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PRESS RELEASE

Parliament represented at the CWP Champions for Gender Equality Workshop in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

—Friday, 8th December 2023— Senator, the Honourable Elena Smith attended the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Champions for Gender Equality: Achieving equal participation in Commonwealth parliaments, hosted by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) CWP Network in Tanzania from the 6th to 8th December 2023.

The three-day workshop convened 33 parliamentarians from 17 different Commonwealth parliaments, with an objective to address how champions of all genders can better address discriminatory practices, unequal access to resources and other issues that prevent the equal participation of women in parliament. The purpose of the workshop was also to help all parliamentarians, regardless of gender, build communication and advocacy skills to successfully encourage their institutions and/or wider civil society, to enhance and support women's political participation.

On the first day, participants attended a session where they were introduced to the concept of a Commonwealth gender sensitive parliament. Other sessions included discussions on understanding the importance of the role and function of a gender champion and exploring the challenges of harassment and violence in parliament and online.

During the second day, participants had the opportunity to interact and learn from stakeholders and organizations engaged in promoting gender equality. Participants also had the opportunity to continue the conversations undertaken during the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference about the effectiveness and desirability of quotas. This session allowed the parliamentarians to learn from the experiences and success stories from parliaments across the Commonwealth. The final session for the second day was on strategic media communication which allowed participants to hear from experts on how to engage with local and national media to effectively advocate for gender equality and greater women's representation.

On the last day of the workshop, participants heard from colleagues who have been active members of their women's caucus on the importance of such a group, its function, impact, and how they can feed into the parliamentary agenda. During this session, Senator Smith shared how the Belize Women's Parliamentary Caucus was established, its function and the different impacts and outcomes from the Caucus so far. The final session was on gender mainstreaming where participants got an introduction on the topic and gained an understanding of how it is a core element of a gender sensitive parliament.

All costs related to the travel for Senator Smith were met by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Headquarters Secretariat (CPA HQ).

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