018. The 12<sup>th</sup> CWP Regional Conference was chaired by Hon. Shirley Osborne, MLA, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Montserrat and Chair of the Regional CWP and saw updates on the activities of the CWP across the region.

As part of the Conference programme, there was also a CWP Seminar focused on Women's Empowerment and Leadership, delivered by Ms Trina Ramsey, which ran over the two days of the conference. The opening session took the form of an informal dinner and

discussion, with Members participating in ice-breaker exercises and discussions.

The second day's session provided Members with the opportunity for introspection and deep thinking about the role that they play in the world as women Parliamentarians. Participants shared experiences and ambitions and were provided with an opening through which to engage with each other on matters of importance and gain clarity on these matters through dialogue.



## **CWP INDIA REGION**



### **International Women's Day 2018 marked in the Parliament of India**

On 8 March 2018, the Presiding Officers of both the Houses of the India Parliament marked International Women's Day 2018 with some impassioned interventions in the chambers.

The Vice-President of India and the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu said that International Women's Day is a day to celebrate and honour the untiring commitment and determination of ordinary women in India and throughout the world to achieve equality, justice and economic development.

Two issues that needed renewed focus on this day were gender equality and women's safety. Gender-sensitization should start in every household,

neighbourhood, school, institutions and community and mindset to respect girls and women should be promoted at home and in schools, public areas, public transport and at every place and every stage. With women constituting 50% of the population, the social, economic and political empowerment of women, including providing reservation of seats for women in Parliament and State Legislatures, has to be accorded top priority for the country to achieve rapid progress, emphasized the Rajya Sabha Chairman.

The Minister of External Affairs, Smt. Sushma Swaraj said women have become President, Prime Minister, Speakers, Chief Minister of many States and Presidents of many national parties in

India. While these achievements enable Indians to raise their heads high, the injustice and pain of women make their heads hang in shame. The International Women's Day is a day to resolve not to tolerate the kind of injustice and pain being experienced by women.

Minister Shri Vijay Goel said it is not that changes have not come about in the conditions of women. But this transformation should reach throughout the country wherever women are not getting complete rights and respect. Many Members of the India Parliament spoke in favour of the Women Reservation Bill which reserves a number of seats for women in India State Assemblies and in Lok Sabha.

In the Lok Sabha, the Speaker, Smt. Sumitra Mahajan congratulated the women of India and of the whole world on the occasion of International Women's Day. She said women always carry their children and their culture together. Smt. Mahajan asked women to be positive, live with confidence and self-respect and contribute to nation building.



## CWP PACIFIC REGION



### Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians in New Zealand unite to celebrate 125 years of women's suffrage and historic milestones in politics

New Zealand Members of Parliament, both male and female, and from all political parties of the left and right, gathered for a special event on 19 September 2018 to celebrate 125 years of women's suffrage in New Zealand.

The breakfast event was convened by the Co-Chairpersons of the New Zealand group of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), Louisa Wall, MP and Jo

Hayes, MP, and the Deputy Speaker of the New Zealand Parliament, Hon. Anne Tolley, as a poignant start to an important day of celebration and reflection. New Zealand women first achieved the right to vote in 1893.

The CWP New Zealand is part of one of the largest international women's organisations in the world. Founded in 1989, with a mandate to work towards increasing women's participation in Parliament, the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians act on gender-related issues, and mainstream gender considerations in the development of policy and

**Above: Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians New Zealand celebrate 125 years of women's suffrage with current New Zealand Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Jacinda Ardern, MP and current MPs recreating a modern version of an iconic 1905 photograph of New Zealand's MPs.**

legislation. It is a unique forum for women Parliamentarians from across the political spectrum to come together and promote gender equality.

The CWP New Zealand Co-Chairpersons, Louisa Wall, MP and Jo Hayes, MP said: "We were privileged to hear from the first woman Prime Minister of New Zealand, Rt



Hon. Dame Jenny Shipley, and Dame Ann Hercus, the first Minister for Women and the first women to hold the Police ministerial portfolio. All 48 current women Parliamentarians were presented with a symbolic gift commemorating their service in the New Zealand Parliament, along with their unique number representing their place out of the 149 women who have been elected to Parliament in our history."

