



CPA CANADIAN BRANCH RULES

(Adopted at Special Meeting, May 9, 2007)

1. NAME AND HEADQUARTERS

The Branch shall be called "The Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association". Its headquarters shall be in care of the International and Interparliamentary Affairs Directorate, Houses of Parliament, Ottawa.

2. STATUS

Its status shall be that of a branch under clause 4 of the constitution of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association with headquarters in London, England, (herein called "the Association").

Canadian Provincial and Territorial Branches are recognized to be independent and autonomous members of the "Association". The Canadian Branch recognizes its common interest with them as branches in the same Region and its responsibility to assist them on request.

3. AIMS

The Branch shall be called "The Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association". Its headquarters shall be in care of the International and Interparliamentary Affairs Directorate, Houses of Parliament, Ottawa.

(a) To implement within its jurisdiction the Aims of the Association as set forth in Clause 3 of its Constitution (see Appendix I to these Rules).

(b) To coordinate its activities with those of the Association.

(c) To cooperate with all other Branches throughout the Commonwealth.

(d) To promote effective coordination of Canadian Branch activities with those of other Canadian branches including:

(i) nomination of a Regional Representative or Representatives on the Executive Committee of the Association;

- (ii) participation in Annual Regional Conference;
 - (iii) Providing exchanges with other Canadian Region Branches and those overseas
 - (iv) providing briefing opportunities for Canadian Branch and Provincial/territorial branch delegates to Association, Region or Branch meetings and exchanges;
 - (v) federal-provincial hospitality to visiting members of other Branches of the Association.
- (e) To maintain liaison with the Government of Canada and recognized political parties having representation in the Parliament of Canada.
- (f) To engage in such other activities as will generally promote the interests of the Branch and its members and those of the membership of Branches in its region.

4. FUNDING

The funding of the "Association" shall be derived from:

- (a) Membership fees;
- (b) Funding from Parliament;

5. MEMBERSHIP FEE

Membership in the Branch shall be open to all Members of the Senate and the House of Commons on payment of the annual fee.

6. HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Honorary membership may be granted at the discretion of the Branch Executive Committee. Honorary Members are entitled to attend but not to vote at Meetings of the Branch and are entitled to such privileges as the Executive Committee shall from time to time decide. They are not eligible for office in the Branch or to be selected as delegates.

7. MEMBERSHIP

The membership fee shall be in accordance with the guidelines set down by the Joint-Interparliamentary Council.

8. PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS

The Members of the Branch are entitled to:

- (a) membership in the Canadian Branch of the Association;

- (b) the right to elect annually the Members of the Executives Committee;
- (c) the right to be notified of every invitation received by the Branch to be represented at any activity of the Association, any other Region or Branch, or organization;
- (d) the right to apply for inclusion in the response of the Branch to such invitations in accordance with "The Method of Selection of Delegates";
- (e) all privileges extended to members of the Association while visiting other member Branches;
- (f) publications produced by the Association for general free distribution to members;
- (g) the services of the Parliamentary Information and Reference Centre maintained by the Association at its Headquarters.

9. METHOD OF SELECTION OF DELEGATES

Upon the approval of its budget by the JIC, the Executive Committee shall meet to establish its level of participation at each of the activities listed in its work plan for that fiscal year.

If the names of the individual members who are to participate at each of these activities are known, these are to be noted on the record of the meeting and forwarded to the Whips for their approval.

For all other vacancies on delegations, the following process shall be followed:

- (a) Notice of every invitation or opportunity to represent the Branch shall be given to every Member, with a copy of the notice being sent to each of the Whips' offices in both Chambers;
- (b) Selection of delegates shall be made by the Chair of the Association in consultation with all party Whips or their designated representatives in both Chambers;
- (c) Members may make application on an approved form to represent the Branch, giving such information as may be requested on the form.
- (d) The Chair of the Branch shall be ex-officio Leader of a Branch delegation to any plenary conference of the Association and otherwise by decision of the Executive Committee.
- (e) Considerations which shall be taken into account by the selection process are:
 - ability to represent the Branch creditably on any specific assignment;
 - knowledge of and interest in Commonwealth affairs;
 - recognition of the importance of experience in Commonwealth Parliamentary Association affairs combined with the principle of rotating opportunities to represent the Branch amongst its active members;
 - attendance at meetings of the Branch, participating in hosting and meeting with incoming delegations, and availability to attend briefing sessions.
- (f) It shall be a basic principle of selection that the largest possible number of Members shall have the opportunity to represent the Branch in "Association" activities at all levels.

