



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation at the
Executive Committee Meeting (EXCO)**

**Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary
Association (CPA)**

London, United Kingdom

May 12 and 13, 2025

REPORT

The Honourable Rosemary Moodie, Senator, attended the International Executive Committee (EXCO) meeting of CPA in London, United Kingdom, on behalf of the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) from May 12 to 13, 2025.

The Executive Committee is composed of the officers of CPA – the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer and the heads of the three CPA networks: Small Branches, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities – as well as regional representatives from each of the nine regions of the CPA: Africa; Asia; British Islands and Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic; India; Pacific; and South East Asia. Senator Moodie attended as the alternate for Ms. Alexandra Mendès, MP, who is one of Canada’s three regional representatives, along with Speaker Raj Chouhan of British Columbia and Speaker Donna Skelly of Ontario.

The EXCO meeting was an opportunity to discuss key governance issues and to undertake planning for the year ahead, notably in light of the CPA’s new legal status as a non-charitable body. A series of committee meetings took place on May 12 ahead of the full EXCO meeting on May 13. These included the Coordinating Committee, the Audit Subcommittee, the Planning and Review Subcommittee, and Finance Subcommittee.

COORDINATING COMMITTEE AND AUDIT SUBCOMMITTEE

The members of the Coordinating Committee and the Audit Subcommittee who are the six main officers of the Executive Committee, reviewed the CPA’s risk register, including current assessments of key risks and associated mitigation measures, approved the CPA’s revised Risk Management Policy and agreed to reappoint the Association’s external auditors for the next financial year. It also took note of the findings of audit of the association’s financial statements.

PLANNING AND REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Senator Moodie took part in the meeting of the Planning and Review Subcommittee, which was chaired by the CPA Vice-Chairperson, Hon. Carmel Sepuloni, M.P. The Planning and Review Subcommittee reviewed the report on the 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CP) held in Sydney, New South Wales, in November 2024, noting the conference’s outcomes, communications engagement surrounding the conference, the feedback received from participants and recommendations provided by the host branch for the organization of future conferences.

The Subcommittee also agreed to the overall theme for the 68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, “The Commonwealth – A Global Partner” as well as the themes for the various workshops to be held during the CPC. These will include a wide variety of topics such as:

- strengthening institutions in support of democracy:
- enhancing democracy through digital transformations and tackling the digital divide:
- championing the human factor from a gender and accessibility lens:
- climate change and its threat to global health:

- financial transparency in parliaments and elections:
- protecting and preserving the separation of powers between national parliaments and provincial, territorial and devolved legislatures; and
- the role of the Commonwealth in good governance, multilateralism and international relations.

There was also agreement to hold a youth roundtable on empowering young people to overcome modern challenges from gang violence to cyberbullying and to hold a general debate at the General Assembly on the conference's overall theme of the Commonwealth as a global partner.

The Subcommittee also noted themes for the 41st CPA Small Branches Conference and its associated workshops which will be held ahead of the CPC. The overall theme for that conference will be "Shaping the Future for CPA Small Branches: Strengthening Parliamentary Independence and Capacity in Small Jurisdictions" and there will be workshops related to work-life balance for parliamentarians in small jurisdictions, human rights and the legacy of colonial laws and the work of public accounts committees.

The Subcommittee also noted the theme for the 9th Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Conference, "Parliaments since Beijing +30: Progress and Challenges and the Road Ahead for Gender Equality" and its associated workshops. These will cover a variety of themes related to realizing gender-sensitive Parliaments, overcoming barriers to the involvement of women with disabilities in politics (a joint session with the Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities Network), not accepting abuse as an outcome of free speech and how parliamentarians can combat discriminatory laws that perpetuate the disempowerment of women.

The Subcommittee reviewed the progress made on the implementation of the CPA's Strategic Plan 2022-2025 over the past year, noting activities and outputs which advance the Association's six strategic objectives across six cross cutting themes. Among the work strands that were highlighted were the development of updated benchmarks for democratic legislatures, the delivery of technical assistance programmes and post-election seminars, the development of new courses for the CPA Parliamentary Academy, research enquiries, work in support of the three networks (Small Branches, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities), and work in the area of artificial intelligence, parliamentary security and human rights.

