



National Assembly of Belize

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PRESS RELEASE

National Assembly Represented at 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

--August 23, 2022-- The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Valerie Woods, the President of the Senate, Hon. Carolyn Trench-Sandiford, the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Marconi Leal, along with the Clerk of the National Assembly, Mr. Eddie Webster, comprise the Belize parliamentary delegation attending the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC). The conference is being held in Halifax, Canada from the 20th to 26th August. The theme of the 65th CPC is: "Inclusive, Accessible, Accountable and Strong Parliaments: The Cornerstone of Democracy and Essential for Development".

As CPA's flagship event, this year's conference is hosting over 600 Commonwealth Speakers and MPs, Clerks, and international experts, who have gathered to discuss parliamentary strengthening, support to parliamentarians, gender sensitization, improving women representation and challenges for small branch parliaments through a series of workshops and conferences.

Speaker Woods, as the Chair of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians for the Caribbean, Atlantic and the Americas Region (CWP CAA), was re-elected as the vice-chair for the CWP Network 2022-2023. As the vice-chair, Speaker Woods chaired the Steering Committee of the CWP and reported on the work of the Committee at the business meeting of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians. The CWP also held its annual conference under the theme: "Break the Bias: Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow". The workshops covered at the conference addressed empowering women parliamentarians, combatting all forms of abuse and harassment in parliament, financial empowerment of women and promoting gender-sensitive parliaments post-pandemic.

The Clerk of the National Assembly is the Branch Secretary for the Belize branch of the CPA. During the conference week, the Society of Clerks at the Table of the Commonwealth, the clerks of parliaments, also held its 56th General Meeting during the week of the conference.

The Small Branches network of the CPA (countries with populations less than 500,000) is also holding its annual conference during the week of the CPC. As a small branch parliament in the Commonwealth, the Belize delegation will also be attending the workshops specific to challenges of small branches such as financial scrutiny and oversight, disaster risk preparedness for small jurisdictions, wellbeing indicators and building sustainable economies of small branches.

The conference concludes with its Annual General Assembly on Thursday, 25th August. The conference is organized by the Canadian Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Commonwealth Headquarters Secretariat. Travel cost for the Belize delegation was met by the CPA.

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