However, consideration shall also be given to the importance of developing within the Branch a group of members with some degree of continuity and variety of service in Association affairs.

(g) The composition of the delegation shall reflect:

(i) the proportionate share of the operating budget of the Branch contributed by each of the Senate and the House of Commons;

(ii) the proportionate representation of political parties in each of the Senate and the House of Commons respectively.

Provided further that, where these proportions are not perfectly achieved in any given year, there shall be adjustments made in subsequent years.

(h) In cases where a delegation is depleted for any reason, and designated alternates are not available, the Chair shall be authorized to fill vacancies in consultation with Whip of the Party concerned. In the event that Party is unable to identify a delegate from their Party, the Executive Committee shall be consulted on whether to fill the vacancy from another Party or to let the vacancy remain.

10. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

(a) An annual General Meeting of the Membership shall be held each fiscal year in the National Capital at a time when Parliament is in session. An AGM must be held within 60 calendar days of the Opening of a new Parliament. The Executive Committee or 10 members of the Association may, upon a minimum of two weeks written notice to the Executive Secretary, call an Annual General Meeting. It shall:

- Elect the members of the Executive Committee
- Receive a summary report of the expenses of the previous fiscal year and a written report of the Association's activities for that year from the Chair
- Amend, where necessary and with one week's notice, the Association's Rules by a two-thirds vote of the members present at the meeting
- Make suggestions and adopt resolutions in accordance with the aims of the Association
- Transact any other necessary business

(b) Electronic notice addressed to their Parliamentary offices shall be given to all Members at least 10 sitting days in advance. Such notice shall include the date, time and place of the meeting and any proposed changes in the Rules, and notice of the process for nomination.

(c) Voting shall be by secret ballot.

(d) The quorum shall be set at 20 or one-third of the total membership, whichever is the lesser amount, provided that the Senate and the House of Commons are represented.

11. SPECIAL MEETING

(a) The Executive Committee or 10 members of the Association may, upon a minimum of two weeks written notice to the Executive Secretary, call a Special Meeting of the membership. It shall deal only with the matter or matters specified in the Notice of Meeting.

(b) Electronic notice addressed to their Parliamentary offices shall be given to all Members at least 10 days in advance. Such notice shall include the date, time and place of the meeting and any proposed changes in the Rules, and notice of the process for nomination.

(c) Voting shall be by secret ballot.

(d) The quorum shall be set at 20 or one-third of the total membership, whichever is the lesser amount, provided that the Senate and the House of Commons are represented

12. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(a) The Executive Committee of the Branch shall be composed of the Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons as Honorary Members and the Elected Officers.

(b) An Executive Committee shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting to be composed of at most 16 members (not including the ex-officio position of Past Chair) reflecting the proportionate share of the operating budget of the Branch contributed by each of the Senate and the House of Commons

(c) The Executive Committee shall meet at least twice yearly to: (i) Direct and manage the affairs and budget of the association in accordance with the decisions taken at its General Membership Meetings and directives of the Joint Interparliamentary Council. (ii) Draw up a work plan and submit it to the General Meeting (iii) Approve any activities, including travel, that are added to the association's work plan over the course of the year. (iv) Convene the Annual General Membership Meeting (v) Draw up a draft budget for the upcoming fiscal year and submit it to the Joint Interparliamentary Council (vi) Submit reports to the membership as required (vii) Ensure that regular reports are submitted to the Senate and House of Commons, as required in the rules and practices of both Houses.

(d) At any meeting of the Executive Committee, five members or thirty per cent of the Executive shall constitute the quorum.

13. OFFICERS

(a) The ex-officio Officers shall be:

(i) The Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons shall be the Honorary Presidents of the Branch and shall be given honorary membership in the Branch;

(ii) The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Official Opposition in the House of Commons shall be Honorary Vice-Presidents and shall be given honorary membership in the Branch.

(b) The Elected Officers of the Branch who shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting shall be:

(i) The Chair who shall be the chief executive officer of the Branch. The duties of the Chair shall be: (a) to call meetings of the Executive and of the Membership in accordance with these Rules; (b) to preside at meetings; (c) to direct the management of the Branch in consultation with the elected officers of the Branch.

