



# National Assembly of Belize

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Speaker Woods attends the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's Conference of Parliamentarians of the Caribbean, Americas, and Atlantic Region**

The Honourable Valerie Woods, Speaker of the House of Representatives, attended the **13<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for Women Parliamentarians of the Caribbean, Americas, and Atlantic Region (CWP CAA)** in Turks and Caicos Islands, which commenced on Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2023, through to Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2023.

In her opening remarks, Speaker Woods, in her capacity as Chair of the CWP CAA, stated that "the purpose of a women parliamentary network in the region is because women are still under-represented. If parliaments are to be truly representative of the people, then it needs to reflect this in its numbers and currently in the region, it does not. There is much more work to do".

The two-day conference addressed the critical role of women parliamentarians in democratic governance, the shared experiences across the region of women in leadership and the challenges faced, the crippling issue of youth crime and the interventions that women parliamentarians can make to contribute to addressing this which is a shared concern across the region. The conference concluded with the business meeting of the network on a review of the operating guidelines of the CWP CAA.

Speaker Woods is accompanied by the Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly, Mrs. Clarita Pech. Belize is currently a member of the regional Executive Committee; therefore, they also attended that meeting at the end of conference. On Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2023, the Speaker and the Deputy Clerk attended the official opening ceremony of the 45<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference for the CPA CAA parliamentarians as well as the first conference session on Oceans Biodiversity and Food Security Preparedness. The conference is being held under the theme "Building a Resilient Region in the Face of Global Challenge".

Speaker Woods and Mrs. Pech are expected to return to the country on Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

**Monday, July 24, 2023**

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