Past and present New Zealand women MPs were presented with #Suffrage125 brooches in the shape of a camellia, crafted by Whakatane artist Robyn Watchorn.

"We are heartened that in 2018, 40% of the New Zealand Parliament's MPs are women; a record for our Parliament, which places us at number 20 in the world for gender equality in Parliaments. We boast a woman Prime Minister, Governor-General,

Chief Justice, Deputy Speaker, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and two senior Whips are women, in addition to three Chairs of Select Committees. As we acknowledge all of the strong, pioneering women who have come before us, and reflect on their journeys, we must gather momentum to break inequalities and stereotypes that still hold us back today. Despite how far we have come in 125 years, there is still ground to be broken and this will only happen when women and men from all sides of the political spectrum come together and advocate for change."

**A panel discussion was also held at the New Zealand Parliament for #Suffrage125 - please visit the following to view the video: <https://www.facebook.com/NZParliament/videos/551222118645738/>**







## CWP PACIFIC REGION

### CWP New Zealand meet with visiting UK delegation to discuss gender equality initiatives

Members of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) New Zealand group, co-chaired by Jo Hayes, MP (National) and Louisa Wall, MP (Labour) held a meeting with UK Parliamentarians, Baroness Redfern and Diana Johnson, MP, part of a visiting CPA UK delegation.

The agenda included discussion of conducting a survey of women MPs (and potentially male MPs) on their experience of sexual violence, abuse and harassment.

Both the UK and New Zealand Members noted that social media has increased the visibility and frequency of threats to MPs and their families, but the #Metoo movement has also been bringing this into the light. The CWP New Zealand Members are continuing to progress its work to end forced and underaged marriage and are looking at its cross-party legislative agenda for this term.

CWP Members also discussed a campaign to ensure all women MPs are up to date with cervical smears and mammograms and intend to highlight this on social media to demonstrate that Members are good role models for their staff, families and constituencies. CWP Members also agreed to hold their annual pink ribbon breakfast to



raise funds for Breast Cancer research and awareness in May.

During the same week, the Parliament of New Zealand also had a number of visiting women MPs and women clerks from the Pacific Region's Legislatures for a regional workshop.

CWP Pacific Steering Committee Chair, Anahila Kanonga'ata-Suisuiki, MP met with the workshop delegates to talk about the challenges and opportunities facing the CPA Pacific Region and enhancing women in leadership was a key theme of the discussions.



### Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians from across the CPA Pacific Region meet in the Cook Islands

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Pacific Region held a meeting of women Members from across the region in the Cook Islands in October 2018. The meeting was held in the margins of the 37<sup>th</sup> CPA Pacific and Australia Regional Conference where Members represented many

Pacific jurisdictions including: Bougainville; Cook Islands; Kiribati; Nauru; New Zealand; Niue; Papua New Guinea; Samoa; Solomon Islands; and Tuvalu.

Hon. Niki Rattle, Speaker of the Parliament of the Cook Islands and CPA Cook Islands Branch President chaired the conference and reiterated her desire to increase the number of women in the Cook Islands Parliament and across the CPA Pacific Region. Speaker Niki

Rattle said: "I believe the topics for our regional conference are really relevant in talking about gender equality and my focus while I'm Speaker of Parliament is to increase the number of women in the Parliament. Out of 24 Members, we have four women and there are many women in the Cook Islands who could actually be sitting in the House and sharing the opportunity of making decisions on the welfare of the people of this country."



## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians - Activities with Partners in 2018

### Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians from across the world attend the inaugural International Congress of Parliamentary Women's Caucuses in Dublin, Ireland

The inaugural International Congress of Parliamentary Women's Caucuses was held at Dublin Castle on 9 and 10 September 2018. The first-of-its-kind event brought together women Parliamentarians, leaders and experts from more than 45 Parliaments and Assemblies across the globe to discuss issues facing women and how Parliamentarians can work to address them. Parliamentarians came from more than 40 jurisdictions including Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Branches: Australia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, Scotland, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, United Kingdom and Wales - and from non-Commonwealth countries like Argentina, Mongolia, Turkey and the United States.

