



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's EXCO  
Meeting  
Canadian Branch of the  
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)  
London, United Kingdom  
December 8-9, 2011**

## Report

Joe Preston, M.P. represented the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association at the Executive Meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, held in London, United Kingdom from December 8-9, 2011.

The circulation of an initial draft of a new CPA Strategic Plan and a recommendation to pursue the possibility of changing the Association's legal status to an international parliamentary organization were among matters agreed to by the CPA Executive Committee when it met on 8 December in London.

The meeting was called by Chairperson Sir Alan Haselhurst, MP, to make rapid progress on key issues in advance of the Committee's next regularly scheduled meeting in April 2012. As well as the Strategic Plan and the CPA's status, the Committee reviewed programming plans for 2012, the work of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) and the CPA's role at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings. It also modified financial procedures and approved the principle of holding regular Commonwealth Youth Parliaments.

Members agreed that the draft Strategic Plan should be circulated to all Branches for comments prior to the Committee's further consideration of it at the April meeting, which is to be held in Tonga. The new plan will run from 2013 to 2017 and is to be presented for approval by the CPA General Assembly in Sri Lanka in September 2012, three months before the current plan ends.

The new plan will be linked to an annual business plan detailing the goals to be met in pursuit of the Association's broad objectives of advancing parliamentary democracy, deepening the Commonwealth's democratic commitment, enhancing the role of the Association and supporting the professional development of Members and officials.

Sir Alan advised the Committee that changing the legal status of the Association away from that of a registered charity could be accomplished through legislation presented to the United Kingdom Parliament as either a government or a private Members' Bill, possibly as soon as the 2012-13 session. The Committee supported the proposal and authorized the Chairperson and the CPA Secretariat to continue discussing the possibility of the proposed change with the U.K. government. A further report will go to the Tongan meeting, including an assessment of the ramifications of a possible change.

The Association became a charity decades ago to exempt its income, mainly Branch membership fees, from U.K. business tax; but some Branches have questioned whether it continues to be appropriate. Sir Alan said the possible new status would need to retain the tax exemption. Any new status must also accurately reflect the nature and

work of the Association in promoting the advancement of parliamentary governance throughout the Commonwealth.

The review of its status was referred to the Chairperson and others by the CPA Working Party which asked Sir Alan to use his British parliamentary and governmental knowledge to find ways to pursue the matter further.

The Working Party, which meets again in Tonga immediately before the Committee's meeting, is also considering how to strengthen the governance of the Association. In the Committee's consideration of financial procedures, it was suggested the Working Party could also review the new rule that Branches must pay their membership fee for the year 90 days prior to the main conference to qualify to attend it. Two Branches applied for and received a last-minute exemption so they could attend the 2011 conference while other late-paying Branches had not sought to have the rule waived so had not attended. The Chairperson apologized for treating some Branches differently and called for further consideration of how future exemptions might be considered.

After examining other financial procedures, the Committee modified the policy of restricting the CPA to funding most events only after they have occurred so the restriction would not apply to CWP events and so Branches facing financial constraints could apply for an exemption.

A policy to require Branches to apply for refunds for annual conference delegation air fares within the year of the conference was also modified by the Committee so Branches will now have six months from the conference date to apply. The conference is normally held in September or October, but some Branches have been seeking refunds as late as two years after the event.

Among other matters considered, the Committee held a preliminary discussion on whether it should meet more than twice a year and whether there should be a small group of Executive Committee Members who could make decisions or advise the Secretary-General between meetings. It was suggested that the Working Party should consider these matters as part of its review of CPA governance, a review that included whether to establish an audit committee to oversee spending and administration.

Respectfully submitted,

Russ Hiebert, M.P., Chair  
Canadian Branch of the  
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	EXCO Meeting
<b>DESTINATION</b>	London, United Kingdom
<b>DATES</b>	December 8-9, 2011
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Joe Preston, M.P.
STAFF	
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$849.96</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$361.41</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$229.03</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,440.40</b>