

European and External Affairs Committee

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Update on the work of the National Assembly for Wales Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

Introduction

1 This paper has been prepared as a brief update for the European and External Affairs Committee's ("The Committee") meeting on 08 June 2010. It is a paper to note on the updated activities of the Wales Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (from hereon referred to as the "CPA") since the Branch Chair, Janet Ryder AM, gave evidence to this committee on 12 January 2010

2 The Committee on 12 January 2010 was also presented with a supporting written paper with information on the background of the Wales Branch of the CPA, its structure and organisation and a summary of the Branch's activities during 2009. Members are referred to this paper (ref:.....) for more detail on these areas.

3. The Committee is asked to note the content of this paper.

Commonwealth Day 2010 (March)

The Branch was represented at the official Commonwealth Day celebrations in Westminster by Daniel Harper and Amelia Wingfield - selected by "Funky Dragon" (Wales' National forum for Children and Young People). Amelia also had the honour of being selected to attend the prestigious Secretary General's Reception.

Plans to mark Commonwealth Day in the National Assembly, including a young people's debate in Siambr Hywel on this year's Commonwealth theme of "Science, Technology & Society", was cancelled due to Industrial Action affecting the National Assembly.

CPA Executive Committee Meeting

8-13 May, Swaziland

Jeff Cuthbert AM represented Wales as the Regional Representative at the Executive Committee's mid-year meeting. The meeting agenda included discussions on:

- The Employment of the CPA Secretary General and other Secretarial Staff (at CPA HQ)
- The programme approval status
- The UK Branch's proposals for the 57th Annual Conference, to be held in London 2011
- Attendance of Regional Secretaries at Executive Committee (ExCo) meetings

Significantly, the meeting also discussed the establishment of an International CPA Working Party with a remit of "examining ways of enhancing and promoting openness, transparency and sound management and fiscal practices" within the CPA.

Note: The CPA Working Party is likely to hold its first meeting prior to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in Nairobi this September and the BIMR Region of the CPA will be represented by Janet Ryder AM. The "Enhancing Governance" paper, originally driven by the CPA Wales Branch and now endorsed by the Region as a whole will be put in front of the Working Party for consideration.

Visit to Lesotho

Following the ExCo Meeting, Jeff Cuthbert visited neighbouring Lesotho in a programme organised by Dolen Cymru (The Wales Lesotho Link). During his time in Lesotho Jeff visited the new Parliament building in Maseru, a school in Leribe twinned with St Cennydd and had meetings with the Irish Ambassador, a doctor from Wales working in Lesotho, school teachers seconded through Dolen with Welsh Government funding and other stakeholders working in partnership between our two countries.

41st British Isles and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) Conference.

10 - 14 May, Isle of Man

A delegation of four Assembly Members, led by the DPO Rosemary Butler AM, and including Janet Ryder AM (Chair), Mohammad Asghar AM, Jenny Randerson AM and two Members of staff attended this conference in Douglas. The Conference was also attended by representatives of all other Countries and regions of the BIMR except Malta who were unable to attend.

The theme of the conference was "Technology and democracy: Successes and Challenges". This theme was discussed in the context of Possibilities, Rights and Challenges. Plenary presentations included talks on "Open Government" by Mr Dave Coplin of the Microsoft Cooperation; and on "Information Security" by Mr Christopher Graham, the UK Information Commissioner.

The Wales delegation played an active part in the Conference, promoting our e-democracy agenda and participating as facilitators,

rapporteurs and Chairs in the Plenary and breakout sessions.

BIMR Annual General Meeting

The BIMR AGM, held during this year's conference saw the "Enhancing Governance" paper unanimously endorsed by the (BIMR) Region.

Note: The CPA Wales Branch has committed to host the BIMR Conference in 2014. It was last hosted here in Wales in 2002.

Destiny Africa Children's Choir

On 18 May, the National Assembly welcomed the Destiny Africa Children's Choir. The visit and performance, sponsored by the CPA Wales Branch was a great success and raised awareness of the work of the Kampala Children's Centre in Uganda.

Note: The event has been documented with photographs and video footage, available to see on the National Assembly's Flickr and youtube sites.

Commonwealth Visitors to the Senedd.

The Branch assisted Members in the development of programmes for Commonwealth visitors to the Assembly. Some notable recent visitors include:

Mr Adam McCarthy, Deputy High Commissioner to the UK (March '10)

Mr Emmanuel Anyimadu - Clerk to the Ghana Parliament (March '10)

Mr Allan Shearan MP - Parliament New South Wales

The Indian High Commissioner, His Excellency Nalin Surie (April '10)

Forward Look:

25th Anniversary of the Link between Wales and Lesotho

The Branch looks forward to a very special evening on 16 June to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the link between Wales and Lesotho. A reception will be held in the Senedd in the company of HRH Princess Mabereng Seeiso Bereng Seesio,.

International Parliamentary Conference on Climate Change

The Branch will be represented by Darren Millar AM in a forthcoming IPC Westminster Seminar on Climate Change to be held this July.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference 2010.

The 56th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference will be held in Nairobi, Kenya in September 2010. The CPA Wales Branch has been invited to attend the conference.

CPA Branch Secretariat

May 2010