



COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

CPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025

A new vision for Commonwealth Parliaments



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The Commonwealth
Parliamentary Association
promotes democracy, good
governance and human rights
throughout the Commonwealth.



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CPA's Mission Statement

To promote knowledge of the constitutional, legislative, economic, social and cultural aspects of parliamentary democracy, with particular reference to the countries of the Commonwealth.



CPA's Vision

That the work of the CPA enables:

- Commonwealth Parliamentarians and officials to uphold and strengthen parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, sustainable development and human rights.
- Mutual learning, dialogue, cooperation and networking across the Commonwealth to build strong, powerful and effective parliamentary institutions able to respond and adapt to the challenges of today and tomorrow.
- Partnerships with others to maximise our impact in line with the shared values which underpin the CPA's mission.



CPA's Values

This CPA Strategic Plan has been developed with the following organisational values in mind:

- The CPA promotes democracy, good governance and human rights throughout the Commonwealth.
- We champion respect, equality, diversity, accountability, transparency and best practice.

Acting CPA Chairperson's Message

Hon. Ian Liddell-Grainger MP
Acting Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee
Member of the UK Parliament



I take great pride in presenting this CPA Strategic Plan 2022-25 having been involved with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for many years, both at a Branch and international level and now as Acting Chairperson. The CPA is a unique platform of Commonwealth Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, with a tremendous convening power and diversity of voices and experiences. As such the CPA family holds great potential to effect innovative changes in addressing common concerns, with this strategy enabling us to reach new heights in doing so.

Through the involvement and engagement of our membership and key external partners, we have created an ambitious set of objectives that build upon the organisation's existing strengths, successes and substantial progress made in recent years, whilst also aiming to meet our membership's changing needs and address the challenges we will face between now and 2025.

Our plan defines how we will continue to advance and develop the organisation and its work in a challenging and ever evolving environment. With six core objectives and cross cutting themes that we will mainstream across our operations and workstreams, the strategy will guide the CPA's work in the coming years and further enhance our support to our Members in fulfilling their parliamentary mandates, as well as their roles in promoting the values of the Commonwealth and achieving the UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

With this publication we also pay tribute to the late CPA Chairperson and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon, Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, MP, who was actively involved in the development of this CPA Strategic Plan. Through Hon. Lifaka's steadfast stewardship of the organisation and her dedication and commitment to the Commonwealth as a whole, the CPA was able to develop and grow, cementing our position as a key partner in promoting parliamentary democracy and facilitating capacity building.

It is fitting that our new CPA Strategic Plan is published in the same year that we celebrate the Association's 110th anniversary. I am confident that the excellent work we have undertaken to nurture democratic governance across the Commonwealth since our establishment will continue to flourish through the framework of this strategy. No doubt there will be challenges ahead but we will resolve them together.



CPA Secretary-General's Foreword

Stephen Twigg
CPA Secretary-General

2021 marks the 110th anniversary of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). This important milestone in our history coincides with a period of great uncertainty, fragility and challenge across the world. The CPA's new Strategic Plan builds upon our recent progress in a spirit of transparency, adaptability, flexibility, agility and innovation.

At the time of writing, the impact of COVID-19 permeates discussion and decision-making throughout the Commonwealth. As we remember those who have lost their lives to this virus and thank the key workers whose hard work and dedication has made such a difference, the CPA will learn from the events of 2020 and 2021 as we set out our strategy for 2022-2025. Technology has a central role to play as both Parliaments and wider societies adapt to the challenges of this decade so we will continue to innovate, share best practice and seek to close the digital divide.

CPA's mission is timeless, whilst the values and vision to support this mission are rooted in our history and in the commitment of our members, both Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. At the heart of this Strategic Plan is a pledge to work in partnership with others to deliver our mission. We will strengthen existing partnerships and seek new ones with organisations both within and beyond the Commonwealth. In doing so, we will be guided by our belief in the value of multilateralism and our support for the values enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter and the goals set out by the United Nations in Agenda 2030. Upholding parliamentary democracy, tackling climate change and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will underpin our strategy and support our collaboration with others.

The core purpose of the CPA remains supporting Parliaments and Parliamentarians to be effective, using tools like the *CPA Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures* and our Post-Election Seminars. The creation of the new *CPA Parliamentary Academy* and the launch of our new website will strengthen our capacity to support and enable our members. We shall be agile in adapting to the changing needs and expectations of CPA members, encouraging mutual learning and informal networking to bloom alongside our important formal structures.

Diversity is a huge strength of the Commonwealth which the CPA reflects in our important networks for CPA Small Branches, Commonwealth Women

“Upholding parliamentary democracy, tackling climate change and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will underpin our strategy and support our collaboration with others.”

Parliamentarians (CWP) and Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD). The Strategic Plan renews our commitment to the networks and emphasises the importance of mainstreaming gender, disability and small jurisdictions. A belief in human rights lies at the core of this strategy as we learn from movements like Black Lives Matter and #MeToo.