(ii) The Immediate Past Chair shall be an ex-officio Member of the Executive Committee

(iii) Two Vice-Chairs who shall as far as possible represent each Chamber and at least one of whom shall represent as far as possible an opposition party. The Vice-Chairs shall assist the Chair in the performance of their duties and act for them in their absence or inability to function.

(iv) The remaining thirteen members who shall as far as possible be chosen to reflect the representation of the recognized parties in the Senate and the House of Commons.

(c) The Executive Committee shall fill by appointment from the Membership any casual vacancies in the Executive Committee for the balance of the unexpired term of office.

(d) The Executive Committee shall continue to act until its successors are elected.

14. NOMINATIONS and ELECTION of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

a) The Executive Secretary shall distribute nomination forms to all members of the Association with the Notice of Meeting.

b) Nominations should be received at least 3 sitting days in advance of the Annual General Meeting. The Executive Secretary will prepare a nominations report based on nominations received. Once the deadline has passed, the nominations should be made public.

c) In order to be eligible to vote, parliamentarians should be members of the association at least seven days prior to the AGM. Once the deadline has passed, the names of all members eligible to vote shall be placed on a voters list.

d) Nominations will only be accepted from the floor at the AGM for positions for which no candidate has been nominated.

e) The elections shall be presided over by a parliamentarian to be chosen from a list that has received the approval of the Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons who is not nominated for a position on the executive of the Association. Elections shall be conducted by secret ballot with the support of the Executive Secretary and additional necessary staff from the International and Interparliamentary Affairs Directorate

f) The ballot box shall be placed in full view and each parliamentarian shall insert his or her own ballot into the box.

15. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The Executive Secretary shall be appointed by the Clerk Assistant, International and Interparliamentary Affairs Directorate subject to confirmation by the Executive Committee. He shall be accountable generally to the Chair and the Executive Committee for providing the necessary administrative support for the activities of the Branch. He shall be the Secretary of the Annual General Meeting, Special Meetings and all committees of the Branch.

16. BRANCH RULES

- (a) The Branch may, by a two-thirds majority of members present and entitled to vote in General Meetings or Special Meetings called for that purpose;
 - (i) adopt such rules and regulations, not inconsistent with the Constitution of the Association, as may from time to time be necessary for the good order and management of its affairs, and amend such rules;
- (b) The Branch shall send a copy of its rules and regulations to the Secretary-General of the Association and shall notify that officer from time to time of any alterations or additions made to those rules.

17. BRANCH OPERATING YEAR

The operating year of the Branch shall be the fiscal year, commencing on the first day of April and ending on the 31st day of March.

18. DISSOLUTION of PARLIAMENT

In the event of a dissolution of Parliament, the Executive Committee in office at that time shall carry on the affairs of the Association until a new Executive Committee is elected, with due regard to policies and related procedures set out in the Financial Management and Policy Guide for Parliamentary Associations.

APPENDIX I

Clause 3 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association as amended and adopted at the General Meeting, India, 1991

The aims of the Branch shall be:

1. To promote knowledge and education in the social, economic, cultural, constitutional and legislative systems within a parliamentary democratic framework with particular reference to the countries of the Commonwealth of Nations and to other countries having close historical and parliamentary associations with it.

2. The "Associations" shall pursue its aims by:

(a) arranging plenary conferences which, as far as practicable, shall be held annually and in such countries of the Commonwealth as the "Association" may determine in response to invitations received from Branches;

(b) arranging study groups, meetings, seminars and conferences which may be on a local, regional or Commonwealth-wide basis;

(c) providing facilities for the exchange of visits between members of Branches, individually or in groups;

(d) organizing international visits to enable parliamentarians and other persons to exchange views and to inform themselves on matters of commons interest;

(e) the publication of journals, monographs, pamphlets, reports of conferences, seminars, discussions and visits and other papers relevant of the aims of the "Association". Such publications shall include a periodical devoted to parliamentary and constitutional subjects, published quarterly or at such other intervals as the "Association" may determine;

(f) maintaining at the Headquarters of the "Association" a centre for the dissemination and exchange of information on parliamentary matters;

(g) inviting at its discretion and on such conditions as it may decide other organizations or persons to participate in any of its activities; and by

(h) taking such other steps as may be necessary.
