



**REPORT OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATE  
TO THE  
18th COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY SEMINAR  
  
Turks and Caicos  
May 28 – June 3, 2006**

The Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association was represented by Ruby Dhalla, M.P. (Brampton Springdale) at the 18th Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar held in the Turks and Caicos from May 28 to June 3, 2006.

# **18th COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY SEMINAR**

## **Turks and Caicos**

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#### **REPORT**

It was my privilege to both attend and serve as a guest speaker at the 18th Annual Parliamentary Seminar of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in the Grand Turk in the Turks and Caicos Islands from May 28 to June 3, 2006. The Seminar provided a unique opportunity to meet with Parliamentarians from around the world, listen to the challenges faced in their respective countries and exchange ideas of global importance. Parliamentarians attending included the likes of Michael Howard (Former Leader of the Opposition and the Conservative party in Britain, Charanjit Singh Atwal (Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha in India), and a number of others from South Africa, Bermuda, and Pakistan.

The seminar itself was held in the Legislative Council Chamber of the Grand Turk commencing on Monday morning, May 28th, 2006 and ending Friday June 2nd, 2006. The seminar topics discussed included the following:

- The History and Role of the Commonwealth
- Parliamentary Democracy in the Caribbean Region
- The Role of the Speaker and parliamentary Staff
- The Member of Parliament and the Political Party
- Standing Orders
- Parliamentary Ethics, Transparency and Accountability
- The Relationship Between Parliament and the People
- Parliamentary Committees and the Committee System
- Financial Scrutiny of the Executive
- Parliament, the Executive and the Public Service
- Parliament Gender, HIV/AIDS and Human Rights
- Services for Members

- Parliament, the member and the Media

Each of the seminar topics was presented by various speakers consisting of either the parliamentarians and/or invited officials from the CPA and the Turks and Caicos Parliament. As a result of listening and speaking with Parliamentarians who are from smaller legislatures I learned of the additional challenges they face when dealing with Parliamentary Transparency and Accountability and the functioning of Parliamentary Committees. As an example the legislative council in the Turks and Caicos meets only once per month and consists of a total of only 19 members: 13 elected members from the 13 electoral districts, 3 ex officio members, 3 appointed members and a Speaker chosen from outside the council. Parliamentarians from the smaller legislatures were keen to learn of the initiatives undertaken in some of the larger parliaments to address the issues identified in the various topic areas.

All of the Parliamentarians attending the seminar engaged in lively debate and exchanged best practice ideas, techniques and discussed solutions to mutual concerns and issues. Most important to the success of the seminar was the overall dialogue and debate within the chamber on the various topics which allowed parliamentarians to share the methods their respective countries have implemented to achieve transparency and accountability and hence improve governance. Parliamentarians were especially keen to learn of the methods adopted within the Canadian political framework for achieving greater transparency and accountability both within the public service and within parliament. I was proud to represent the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and share the many initiatives undertaken and implemented within Canada's political infrastructure. Canada's progress and leadership in the global arena is held in high regard by many Parliamentarians from the other Commonwealth countries.

In addition to participating actively in the debates and discussion I presented at the **Parliament Gender, HIV/AIDS and Human Rights workshop**. My speech provided an overview of the representation of women in the commonwealth parliaments and focused on the importance of increasing the participation of women in the political process.

It was universally agreed that all commonwealth parliaments have a substantial role to play in ensuring that barriers to participation for women are reduced, that there is gender-sensitization and that women have an opportunity to play a substantial role in the development, creation, and implementation of policy for political parties and Government.

As this was the first Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference I attended I believe the CPA and its members must be commended for its leadership in educating and promoting knowledge about parliamentary democracy and governance. Parliamentarians attending the seminar were enriched and inspired to undertake and promote initiatives to advance gender equality, improve transparency and accountability and hence good governance in their respective countries. The seminar information learned both in the workshops and through listening, and conversing with other parliamentarians was an extremely valuable learning tool. I want to take this opportunity to thank the host country and the CPA Canadian Branch for their efforts in

ensuring this seminar was a success. I am also grateful to the people of the Grand Turk for their warmth and wonderful hospitality.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Russ Hiebert, M.P. Chair for  
Ms. Ruby Dhalla, M.P.

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

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian (Federal) Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	18th Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Grand Turk, Turks & Caicos
<b>DATES</b>	May 28 – June 3, 2006
<b>SENATORS</b>	
<b>MEMBERS</b>	Ms. Ruby Dhalla, MP
<b>STAFF</b>	
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$ 2,285.65</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$ 230.77</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,515.42</b>