The Irish Parliament, also known as Houses of the Oireachtas, has two houses – the *Dáil Éireann* (lower house) and *Seanad Éireann* (upper house). At present, Ireland has a total of 208 Parliamentarians of which 63 are women. In January 2017, sixteen of the sixty-three women Parliamentarians met to establish the first Irish Women's Parliamentary Caucus in the Oireachtas. The idea came from Green Party MP and



Image: House of the Oireachtas

Deputy Leader, Catherine Martin, TD, who became the first Chairperson of the Irish Women's Parliamentary Caucus. Catherine Martin said: *"It was the first time that women Parliamentarians had come together in a formal way to highlight, and campaign, in this manner. Even though there was jubilation that there were 35 women Dáil deputies, the highest ever, we were still very much a minority in the Oireachtas."* She also said that the gender imbalance was most visible during walk-through votes in Parliament when the relatively small number of female TDs became apparent among *"a sea of suits"*.

The keynote speakers at the congress included Rt Hon. Harriet Harman, QC, MP (United Kingdom); the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland, Leo Varadkar, TD; Hon.

Dr Jessie Kabwila, MP (Malawi); and Professor Mary Beard. Attendees at the International Congress of Parliamentary Women's Caucuses adopted the Dublin Declaration, a proposal for action on women in politics. The declaration includes a commitment to working across party and ideological lines in pursuit of gender equality.

A number of women Parliamentarians from Commonwealth jurisdictions attended the congress including the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Vice-Chairperson, Joyce Watson, AM (Wales). The Co-Chairs of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians New Zealand Branch, Jo Hayes, MP and Louisa Wall, MP reflected on their experiences at the congress: *"We were delighted that New Zealand was*

*acknowledged at the congress for being the first country to give women the vote in 1893, although it would be another 25 years later that Ireland would follow suit. By this time, New Zealand had opened the opportunity for women to stand for election to Parliament, however it wouldn't be until fourteen years later that the first New Zealand woman would first enter Parliament.*

*The extensive discussions, debates and speakers at*

*the international congress demonstrated that all countries suffered similar issues, when it came to gender equality. Key observations included that women are a minority most Parliaments; women have been and continue to be targets for abuse and slander predominantly from male Parliamentarians but also by a small number of female Parliamentarians; and often, there is no dedicated funding for women caucuses.*

*A number of delegates suggested that national parliamentary surveys should be developed and undertaken to identify the common issues facing women in Parliament. We wish to also express our thanks to the Speaker of New Zealand, Rt Hon. Trevor Mallard, MP for supporting us to attend this milestone global congress for women. The learnings and networks have been invaluable."*



### Commonwealth workshop focuses on Women's Economic Empowerment after CHOGM

The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Mr Akbar Khan has spoken at a workshop at the Commonwealth Secretariat on 'Women's Economic Empowerment after CHOGM: State of play and what next during the UK's term as Chair-in-Office?' on 24 July 2018. The workshop, organised in partnership with the Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network (CBW), brought together Commonwealth High Commissioners, businesswomen from the public and private sectors, representatives of Commonwealth Accredited Organisations and the Commonwealth Secretariat's Gender Unit.

The World Bank's Gender Unit's Tazeen Hasan highlighted a new report titled 'World Bank Women, Business

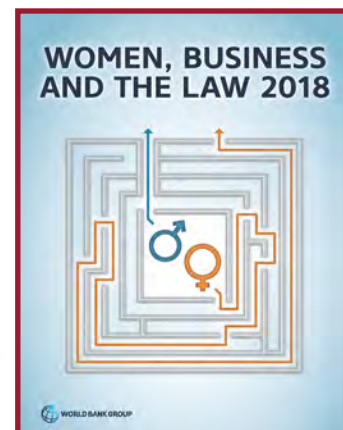
*and the Law Report 2018'* which provides tangible evidence on the barriers facing women's economic empowerment.