Most Commonwealth citizens are aged under 30 and we have an opportunity to empower this generation, many of whom are bearing the brunt of the wider impact of COVID-19 with school and college closures, job losses and economic uncertainty. In previous years we have held our Commonwealth Youth Parliament, most recently online, and the week-long event showcases the enthusiasm, innovative thinking and passion of young people across the Commonwealth. This Strategic Plan emphasises the CPA’s commitment to engage with young people, promote citizenship education and support young Parliamentarians.

Fifty years ago, the CPA attained charitable status in the UK. In recent years, we have been in discussion with the UK Government about adopting a new legal status as an international, interparliamentary organisation. I am determined to do my utmost to make progress on this matter as an important strand of the new Strategic Plan.

I am immensely grateful to the fifty organisations and individuals who took the time to respond to the consultation which underpins this Strategic Plan, including CPA Branches, individual Parliamentarians and a broad range of external partners. The consultation was conducted in the same spirit which is central to this plan – a belief in our shared values, the importance of partnership and the power of mutual learning.

The 2022-2025 Strategic Plan will build upon the excellent progress made by the CPA as a result of the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan which has delivered impressive change, including important reforms to our programmes and a highly successful IT Transformation which has allowed us to adapt to the significant challenges of 2020 and 2021. None of this would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of our Chairperson and Coordinating Committee, members of our international Executive Committee, Regional Secretaries, networks, Branches and, last but not least, the hardworking and professional CPA Secretariat staff. I thank them all.

Context

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in the 21st century

Established in 1911 and one of the oldest Commonwealth organisations, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association has had to adapt and evolve over the years, arguably never more so than in recent times. This Strategic Plan 2022-2025 has been developed in a time of great external flux and this has presented us with new challenges but also opportunities.

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With democratic values, human rights, civil society space and multilateralism already questioned or threatened in many parts of the world, despite the powerful commitments set out by both the United Nations and the Commonwealth, it is vital that scrutiny and accountability are not further eroded and that the efforts of Parliamentarians to uphold these are supported.

The United Nations described 2020-30 as a ‘Decade of Action’ to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with their core commitment to ‘leave no one behind’. Agenda 2030 was always going to be difficult to achieve and emergencies such as COVID-19, refugee crises and natural disasters make the job tougher still. In developing this plan, we have identified Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff as playing a crucial role in delivering the SDGs: developing legislation, allocating budgets and holding governments to account in order to implement the SDGs in the timeframe set.

“Connected to this is the deep commitment of Commonwealth citizens and civil society to the values and principles set out in the Commonwealth Charter, including the crucial role of effective and democratic Parliaments in protecting human rights, promoting economic empowerment and challenging injustice.”

Connected to this is the deep commitment of Commonwealth citizens and civil society to the values and principles set out in the Commonwealth Charter, including the crucial role of effective and democratic Parliaments in protecting human rights, promoting economic empowerment and challenging injustice. We are eager that this plan provides us with a blueprint for assisting and enabling our membership to promote and protect the Charter, within and outside of the Commonwealth.

Recent events have demonstrated the huge role of technology in helping to propel these issues to the fore and enabling people to better connect with, and advocate alongside, each other. We are presented with huge potential to learn and develop further from this so that we can widen participation and a broader, more diverse range of voices can be heard within parliamentary strengthening and the Commonwealth. At the same time, technological innovations are vital to tackling the impact of climate change and enabling us all to operate in a more sustainable way through greater use of virtual platforms and remote learning.

“Across the Commonwealth, more than 60% of the population is aged under thirty. Empowering young people will enable us all to benefit from the energy and ideas of a new generation of citizens. Listening to young people and learning from them has great potential to help renew our political institutions.”

Across the Commonwealth, more than 60% of the population is aged under thirty. Empowering young people will enable us all to benefit from the energy and ideas of a new generation of citizens. Listening to young people and learning from them has great potential to help renew our political institutions.

This Strategic Plan seeks to address these challenges and maximise opportunities. Through a robust and thorough consultation process we have sought the views of the CPA’s membership and key external partners in how to best approach these challenges whilst delivering our longstanding goals.

The objectives we have identified aim to build on and consolidate the substantial progress the CPA has made over recent years. By addressing the challenges of the 2020s, we seek to increase our effectiveness, efficiency and impact in supporting our members and strengthening parliamentary democracy as we progress towards 2025.

Strategic Objectives

1

Strengthen the capacity and maximise the effectiveness of Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff and enable mutual learning.

- The CPA's core mandate is to promote parliamentary democracy. We will continue to connect, develop and support Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff to fulfil their democratic functions and aid the implementation of the enduring values of the Commonwealth.
- By fostering an enabling environment for dialogue, cooperation and mutual learning for Parliamentarians and officials, we will provide the tools for our members to build their capacity and in turn strengthen the governance of political institutions.
- The principle of mutual learning lies at the heart of the CPA's new Parliamentary Academy which will play a central role in the delivery of this strategic objective.

2

Protect and uphold the independence of Parliaments, the principle of the separation of powers and broader human rights as set out in the Commonwealth Charter through strong, strategic partnerships.