Finally, the Subcommittee considered the report from the communications review undertaken by an external consultant in early 2025. They noted the Secretariat's work to develop an implementation plan for the various recommendations and an updated communications strategy in line with the CPA's Strategic Plan 2026-2029.

FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

The Finance Subcommittee, chaired by CPA Treasurer, Hon. Anurag Sharma, M.P., met concurrently to the Planning and Review Subcommittee. Canada's representative on the Finance Subcommittee was Hon. Raj Chouhan, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia.

The Subcommittee reviewed the financial reports for the year ending December 31, 2024, for both the new, non-charitable CPA and for the legacy charitable organization and its associated funds. It noted that the Association had finished the year with a surplus, despite a budget which projected a deficit. This was mainly due to higher membership revenues due to more branches choosing to send a second delegate to the CPC as a way of increasing female representation, higher interest income and lower costs for travel and program delivery.

It then received an update on the budget situation for 2025 which is now projecting a larger deficit, mainly due to the unplanned in-person EXCO meeting. There was also a discussion on the planned budgets for 2026 and 2027, which also project deficits. While the Association does have healthy reserves, there is a desire to explore potential ways of diversifying income.

There was a discussion among members of the Subcommittee about various options for restructuring membership fees, though no consensus emerged.

The Subcommittee also agreed to recommend the reinstatement of the Jammu & Kashmir branch which has been in abeyance since 2018 and the admission of a branch from the Sark Parliament.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

In addition to receiving and discussing reports from the various subcommittees, EXCO members received an update on the evolution of the CPA's legal status. With the passage of enabling legislation in the United Kingdom parliament and the adoption of a new constitution by the CPA General Assembly in late 2024, the CPA was able to continue its evolution from a United Kingdom charity to a recognized international, interparliamentary organization. Secondary legislation to operationalize this change is expected to be adopted by the end of 2025.

EXCO discussed opportunities arising from the organization's new legal status including the possibility of seeking observer status at the United Nations General Assembly, a status which is held by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and is being sought by the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie. The new legal status could also allow for greater influence within the Commonwealth, notably at Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings, as well as enhanced capacity for global representation and advocacy.

There was also agreement to form a working group to review the CPA's constitution and ensure that it is aligned with the new legal status. The working group will be composed of one representative from each region and will be asked to present a preliminary report to EXCO at its next meeting at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Barbados.

EXCO also discussed a draft of the CPA's 2026-2029 Strategic Plan which has three main strategic objectives—strengthening parliaments, enhancing professional development and promoting Commonwealth values—and six themes: gender equality, the rights of persons with disabilities, empowering small jurisdictions, youth engagement in democracy, technology and climate change and sustainable development. There was agreement to share the draft with all branches for their feedback ahead of the general assembly.

EXCO received reports from the chairs of its three networks: Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD), Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) and Small Branches.

The CPwD Chairperson, Hon. Laura Kanushu, spoke about accessibility projects being funded through the Capital Investment Fund, her participation in the Global Disability Summit in Berlin, a webinar the CPA hosted on the role of parliamentarians in upholding the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as the joint session planned with CWP at the upcoming Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

The Small Branches Chairperson, Hon. Valerie Woods, spoke about the workshop held in the Isle of Man focused on oversight and independence in small jurisdictions, technical support provided to Pacific branches and collaboration with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy to develop a dedicated resource on post-legislative scrutiny in small jurisdictions.

The CWP Chairperson, Hon. Zainab Gimba, reported on gender-sensitive parliament assessments done in Fiji and in Northern Ireland, a webinar organized with the Commonwealth Local Government Forum on women's political participation, her participation in the IPU Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians in Mexico City, a joint study conducted with the IPU on violence against women in Asia-Pacific parliaments, the CWP workshop on women's economic empowerment held in The Bahamas and plans for the Gender Strengthening Fund.

Finally, EXCO reviewed and approved the CPA's annual report for 2024, received a report from the Secretary-General on matters related to the Secretariat, approved some changes to the CPA's travel policy, approved the presentation of updated rules for the conduct of CPA election to the General Assembly and received an update from the Barbados Branch and from the Deputy Secretary-General about the arrangements for the 68th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

TRAVEL COSTS

Travel expenses associated with this activity can be found in the delegation's financial report. This report is available in the [Financial Disclosure](#) section of the Parliamentary Diplomacy website.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexandra Mendès, M.P.

Chair of the Canadian Branch of the
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)