



# National Assembly of Belize

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REF: NA/17/23 (15)

### PRESS RELEASE

#### **National Assembly Represented at 66<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Accra, Ghana**

**—Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023—** The National Assembly of Belize is being represented this week at the 66<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in Accra, Ghana. The Belize parliamentary delegation includes the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Valerie Woods, in her capacity as a member of the Steering Committee of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, the President of the Senate, Hon. Carolyn Trench-Sandiford, the Vice President of the Senate, Hon. Collet Montejo, and the Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly, Mrs. Clarita Pech. This is the annual flagship conference for parliaments that are members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). This year, the conference is being hosted by the Parliament of Ghana and the CPA Ghana Branch from 30<sup>th</sup> September to 6<sup>th</sup> October. The theme of this year's conference is: "The Commonwealth Charter 10 years on: Values and Principles for Parliaments to Uphold".

During this week, the Small Branches network of the CPA (countries with populations less than 1,000,000) also held its 39<sup>th</sup> annual conference under the theme: "Mobilizing Relationships and Resources for Greater Sustainability". As a small branch parliament in the Commonwealth, the Belize delegation attended this conference. President Trench-Sandiford chaired and participated on the panel discussion on "Building Independent Parliaments: Ensuring Financial and Administrative Autonomy". The delegation also took part in the development workshops on the Impact of Population Changes on Small Jurisdictions; Small Parliaments Working Together: Services and Resource Sharing; Tackling Climate Change Through Environmental Impact Assessments and Gender Quotas in Parliaments.

The Society of Clerks at the Table of the Commonwealth (SoCATT), the network dedicated to Clerks of parliaments, also held its 57<sup>th</sup> General Meeting during the conference week. Mrs. Pech, as the Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly, participated in this meeting providing the opportunity for Belize to network with experienced Clerks from across the Commonwealth and to discuss areas of possible collaboration on strengthening of the administration of parliament.

The various delegations from the Caribbean, Atlantic and Americas region of the Commonwealth also met in the side margins of the conference for updates specific to parliamentary administration and regional matters of interest including representation within the commonwealth association.

The conference concluded today with its Annual General Assembly. As the organizers of the event, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Headquarters (CPA HQ) covered the airfare travel costs for the Belize delegation.

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