- The CPA plays a vital role in promoting and advancing the Commonwealth Charter, through our capacity-building programmes, awareness-raising communications and through the actions of our membership. We will continue to emphasise the key values of the Commonwealth throughout our work and will collaborate closely with the Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Accredited Organisations and other external partners to uphold the independence of Parliaments.
- We will work to increase our visibility as a vocal champion of the Commonwealth Charter, particularly with regards to good governance, the Commonwealth Latimer House Principles and the protection of human rights.

3

Persuade the UK Government to implement legislation recognising the CPA as an international, interparliamentary organisation.

- The CPA has had the legal status of a UK charity since 1971 and our work is governed by charity law. We are seeking a change to the organisation’s legal status to enable us to continue to achieve our ambitions for the future. Our members agreed that the most appropriate option was a change of status to an international, interparliamentary organisation and we have been working towards this.
- This Strategic Plan provides a revitalised opportunity for CPA Officers, the CPA Working Group on Governance and the CPA Secretary-General to re-affirm our commitment to this key aim. We will build upon the ‘*Business Case for Status Change*’ that we initially presented to the UK Government in December 2018 and will continue to engage and work closely with the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, CPA UK and others to progress the issue and achieve this core objective.

4

Support Parliaments and Parliamentarians to adapt, innovate and recover from crises such as COVID-19 or natural disasters.

- The events of 2020 have highlighted the importance of Parliamentarians and their legislatures adapting and innovating when faced with major new challenges. In order to successfully preserve the operations and duties of Parliament during difficult times, it is essential for Parliamentarians and staff to take appropriate, proportionate and novel measures.
- Having already adapted our approach in delivering our programmes and governance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CPA is committed to supporting our membership in the face of new and existing challenges. We will learn from the changes in modalities of working over recent months and their impact on parliamentary functions and processes, networking and learning and we will provide opportunities for our members to share lessons from the crisis and promote innovation and best practice in the future.
- The CPA will champion new ways of working, whilst encouraging our Parliaments to put in place the necessary safeguards to operate effectively and democratically – including addressing the digital divide. We will work with our members to ensure they have clear business continuity and crisis management measures in place, with a keen emphasis on developing and maintaining robust IT strategies and adopting innovative IT solutions where possible.

Strategic Objectives

5

Support and enable the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), CPA Small Branches and Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) networks to fulfil their strategic objectives.

- The three CPA networks play a vital role in advancing issues around gender equality, small jurisdictions and disability within the Commonwealth and the wider international arena. We pledge to further support and strengthen these networks, so that the full diversity of Commonwealth Parliamentarians' experiences is reflected in our work, membership and partnerships.
- Building upon the work undertaken in recent years, the CPA will continue to work closely with the networks' Chairs, Steering Committees, Regional Champions and wider membership in order to implement and achieve their network specific strategic objectives. We will help to ensure that the networks remain strong, vocal and responsive advocates for those whom they aim to represent. The CPA will further encourage our member Parliaments to become gender and disability-sensitive institutions.

6

Promote the values of the Commonwealth, parliamentary democracy and sustainable development to a wide audience.

- The CPA is committed to fostering the values of the Commonwealth and the UN Agenda 2030's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) across our membership and beyond. Whilst our work relates particularly to SDG 16, focusing on peace, justice and strong institutions, we will support CPA members to play an active role in the delivery of all SDGs in their own jurisdictions, regionally and on an international level.
- Security and stability are important challenges for Commonwealth Parliamentarians, including the impact of conflict, terrorism and cyber-crime. The CPA will give active support to our members to address these.

Commonwealth Parliamentarians at the 38th CPA Australia and Pacific Regional Conference held in Adelaide, South Australia.



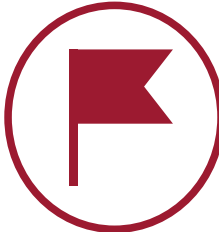
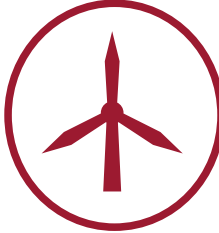

Youth delegates from across the Commonwealth at the 8th Commonwealth Youth Parliament in British Columbia, Canada.



Youth delegates at the annual Commonwealth Youth Parliament, organised by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in partnership with the host CPA Branch.

Cross-cutting themes

Throughout our consultation and strategic planning process, several cross-cutting themes emerged as significant. We are therefore committed to mainstreaming six key themes throughout our operations and workstreams.

 <p>Gender</p>	 <p>Small States and Jurisdictions</p>	 <p>Youth</p>
 <p>Disability</p>	 <p>Sustainable Development and Climate Change</p>	 <p>Technology and Innovation</p>

We will work to ensure that these themes are fully integrated across the CPA Secretariat's ways of working and that they underpin the development and delivery of all CPA budgets, programmes, communications, partnerships and evaluation methods.