The CPA Secretary-General said: *"I congratulate the World Bank Gender Unit on highlighting the barriers to women's economic empowerment – particularly in the Commonwealth. There is important work ahead for male and female Parliamentarians to achieving gender equality."*

The CPA Secretary-General spoke at the workshop alongside Arif Zaman, Executive Director, Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network (CBW); Amelia Kinahoi Siamomua, Adviser and Head of Gender, Commonwealth Secretariat; Hon. Anisa Dhanji, International Association of Women

Judges and UK Association of Women Judges; Thana Sivasambua, Adviser, Diaspora and Enterprise, Government of Sri Lanka, entrepreneur and Chief Operating Officer, CBW; and Amy Agnew, Europe Director, Global Citizen.

To view the report please click on the following link: <http://wbl.worldbank.org/>.







## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians - Activities with Partners in 2018

### Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians attend the first historic Women MPs of the World Conference at the UK Parliament

In an historic first, women MPs from five continents and almost 100 countries including many Members of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), met in the 'Mother of Parliaments' in Westminster for a unique conference, held to mark 100 years since the first women in the United Kingdom gained the right to stand for election to Parliament. The conference was granted the rare privilege to hold its proceedings in the House of Commons Chamber at the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

The one-day event brought together women MPs from around the world to celebrate their achievements, discuss how to strengthen visibility and further empower women Parliamentarians to continue to drive change nationally and internationally. The focus of the event was to inspire the next generation, to contribute to women's equal participation in Parliaments globally, and to demonstrate how elected women around the world are shaping the political agenda and making a difference to women and girls in their home countries. Delegates discussed how to advocate for greater representation of women in Parliament and public life, as well as exploring the specific challenges facing

women MPs and how these might be overcome.

Women MPs were able to share their experiences and propose solutions to what can be done to help them become more effective, counter harassment and abuse, balance family and political responsibilities, and to help more women get into Parliament. Women Parliamentarians are spearheading policy change and through this conference were able to shine a spotlight on four policy areas that affect the lives of women and girls: promoting women's economic empowerment; ending violence against women and girls; championing efforts to enable all women to have access to voluntary family planning; and breaking the barriers to girls' education.

Community organisations and charities working for women's rights were invited into the public gallery at the UK Parliament to watch the debates.



The historic event was co-hosted by the United Kingdom Secretary of State for International Development and Minister for Women and Equalities, Rt Hon. Penny Mordaunt, MP, who gave the opening speech in the House of Commons Chamber and the conference was also supported by the UK Leader of the House, Rt Hon. Andrea Leadsom, MP and the former Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Rt Hon. Harriet Harman, MP, who also both contributed to the debate in the Chamber.

Secretary of State for International Development and Minister for Women and Equalities, Rt Hon. Penny Mordaunt, MP said: "Without the determined and inspiring women who fought for the vote, my fellow women MPs and I would not be doing the jobs we do today. We currently have the highest number of women in history sitting in the UK House of Commons, but



only 32% of MPs are women. Worldwide, only 24% of people elected into political office are women. We have a long way to go before we see true equality. We want more women to feel empowered and supported to enter politics and drive change nationally and internationally. This centenary year we are not just celebrating the achievements of the women who came before us – we are helping women here and now to tackle gender inequality around the world."

Mother of the UK House of Commons\*, Rt Hon. Harriet Harman, MP said: "Women have fought their way into nearly every Parliament in the world. But it's not enough for us just to be there, we want to exercise power on equal terms with men in Parliament. As only relatively recent arrivals, women MPs are still pioneers in male-dominated Parliaments. At this historic conference, we have been able to get together to share our experiences,

our successes and setbacks. We have determined to fight yet harder to get equality for women in our countries. We have made links, so we can work together in the future. We have strengthened our resolve to fight the backlash against women in public life and to get yet more women into Parliaments. Our countries are very different but as women Parliamentarians, our goals are the same. We want equality for women and nothing less. The sisterhood is global."

