

CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA

The Fifth Conference of the Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians, New Delhi: The Fifth Conference of the Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians, New Delhi was hosted by the Parliament of India in New Delhi from 9 to 12 July 2011. The Speakers of SAARC Countries, viz. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka; and Presiding Officers of Indian State Legislatures and Secretaries-General/Secretaries of SAARC Parliaments and Principal Secretaries/Secretaries of Indian Legislatures attended the Conference.

On 9 July 2011, the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh inaugurated the Conference at a solemn function held in the Central Hall of the Parliament House. The Speaker, Lok Sabha, Smt. Meira Kumar welcomed the distinguished gathering while the Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, H.E. Mr. Chamal Rajapaksa, proposed the Vote of Thanks. The Hon'ble Speakers of the other member countries also addressed the distinguished gathering.

On 10 July 2011, at the First Session of the Conference, the Speaker, Lok Sabha, Smt. Meira Kumar took over the Chair from the outgoing President of the Conference H.E. Mr. Chamal Rajapaksa, Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka. While thanking the Delegates, Smt. Meira Kumar specially welcomed the President of Wolesi Jirga (Parliament) of Afghanistan as the new member of the Association. Dr. Fehmida Mirza, Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan presided over as the Vice-President of the Conference.

Dr. Fehmida Mirza, Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan and Mr. Abdul Rauf Ibrahim, Speaker of the Wolesi Jirga (Parliament) of Afghanistan were the lead speakers on the subject: *"Consolidating Democracy: Strengthening Trust between Parliament and the People"*. Dr. Sonam Kinga, the Deputy Chairman, National Council of Bhutan and Mr. Md. Abdul Hamid, Advocate, Speaker of the Parliament of Bangladesh were the lead Speakers on the subject: *"Sustainable Development in SAARC Countries—The Way Forward"*.

Council; I. Hemochandra Singh, Speaker, Manipur Legislative Assembly; Charles Pyngrope, Speaker, Meghalaya Legislative Assembly; R. Romawia, Speaker, Mizoram Legislative Assembly; Kiyanielie Peseyie, Speaker, Nagaland Legislative Assembly; Pradip Kumar Amat, Speaker, Orissa Legislative Assembly; M.B Dahal, Deputy Speaker, Sikkim Legislative Assembly; R.C. Debnath, Speaker, Tripura Legislative Assembly; Harbans Kapoor, Speaker, Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly; Biman Bandyopadhyay, Speaker, West Bengal Legislative Assembly; Mohd. Akbar Lone, Speaker, Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly; Sardar Nirmal Singh Kahlon, Speaker, Punjab Vidhan Sabha; and Dr. Yoganand Shastri, Speaker, Delhi Vidhan Sabha.

Sarvashri N.B. Subhedar, Secretary, Goa Legislative Assembly; Girish Jha, Secretary-in-Charge, Bihar Vidhan Sabha; Ngurthanzuala, Secretary, Mizoram Legislative Assembly and Mohd. Ramzan, Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly were the four Secretaries from the State Branches who attended the Conference.

The year 2011 marked the 100th Anniversary of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The theme of the Conference was '*Reinforcing Democracy*', which was also the topic of the Centennial. The topic of the Plenary was '*Commonwealth Parliaments: Progress and Challenges*'. Besides, a total of eight Workshops were held on the following topics: (i) Commonwealth in 21st Century; (ii) Parliament and Reforms—Raising the Benchmarks; (iii) Commonwealth Initiatives in Handling Migration Issues; (iv) Enhancing Good Governance and Accountability: Improved Standards of Probity and Performance; (v) The World Economy and Obstacles facing the Commonwealth; (vi) Women as Agents of Change: Where are We Now? The Way Forward; (vii) Technological Threats to International, National and Personal Security; and (viii) The Role of Parliamentarians in Advancing the Transfer of Agricultural Technology and Research.

The Speaker, Lok Sabha delivered the Lead Speech in the Workshop on the topic '*Technological Threats to International, National and Personal Security*'.

Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Haselhurst, MP, United Kingdom was elected Chairperson of the Executive Committee, CPA for a term of 3 years (2011-2014). Hon. Marwick Khumalo, MP, Swaziland was elected Treasurer of the CPA for three years (2011-2014). Shri Kiyanielie Peseyie, Speaker, Nagaland Legislative Assembly was elected as a Regional Representative from India Region to the CPA Executive Committee for a 3 years term (2011-2014)

An important decision of amending the Rules of the Association to provide one-fifth representation to women MPs in the Delegation from each member country and to form a Forum of Women Parliamentarians to meet on the sidelines of the Conferences of the Associations was taken at the meeting of the Speakers' Council held on 9 July 2011.

Meeting of the Secretaries-General/Secretaries of the Parliament of SAARC Countries and Indian State Legislatures: On 9 July 2011, a meeting of the Secretaries-General/Secretaries of the Parliament of SAARC Countries and Indian State Legislatures was held. Shri T.K. Viswanathan, Secretary-General, Lok Sabha welcomed the participants. During the meeting, discussions were held on two subjects, viz., "Towards a paperless office—Harnessing Information and Communications Technologies in SAARC Parliaments" and "Meeting the information needs of the Members in SAARC Parliaments".

The 57th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, London, 2011: The 57th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference was held in London from 22 to 28 July 2011. The Indian Delegation to the Conference was led by the Speaker, Lok Sabha, Smt. Meira Kumar. The Delegation from India Union Branch consisted of Sarvashri Arjun Charan Sethi, MP, Lok Sabha; Syed Shahnawaz Hussain, MP, Lok Sabha; Mukut Mithi, MP, Rajya Sabha; Shri Balbir Punj, MP, Rajya Sabha; and Dr.(Smt.) Killi Kruparani, MP, Lok Sabha. Shri T.K. Vishwanathan, Secretary-General, Lok Sabha attended the Conference as the Regional Secretary of CPA India Region and Member of Society of Clerks-at-the-Table. Shri S. Bal Shekar, Additional Secretary, Lok Sabha Secretariat, was the Secretary to the Delegation.

The Delegation from India Region also included the following delegates from the State CPA Branches of India: Sarvashri Nadendra Manohar, Speaker, Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly; Wanglin Lowangdong Speaker, Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly; Pranab Gogoi, Speaker, Assam Legislative Assembly; Uday Narain Choudhary, Speaker, Bihar Vidhan Sabha; Dharam Lal Kaushik, Speaker, Chhattisgarh Vidhan Sabha; Pratap Singh Raoji Rane, Speaker, Goa Legislative Assembly; Ganpatsinh V. Vasava, Speaker, Gujarat Legislative Assembly; Kuldeep Sharma, Speaker, Haryana Vidhan Sabha; Tulsi Ram, Speaker, Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha; Shri Chandreshwar Prasad Singh, Speaker, Jharkhand Vidhan Sabha; Shri D.H. Shankaramurthy, Chairman, Karnataka Legislative Council; S. Karthikeyan, Speaker, Kerala Legislative Assembly; Vasant Davkhare, Deputy Chairman, Maharashtra Legislative