Through mainstreaming these themes into our work and decision-making processes, we will create a more inclusive, responsive and relevant organisation. We aim to ensure that this approach takes root throughout the period of this Strategic Plan and is adopted as best practice for the CPA beyond 2025.

Implementation Tools

In order to realise the CPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and fulfil our objectives, there are some important and essential foundational enablers that we will utilise.

Convening Power and Strength in Diversity

A core strength of the CPA is our convening power. When the organisation was founded in 1911, the world had scarcely two dozen nations which could be classed as parliamentary democracies. Today, the United Nations has 193 member states, 54 of them in the Commonwealth. At the CPA we bring together over 17,000 Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from more than 180 legislatures and, unique to the CPA, these consist of sub-national Parliaments as well as national Parliaments.

The presence of sub-national states and provinces - as well as Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies - belonging to the same organisation as some of the largest global democracies enables our members to convene as equals. This ability to bring together representatives from Parliaments across the globe and invoke a mass of political will and awareness has huge potential to generate a wave of change.

The plethora of voices and experiences within the CPA makes for political dialogue at its most innovative and dynamic - the power of which we will harness and channel to accomplish our core mission of promoting and strengthening parliamentary democracy. Through our programmes and global conferences, such as the annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC), we facilitate a shared space for Parliamentarians and officials to discuss best practice on issues ranging from Select Committee scrutiny to security and geo-political stability.

We will continue to take advantage of technology to create more opportunities for this discourse on virtual platforms and encourage Parliaments to utilise the CPA network to agree to, and hold each other to account on, key commitments that feed into working towards achieving the SDGs and our wider objectives.



“The CPA has been successful in harnessing all our strengths and opportunities as Parliaments that share a common history under the Commonwealth and builds on these to strengthen our democracies.”

Parliament of Fiji and CPA Fiji Branch

Programmes and Projects

Learning and striving for excellence should be a lifelong endeavour. At the heart of the CPA is the principal importance of building the capacity of Commonwealth Parliamentarians, parliamentary officials and clerks. The CPA was originally established with the simple premise that by bringing Parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth together to share experiences and learning, parliamentary democracy and good governance could be greatly enhanced. That idea remains true today.

Over the life of the strategy, our primary focus will be the ongoing delivery of programmes and projects to our members which are consistently impact-oriented, effective, sustainable, cost-effective, innovative and of the highest standards. Our dual programmes' strategy comprises professional development and institutional strengthening activities. Both workstreams are undertaken on a multilateral and bilateral basis to ensure a depth and breadth of learning across our membership. For the life of this strategy we will champion our flagship programmes, such as the *CPA Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures*, our Technical Assistance Programmes and our Post-Election Seminars, whilst generating new and timely projects which meet the changing demands of our members and their Parliaments. Whether it be tackling the impact of climate change or mitigating the future risks of global pandemics, we will strive to remain relevant and responsive to our members' needs.

We believe in the importance of continuous improvement, applying rigorous project management methodologies including monitoring and evaluation to our programme outputs and deliverables. With the ongoing objective of perfecting our professional development programmes, we have developed the *CPA Parliamentary Academy*. This project, launched in 2021, is one of the most ambitious in the CPA's history. It will offer a portfolio of online and physical courses delivered internally and through established partnerships with leading academic institutions. Through an adaptive, tailored and flexible learning approach, the Academy will be a centre for excellence for Parliamentarians and parliamentary officials, new and experienced, to build their knowledge, skills and confidence and empower them to face existing and future challenges. Over the life of the strategy, the Academy will continue to expand in content to cover a greater variety of topics and learning needs.



“One of the most important functions of CPA is to deliver knowledge-sharing and educational programmes for Members of Parliament. Such programmes increase knowledge, deepen understanding, provide opportunities for networking, and can increase the effectiveness of an MP.”

Hon. Lim Biow Chuan, MP, Parliament of Singapore
CPA Singapore Branch

Research and Expertise

The CPA is a leading organisation in the field of strengthening parliamentary democracy. We believe in the value of providing accurate, balanced, academically rigorous information, data and research for our membership. We will continue to be an invaluable knowledge-hub, commissioning, producing and publishing toolkits, handbooks, guidelines and other materials for the benefit and use of Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff on a range of subject-specialisms, from parliamentary practice and procedure to overarching themes like COVID-19 or the SDGs. We will always endeavour to collaborate with leading international experts by incorporating their invaluable knowledge and experience into our research products.

Central to our strategy will be the ongoing provision of the *Commonwealth Parliaments Research Service* (CPRS). It is a world-renowned service which is uniquely placed to offer authoritative information relevant to the needs of our primary stakeholders. Our research is collected, designed and distributed to internal and external stakeholders through multiple channels. Our approach is to produce timely, high quality and valuable research particularly to those Parliamentarians and Parliaments unable to provide or access such resources from alternative sources.



“CPA’s strengths are the quantity and quality of training programs for Parliamentarians and the reference tools - guidelines, toolkits, benchmarks, etc. - produced by the CPA to facilitate the work of Parliaments.”

