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PRESS RELEASE

National Assembly Participates in a Westminster Seminar on Effective Parliaments

Monday, 16th March 2026 – A delegation from the National Assembly of Belize, comprising Hon. Marconi Leal Jr., Minister of State for Foreign Trade and Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Senator, the Hon. Sheena Pitts, and Mr. Manuel Grant, Parliamentary Officer I, participated in the 74th Westminster Seminar on Effective Parliaments, hosted by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) UK Branch in London from 9-13 March 2026.

The seminar brought together parliamentarians and parliamentary officials from across the Commonwealth to exchange experiences and strengthen parliamentary practice in an evolving global landscape.

Throughout the programme, Hon. Leal Jr. and Senator Pitts were actively engaged in the discussions and practical sessions addressing key aspects of parliamentary work. These included the role of the Speaker, parliamentary privilege and standards of conduct, effective scrutiny of the Executive, and the use of parliamentary resources to support oversight and accountability.

Senator Pitts also brought distinction to Belize through her participation in the Commonwealth Day Flag Raising Ceremony at Westminster Abbey, where she delivered a recitation from "*The House of the Commonwealth.*"

Hon. Leal Jr. played an active role in these engagements, participating in vigorous exchanges with fellow parliamentarians on issues such as codes of conduct, transparency, accountability, and the evolving demands on modern legislatures.

A highlight of the seminar was the delegation's observation of Prime Minister's Questions in the House of Commons, offering a first-hand view of executive accountability in practice. The programme also included a constituency visit to Liverpool Riverside, where Hon. Leal and Senator Pitts engaged with local government officials, community leaders, and institutional stakeholders, including representatives from Liverpool City Council, the International Slavery Museum, and Liverpool John Moores University, gaining valuable insight into community-level governance and constituency engagement.

The seminar also explored emerging priorities for parliaments, including leadership and communication, diversity and gender-sensitive approaches, the safety of parliamentarians, and the use of artificial intelligence to enhance parliamentary functions and public engagement.

Mr. Grant, contributed to discussions on parliamentary procedure and administration, including sharing insights on Belize's efforts in digitization.

All travel expenses related to the delegation's participation were funded by the CPA UK Branch.

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