The delegates to the conference included many Members of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians: former Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Hon Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhary, MP, Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament; Hon. Bardish Chagger, MP, Canada; Diane Abbott, MP, United Kingdom; Hon. Aishatu Dukku, MP, Nigeria; Ya Kumba Jaiteh, MNA,

The Gambia; Hermine Patricia Tomaino Ndom Njoya, MP, Cameroon; Rt Hon. Maria Miller, MP, United Kingdom; Nikki Kaye, MP, New Zealand; Hon. Lindiwe Zulu, South Africa; Jessie Kabwila, MP, Malawi; Hon. Sarah Flood, Saint Lucia; Hon. Nafisa Shah, MNA, Pakistan; Hon. Cynthia Forde, MP, Barbados; Hon. Jovah Kamateeka, MP, Uganda; Hon. Emilia Lolloh Tongi, MP, Sierra Leone; Princess Kasune Zulu, MP, Zambia; Dawn Butler, MP and Rushanara Ali, MP, United Kingdom.

Women MPs also attended from: Colombia, Egypt, Indonesia, Oman, Ireland, Slovakia, Venezuela, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Philippines, Israel, Romania, Peru, Norway, Burkina Faso, Nepal, Turkey, Albania, Senegal, Germany, Guinea, Afghanistan, Greece, Jordan, Brazil, Tunisia, Iceland.

\*Rt Hon. Harriet Harman, MP is the current 'Mother of the House' in the UK Parliament as the longest continuously serving woman MP, first elected in 1982.





## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians - Activities with Partners in 2018

### Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians at inaugural Women Leaders Global Forum in Iceland

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians from across the network attended the inaugural Women Leaders Global Forum, which was held between 26 and 28 November 2018 in Reykjavik, Iceland. The Women Leaders Global Forum is where women leaders discuss and share ideas and solutions on how to further advance society, increase equality between women and men and promote and positively develop the number of women in leadership positions.

The Forum is annually co-hosted by Women Political Leaders (WPL), and the Government and the Parliament of Iceland, and is co-chaired by leaders of the OECD, World Bank, World Economic Forum and others. The forum was founded by Silvana Koch-Mehrin, Founder



and President of the Women Political Leaders (WPL), and Hanna Birna Kristjansdottir, Chair of WPL's Executive

Board, who were inspired by the World Economic Forum and wanted to devise a women's forum. They chose Iceland as the host as it is the best country for women,

according to the WEF's Global Gender Gap Report. The inaugural Women Leaders Global Forum featured keynote speakers, all internationally recognised for their contribution to advancing society and 400 delegates from over 100 countries, who attended two days of workshops as well as bilateral meetings and events.

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians were represented at the Forum by Hon. Laura Ross, MLA (Saskatchewan), the Chairperson of the CWP Canadian Region who said: "As the Chair of CWP Canada



Region, I was honoured to be invited to attend the Women Leaders Global Forum 2018 alongside four hundred women from over 100 countries. This Forum was the perfect opportunity to network with fellow legislators, business and community leaders. The objectives of both CWP and WPL are very similar in that increasing the number of women and their influence within their Legislatures is our main objective. Having more women sitting at the decision-making tables changes politics and public policies.

A large number of delegates had the opportunity to present to the Forum on the current situation within their respective countries on the status of elected women within all levels of government. Many of the presenters also talked about quotas so that more women would be able to be elected to public office. I had the opportunity to present on behalf of the CWP and

to give the perspective of the CWP Canada Region on the present status of the number of women elected to Federal, Provincial and Territorial offices in Canada. In my presentation, I was able to share why it is so important for partisan politics to be set aside so that work undertaken with CWP to be successful. It is the advancement and the encouragement of women of all political stripes to seek public office."

The Women Leaders Global Forum continued with

presentations on women as change-makers in the digital revolution and it was noted that entrepreneurship is integral to the world economy and that women need to be fully engaged. A key session at the Forum looked at 'The World Atlas of Women' and the measurements taken across the world showing the differences in parity in the distribution of political and business power.

The Women Leaders Global Forum's mission is to provide a platform where women leaders discuss and share ideas and solutions on how to further advance society, increase equality between women and men and promote and positively develop the number of women in leadership positions. Under the heading 'We Can Do It', the 2018 theme was 'Digitalisation' and the way it has created an increasingly interconnected world, single-handedly changing the way we live, work and love.







## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians - Publications and Resources



The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) publishes a number of booklets, leaflets and guides on behalf of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) which are available from the CPA Headquarters Secretariat direct or online.