CPA Québec Branch

Technology and Innovation

Our focus on technology and innovation in the coming years will draw heavily from the lessons learned in 2020 and 2021. In addition to expanding our digital communications content and utilising the new CPA website to its full capacity, we will continue to adapt and modernise the content and delivery of our programmes and governance. Following on from the new *CPA Parliamentary Academy*, the CPA Secretariat will ensure we have a renewed focus on the cutting-edge issues facing our membership. We will employ innovative techniques and create more virtual opportunities to share best practice across our programmes, governance and support to members.

In undertaking these efforts, we will address the digital divide within our membership and the wider Commonwealth through additional support and technical assistance programmes where appropriate. We will also look to increase the IT awareness, training and resources available for CPA members and staff to grow digital capacity and ensure we are all agile and flexible when faced with new challenges.

Partnerships

Partnerships play a key role in the CPA's efforts to foster and promote the values of the Commonwealth and the SDGs. In acknowledging that this will require both international cooperation and strong relationships between governments, Parliaments, the private sector and civil society, we are committed to building and maintaining strategic partnerships with fellow Commonwealth organisations, civil society groups, think tanks, academic institutions, UN bodies and other international parliamentary strengthening organisations, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

We will place a greater emphasis on exploring potential partnerships within the CPA's regions and will pursue emerging opportunities for joint action at a regional level in areas of shared interest. Through more open dialogue and closer relations, both bilaterally and multilaterally, the CPA can avoid duplicating how we promote and strengthen democracy, human rights and multilateralism, enabling us to refine and focus our work further.

Given our mutually reinforcing objectives and compatible cross-cutting themes, we will look to enhance our collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Foundation and Commonwealth of Learning.

There is a diverse range of Commonwealth organisations working hard to uphold the Commonwealth Charter. We will explore what more we can do to act in partnership with them via umbrella bodies like the Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organisations (IFCO) and the Commonwealth Latimer House Working Group and on a bilateral basis with the Associated Organisations, including the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF).

In advocating for strengthened human rights across the Commonwealth, we will seek to collaborate more closely with organisations already dedicated to improving the situation for marginalised groups, including the Commonwealth Equality Network, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative and Commonwealth Youth Gender Equality Network.



“The CPA is well regarded by Commonwealth Associations as a credible and effective organisation that uses its convening power and programmes to promote democracy and good governance in the Commonwealth.”

Association of Commonwealth Universities

“The best the CPA does is being a very effective glue: weaving together the strengths of its members and by promoting laudable goals. It is an international role model and ‘flies the flag’ in so many positive areas.”

United Nations Association New Zealand

Youth Engagement

We pledge to prioritise the role and interests of young people within the CPA's work and operations. We will uphold and promote youth participation in politics and will support young Parliamentarians in their new roles through, amongst other mechanisms, encouraging their participation in Post-Election Seminars, enrolling in the *CPA Parliamentary Academy* and creating mentoring opportunities with CPA alumni.

Beyond our core membership, we will pay particular attention to engaging and educating young people on democracy and the role of Parliament. We will build upon the successful Commonwealth Youth Parliaments (CYP) of recent years and look to maximise the impact and reach of the future CYPs, virtual and physical, to encourage youth involvement in political processes and in turn embed the voices of younger generations within the work of the CPA.

We will increase our focus on the citizenship and awareness raising work we undertake with schools and pupils across the Commonwealth by bolstering the CPA Roadshow programme and strengthening the informative and educational resources we create for young people, particularly around key events such as Commonwealth Day and International Day of Democracy.

Within the CPA Secretariat, we will continue to explore the possibility of an internship programme to allow for greater opportunities for young people to work within a Commonwealth setting and gain the skills and experience necessary for more substantive future roles.

We will also look to expand upon potential partnerships with the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Association of Commonwealth Universities and others in empowering young people in leadership and increasing the capacity of Parliaments to respond to their needs and priorities.



“There is a dire need to connect with the new generation.”

CPA Pakistan Branch

“It is critical that the Association positions itself as the go-to organisation on matters of parliamentary engagement, democracy and good governance.”

CPA Kenya Branch

Sustainable Development and Climate Change

The international community has made bold commitments to tackle poverty and climate change, including the Paris Accords and Agenda 2030. These commitments are important tools for Parliamentarians in their work on sustainable development. The CPA Small Branches network has led the way in raising the profile of climate change and biodiversity within the CPA. Small island developing states are in the front line here.

CPA's role is to support our members so that they can be effective advocates for sustainable development. This commitment runs through our programmes and other activities. We will pursue this in partnership with others working in this important sphere including UNDP, UNESCO, Parliamentarians for Global Action, the Global TB Caucus, the International Parliamentary Network for Education and Parliamentarians for the Global Goals.

In mainstreaming these issues, we will also step up our efforts to ensure CPA operations are more environmentally sustainable. This will include an increased use of virtual meetings where possible to reduce air travel, a reduction in the number of physical publications and printed materials and a reinforcement of our paperless policy for governance meetings.



“Together with the attainment of SDGs under Agenda 2030, a prioritisation of climate change will go a long way in supporting development and the pursuit of economic, social and cultural aspects of parliamentary democracy.”

CPA Kenya Branch

“Parliamentarians have a crucial role in the promotion and protection of human rights. The CPA is key in raising awareness of this amongst Parliamentarians and other stakeholders at both international and national levels.”

Professor Luis Franceschi, Senior Director
Governance and Peace Directorate, The Commonwealth Secretariat

Communications

Our communications strategy is key to enhancing the visibility and reach of the CPA, both within our membership and the wider parliamentary strengthening community, and the effectiveness of our programmes and networks. It is therefore an essential tool in delivering our strategic objectives.

We will enhance our current communications methods through continuous improvement to ensure they are flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the CPA and our key stakeholders. This will involve developing and utilising new innovations and technologies, including broadening our digital content with a CPA podcast and blog. By employing the most relevant and up-to-date digital tools, we will also ensure the new CPA website is utilised to its full extent as an interactive hub for our members and external partners. It will act as a clear and accessible portal for viewing our organisational outputs, as well as for accessing resource materials on the SDGs and Commonwealth Charter, news articles, *The Parliamentarian* and CPA member information.

Through diversifying our communication outlets, we will increase engagement from groups which we have previously found harder to reach and will provide a wide range of platforms for the many different voices that exist within the CPA. This will in turn create more opportunities for mutual learning among our members and will strengthen our organisational reputation and credibility. In creating and publishing varied and engaging content on multiple platforms we also hope to increase collaboration with Commonwealth and international organisations to promote shared values and parliamentary democracy in a coordinated multi-pronged approach.



“CPA’s networks offer a valuable convening function on important issues around parliamentary practices and effectiveness for populations that are significantly underrepresented both in the Commonwealth and beyond.”

Sophia Fernandes, Westminster Foundation for Democracy

CPA Networks

The three CPA networks, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), CPA Small Branches and Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD), play a central role in advancing their focal issues and are integral to the CPA’s work. Our networks will continue to advocate for those they aim to represent and will provide a platform for all voices to be heard within the CPA and the Commonwealth. They are essential vehicles to progress their own agendas and individual strategic plans, whilst playing a key role in driving forward and achieving the CPA’s overarching objectives.

We will encourage the development of our networks’ partnerships with organisations who hold our shared values to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes that forward our CPA Mission and goals. Our networks will continue to generate awareness raising research and materials, facilitate a space for mutual learning and seek representation at high-level forums and meetings.

CPA Alumni

In addition to our current network of Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, we are keen to form stronger links with our organisation's alumni to maintain their involvement with the CPA after they leave Parliament. We will increase our efforts to engage with former Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff and utilise their rich and diverse experiences within our work, including participation in CPA programmes and creating mentorship partnerships for current members.

This continued engagement will provide additional networking opportunities for CPA alumni and will also ensure the values and work of the CPA are actively championed across our regions, by both current and former members, within and outside of traditional political institutions.



“The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is a fantastic educational and networking resource.”

Hon. Juan Watterson, Speaker of the House of Keys, Parliament of Tynwald
CPA Isle of Man Branch

Governance

Good governance lies at the heart of the CPA's Mission and we are therefore committed to the responsible and effective administration of our organisation, with a keen focus on transparency, accountability, financial oversight and thorough auditing processes.

The CPA Secretariat will maintain the CPA's high reporting standards both internally, with regards to reporting to our Trustees, and externally, including producing our Annual Report and Performance Review, accountability of the Secretariat and Trustees to the Charity Commission and the upkeep of our accreditation as an Associated and Accredited Commonwealth Organisation.

We will continue to provide our Trustees with support and guidance from the CPA Secretariat so that they are able to act in a fully informed, lawful and representative manner. All decisions and actions taken will be in accordance with the CPA constitution and will ensure that all CPA members, regardless of region or jurisdiction, are treated equally. Through fulfilling our financial, administrative and human resource obligations to the highest levels of international best practice we will ensure our organisation is an effective vehicle to progress and deliver our objectives.



“We encourage the CPA to focus on women in all their diversities, as well as champion diverse Parliaments across the world.”

The Commonwealth Equality Network and Kaleidoscope Trust

Finances and income diversification

A longstanding strength of the CPA is that the majority of our income comes from Branch membership fees, demonstrating the dedication and commitment of our members. Additionally, we have taken a number of proactive steps towards the diversification of CPA's income. This should ensure that we can undertake the ambitious programme and membership support we aspire to without threatening our financial standing. We will continue to pursue possibilities to increase the range of CPA income through exploring new partnerships, alternative funding streams and income generation initiatives.

In this endeavour, we will also ensure the application of a Socially Responsible Investment Policy to guarantee any potential CPA investments and financially beneficial partnerships are aligned with the objectives of the SDGs.



“CPA should aspire to be a more visible and vocal champion of the Commonwealth Charter, particularly on the rights which form part of a healthy democracy.”