There are also downloads, information, links and research about the activities of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) and gender issues published on the **CPA website [www.cpahq.org](http://www.cpahq.org)** with a specific section for the **CWP at [www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cwp](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cwp)**.

The **Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Strategic Plan 2017-2019** is available in both print and online versions.

*The Parliamentarian*, the Journal of Commonwealth Parliaments, continued to publish news from the CWP activities from across the nine Regions.

In 2018, the CWP Vice-Chairperson represented the CWP on the Editorial Advisory Board for *The Parliamentarian* and contributed several articles on different themes as well as encouraging Members to contribute articles and share news of CWP and gender activities.

To view the latest issue and archived issues of *The Parliamentarian* please visit **[www.cpahq.org/cpahq/parliamentarian](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/parliamentarian)**.

Please contact the CPA Headquarters Secretariat **[hq.sec@cpahq.org](mailto:hq.sec@cpahq.org)** for more information or to receive any copies of CWP publications and resources.



## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) on social media

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) launched a new Facebook page to share information about the work of the CWP and to encourage Members to share information and good practice.

All Commonwealth Parliamentarians are encouraged to 'Like' and share the page which can be found under 'Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians' on Facebook.com or by visiting **[www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cwpfacebook](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cwpfacebook)**.

Many CWP Regions also have a Facebook page showcasing regional activities.

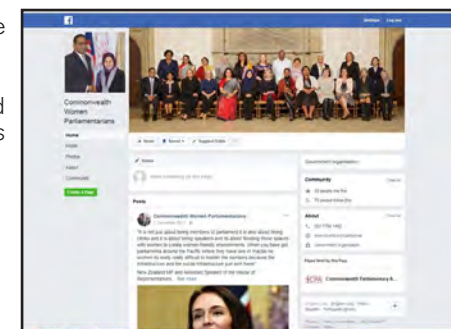
In addition, regular posts on CWP news and activities are featured on the CPA Headquarters Secretariat social media channels.

Twitter **[@CPA\\_Secretariat](https://twitter.com/CPA_Secretariat)**

Facebook.com/**[CPAHQ](https://www.facebook.com/CPAHQ)**

CPA YouTube **[www.cpahq.org/cpahq/youtube](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/youtube)**

Flickr **[www.cpahq.org/cpahq/flickr](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/flickr)**.



## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee 2018-2019

### CWP PRESIDENT

*Vacant*  
(2018-2019)

### CWP CHAIRPERSON

**Hon. Dr Dato' Noraini Ahmad, MP**  
Malaysia  
(2016-2019)

### AFRICA

**Hon. Angela Thoko Didiza, MP**  
South Africa  
(2016-2019)

### ASIA

*Vacant*  
(2018-2021)

### AUSTRALIA

**Ms Michelle O'Byrne, MP**  
Tasmania  
(2016-2019)  
*Also: CWP Vice-Chairperson,  
CWP Steering Committee  
(2018-2019)*

### BRITISH ISLANDS AND MEDITERRANEAN

**Ms Joyce Watson, AM**  
Wales  
(2015-2018 - *new nomination due  
for 2018-2021*)

### CANADA

**Ms Laura Ross, MLA**  
Saskatchewan  
(2017-2020)

### CARIBBEAN, AMERICAS AND THE ATLANTIC

**Hon. Jeannine Giraudy-McIntyre**  
President of the Senate, St Lucia  
(2018-2021)

### INDIA

**Smt. Kirron Anupam Kher, MP**  
Lok Sabha, India  
(2017-2020)

### PACIFIC

**Ms Anahila Kanongata'a-Suisuiki, MP**  
New Zealand Parliament  
(2017-2020)

### SOUTH-EAST ASIA

*Vacant*  
(2016-2019)

*Information correct as provided to the CPA  
Headquarters at January 2019.*

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP)

This newsletter for the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) was produced by the CPA Headquarters Secretariat. To feedback on this newsletter or to send news items for inclusion in future newsletters please email [editor@cpahq.org](mailto:editor@cpahq.org).

Image credits: CPA Headquarters Secretariat and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

CWP website: [www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cwp](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cwp)





## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP)

CWP website: [www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cwp](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cwp)

CWP Facebook page: [www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cwpfacebook](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cwpfacebook)

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