Strategic Plan Consultation Respondee

CPA Secretariat

The CPA Secretariat is committed to working with our Trustees and wider membership to fulfil the strategic objectives. The dedication and professionalism of the CPA's staff are key enablers of the CPA's strategy.

The CPA Secretariat will continue to embody and champion the values of the CPA in both its work and conduct and will undertake all functions in a professional, transparent and holistic manner. Our Secretariat support for CPA Branches, both national and sub-national, will continue to recognise and respect the different needs and preferred approaches of our member Parliaments.

We will further develop pilot schemes for remote working opportunities from the CPA's Regions so that the CPA Secretariat reflects the geography of our membership and represents the CPA value of celebrating diversity.

Through continuous strengthening of our monitoring and evaluation methodology, we will enable our staff to design, adapt and appraise their work in order to achieve this plan's objectives.

Lastly, we will continue to pursue greater training and professional development opportunities for staff at all levels and will prioritise the learning and development and well-being of staff, following our recent achievement of *Investors in People* accreditation. This internationally recognised accreditation is celebrated worldwide as a global benchmark of excellent people management and development.



Parliamentary staff from across the CPA Caribbean, Americas and the Atlantic Region gather for a CPA professional development programme in Grenada.



THE COMMONWEALTH AT 70
FROM WESTMINSTER
TO THE WORLD

The Commonwealth at 70: From Westminster to the World

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

Founded more than a century ago, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association has become a force for good governance across the Commonwealth's nations, territories and dependencies

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) traces its origin to a world vastly different from today. When it was founded in 1911 as the Empire Parliamentary Association, the world had scarcely two dozen nations which were parliamentary democracies. The British Empire was composed of one sovereign parliamentary democracy, five dominions, a handful of tiny protectorates and a vast array of colonies. Today, the United Nations has 193 member states, 53 of them in the Commonwealth of Nations. The CPA's membership of 180 branches also includes 14 Overseas Territories, three Crown Dependencies and more than 125 sub-national states, provinces and territories in federal-style countries, all with their own parliaments or legislatures.

The Empire Parliamentary Association was renamed the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association at a conference in London in October 1948, as parliamentarians preceded their governments by several months in recognising that the future lay in working together as equals, co-operating to build a new world. The modern-day Commonwealth, as we know it, was later founded officially at the government level in 1949 by the London Declaration. As the Commonwealth evolved to its current membership of 53 nations, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association also grew to become a force for good governance, not just in the over 180 jurisdictions where it has branches today, but throughout the wider world.

are inspired by the "Westminster model" of parliamentary democracy.

Continuing education is necessary for all professions, and none more vital than parliamentarians and parliamentary officials who take office without the formal training and supervised practice of other professions. Legislators and staff are required to operate immediately, often in the highest positions in a country, in an unforgiving and exceptionally demanding environment. By helping parliamentarians and parliamentary officials to enhance their knowledge of the many different ways in which their institution operates throughout the Commonwealth, to understand diverse perspectives on political issues and to realise that they are not alone in the practice of their professions, the CPA has contributed to the development of governance throughout the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, which became annual from 1961 having previously been held every two years, added discussions on parliamentary and electoral processes to the usual agenda of political and foreign policy issues. The quarterly journal of the CPA, first published in 1920, evolved from a summary of debates in various parliaments to *The Parliamentarian* as the *Journal of Commonwealth Parliaments*, as a record of advances in democratic governance.

The CPA in 1989 created the constitutional posts of Patron and Vice-Patron of the Association. Elizabeth II as the Head of the





Delegates at the 62nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in London, UK.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The 2022-2025 Strategic Plan will commence in January 2022. It will be complemented each year by an 'Annual Business Plan' which will identify the priority activities and outputs necessary in order to achieve this plan's objectives. The 'Annual Business Plan' will be presented to the CPA Executive Committee each year for approval.

A monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed in line with the set objectives to enable us to accurately capture and analyse the progress made, drawing upon the monitoring and evaluation work that has been at the forefront of the improved processes and practices within our programmes and communications work. A keen emphasis will be placed on consistency and thoroughness in recording outputs, outcomes and impacts throughout the lifespan of the Strategic Plan.

This framework will enable the CPA to fulfil our reporting obligations to our membership and the UK Charity Commission by providing us with a clear and enhanced understanding of key results, areas for continuous improvement and value for money. This data will also play a pivotal role in our partnerships work as we will be able to present the impact and effectiveness of our programmes to others more accurately.

Our publicly available Annual Report and Performance Review will use the monitoring and evaluation framework to present the progress of our activities against our strategic objectives and the outputs set out in our Annual Business Plan.

In addition to our Annual Report, the CPA Secretariat will also provide the CPA Executive Committee with bi-annual progress reports via the Audit Subcommittee which will continue to receive an update at each Executive Committee meeting on the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

A mid-term review of the plan will take place in 2023 to allow us to take stock of the progress made, identify and address any issues that have arisen since its initial introduction, and recognise and implement any further actions needed to ensure the objectives are achieved within the remaining period of the plan. The review will also help to ascertain the effectiveness of the monitoring framework and whether any changes are necessary.



“The CPA could improve on monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress made in implementing Association decisions, Agenda 2030 and in delivering commitments contained in the Commonwealth Charter.”

CPA British Columbia Branch

ANNEX: Strategic Plan 2018-2021: progress and lessons learned

The 2018-2021 Strategic Plan set out several areas of priority for the CPA Secretariat and we have made good progress towards achieving these objectives:

Continuous improvement in the quality and relevance of the CPA's programmes

Building on the 2019 Strategic Review of CPA Programmes and subsequent developments, we have continued to deliver a considerable number of high-quality and innovative activities and publications, ranging from workshops, online courses, high-quality toolkits, supporting CPA Officers' attendance at key international meetings and publishing informative and topical editions of *The Parliamentarian*.

In addition, we have implemented new formats to ensure our programmes are engaging and tailored to the interests and needs of each of our legislatures. In response to COVID-19, we developed timely toolkits, organised webinars and adapted physical programmes to a digital delivery to ensure organisational relevance and membership support in an evolving context.

As part of the CPA's wider redevelopment of its website and evolution of programmes, we have also developed the *CPA Parliamentary Academy*. This online platform provides CPA Parliamentarians and parliamentary officials with a freely accessible long-term learning programme to further their professional development through access to toolkits, courses and video masterclasses, as well as attending residency elements when possible.

Recognition of the CPA as a leading organisation in the field of parliamentary strengthening and collaboration with other key partners

We are acutely aware of the crowded space in which the CPA operates, and we have taken great strides to maintain our footing and build our reputation as a leader in parliamentary strengthening. Of particular note are the number of CPA *Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures* self-assessments undertaken as part of the Commonwealth Partnerships for Democracy (CP4D) project and a large uptake in Post-Election Seminars; bolstering our standing as a go-to partner for Parliaments.

Through building new and valuable partnerships and collaborating with other leading international organisations we have sought to further increase the profile and presence of the CPA and its CWP, CPA Small Branches and CPwD networks. Over recent years, we have been represented at a greater number of key UN meetings, played an integral role in the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM) and its forums and developed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) documents with key UN Agencies and external partners.

Progress towards achieving a new legal status for the CPA

CPA's status as a UK charity has been a significant matter within the organisation for many years. The 2018-2021 Strategic Plan reaffirmed the important objective for the CPA to be reconstituted as an international organisation established in law by the UK Government and Parliament.

Whilst movement towards achieving this objective has not been at the pace initially hoped, a new Working Group on Governance focusing on the issue was established at the CPA General Assembly in September 2019 and dialogue is ongoing between the CPA and the UK Government in order to achieve our vision of an international interparliamentary status.

The creation of a more financially sustainable organisation

The previous Strategic Plan highlighted the potential threat that outstanding membership fees could have on the organisation's financial standing given the reliance of CPA's income on subscriptions. We have therefore explored routes to mitigate this risk and to become more financially sustainable through establishing diverse income streams other than membership subscriptions.

This initiative is ongoing and measures taken towards achieving financial sustainability have included the:

- Creation of a Working Group on Income Diversification
- Instruction of an external report on potential alternative funding streams
- Recruitment of a new CPA Partnerships and Engagement Manager
- Development and implementation of an Ethical Fundraising and Acceptance of Funds Policy

A fit for purpose IT system

Prior to the previous Strategic Plan, the CPA's IT systems did not meet our organisational needs. Following the necessary investment and expert recruitment, the development and implementation of a plan to update systems that support all CPA activities effectively, efficiently and reliably was undertaken.

We now have IT systems fit for purpose to support our operations for the foreseeable future. This investment in our technological infrastructure also allowed us to quickly adapt to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic and enabled us to support our members through distance learning and virtual programmes, which would not have been possible using our old, outdated technology infrastructure and systems.

We have also more recently undertaken the redevelopment of the CPA's website which now houses our e-learning platform the *CPA Parliamentary Academy*. This has empowered us to provide a more engaging, interactive and informative communications and learning hub for members to utilise and for current and potential partners to learn more about CPA activities and outputs.

The development of a robust system of performance management and holistic way of working within the CPA Secretariat

Since the introduction of the previous Strategic Plan, modern ways of working such as matrix and flexi-working are now well embedded within the CPA Secretariat. Moving away from the former siloed structure, staff have embraced enhanced internal communications and cohesion.

There has been an increased emphasis on learning, training and development of CPA staff, particularly on professional project management processes, leadership and people management and IT and digital design skills. Staff at all levels are encouraged to take advantage of learning and development opportunities and this forms part of the current robust management practices and appraisal systems in place.

Secure accommodation for the CPA Secretariat

Since 2018, we have been in consultation with the UK Parliament regarding future accommodation of the CPA Secretariat on the Parliamentary Estate. In 2020, we were very pleased to receive the assurance of long-term accommodation provision on the Estate, thus enabling us to fulfil this objective.

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