



CPA UK, CPA Canada & Parliament of Guyana Capacity Building Programme

In partnership with the British High Commission

Workshop for Committee Chairs and Clerks

4-6 April, Parliament of Guyana

Report



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Background

1.01. In October 2015, CPA UK and the Parliament of Guyana embarked on a seven-month Capacity Building Programme jointly funded by CPA UK and the British High Commission, Georgetown. The aims of the wider programme were to:

- a. Enhance the Assembly's ability to conduct its business effectively.
- b. Work with the Assembly's parliamentary committees to enhance its oversight capacity.
- c. Work with the Parliamentary Leadership, to strengthen its administrative, financial, and procedural independence.
- d. Work with parliamentary officials to support the functioning of the Assembly.
- e. Address the challenges of maintaining a successful coalition government.
- f. Support the interaction between UK, Guyanese and Caribbean Parliamentarians to discuss issues of regional interest, sustainability, energy and development.

1.02. The first bilateral activity of the Capacity Building Programme was a Workshop for Committee Clerks of the Parliament of Guyana from 16-19 November 2015 in Westminster.

1.03. The second activity was an in-country Workshop with Committee Chairs and Clerks, aimed at promoting good practices in scrutiny and oversight of the Executive within the committee system. The Workshop involved delegations from the UK and Canadian Parliaments. The Workshop was facilitated by CPA UK with the support of the following:

- a. Office of the National Assembly, Parliament of Guyana.
- b. British High Commission, Guyana.
- c. Canadian High Commission, Guyana.
- d. CPA Canada.
- e. Parliamentarians and Clerk, UK Parliament.
- f. Parliamentarians and Clerk, Parliament of Canada and Legislative Assembly of British Columbia.

Delegations & Participants

2.01. The UK delegations comprised Rt Hon. Baroness Primarolo DBE, Rt Hon. Alistair Carmichael MP, Nigel Evans MP and Gosia McBride, Clerk of the Women & Equalities Select Committee of the House of Commons, accompanied by Andrew Tuggey and Rachael Atkins, CPA UK.

2.02. The Canadian delegation comprised Yasmin Ratansi MP, Rodger Cuzner MP, Senator Ann Cools, from the Canadian Federal Parliament, Craig James, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia accompanied by Elizabeth Kingston, Clerk from the House of Commons.





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2.02. **Participants.** The participants were the Committee Chairs, Members, plus the Committee Clerks and Deputy Clerks of the Parliament of Guyana.

Aim & Objectives

3.01. **Aim.** The aim of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of Guyanese Parliamentary Committees to hold their Executive to account through scrutiny and oversight.

3.02. **Objectives.** The workshop had an overarching set of objectives:

- a. **Objective 1.** Enhancing broader understanding of the key features and functions of parliamentary committees in holding government to account.
- b. **Objective 2.** Exploring the role, responsibilities and relationships of Committee Chairs, Members and Clerks in operating an effective committee.
- c. **Objective 3.** Developing practical skills in conducting an inquiry; identifying witnesses, making best use of evidence, public engagement and reporting.
- d. **Objective 4.** Discussing the limitations of conducting efficient policy and financial oversight through the committee system.
- e. **Objective 5.** Sharing experiences of the challenges of operating a committee system within the context of a coalition government.

Summary

4.01. The programme facilitated the exchange of knowledge between parliamentary colleagues from Guyana, Canada, and the UK on the key principles and priorities in maintaining an effective committee system and facilitated the frank exchange of experiences between parliamentary colleagues on the current state of the committee system and wider political landscape in Guyana. Despite differences in the electoral and parliamentary systems of each of the three countries represented, participants engaged in valuable discussions on parliamentary good practice and technical aspects of committees including the role of Chairs and Clerks, choosing inquiry topics, sourcing witnesses, conducting hearings, writing reports and creating robust recommendations.

4.02. With a newly elected Speaker and autonomous Office of the National Assembly, the Parliament of Guyana was keen to utilise the opportunity a change in landscape afforded to focus on increasing the oversight function and investigative powers of the Legislature. Importance was placed by the visiting delegation on the role cross-party consensus on future priorities and practical solutions to challenges relevant to the Guyanese political context.





5.01. Political Background.

a. **Governing Coalition.** The governing party in Guyana was *A Partnership for National Unity - Alliance for Change* coalition (APNU-AFC), which contested the General Election in November 2015 with a joint candidate list and won 33 of 65 National Assembly seats, providing a majority of one seat. The coalition consisted of *A Partnership for National Unity*, traditionally aligned with the Afro-Guyanese population of Guyana, made up of five parties and the *Alliance for Change*. At the time of the visit, the President of Guyana was HE David A. Granger (Partnership for National Unity, specifically People's National Congress Reform) and the Prime Minister was Hon. Moses Nagamooto (Partnership for National Unity, specifically Alliance for Change). There were three Vice Presidents representing each of the smaller coalition parties and the Leader of the Opposition was Bharrat Jagdeo MP (The Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C)).

b. **Opposition.** The Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C), traditionally aligned with Indo-Guyanese, had been in power for 23 years leading up to the 2015 election, and now was in opposition. Seemingly there appeared to be little consensus between government and opposition. The opposition initially refused to take up their seats in the National Assembly following claims of vote rigging.

c. **Closed Party List Electoral System.** Guyana has a proportional representational electoral system with Members representing ten geographical constituencies together accounting for 25 seats; there is one nation-wide constituency for 40 seats. Members are elected by proportional representation through a closed party list system based on the Largest Remainder system using Hare quota. Members discussed the PR party list system; mentioning that there is not always a strong link between a Member and a particular geographical area, and accountability to their party often supersedes accountability to their constituency, if they are linked to one. It was highlighted that in this hybrid Westminster system, the role of a backbencher on a committee in scrutinising the Executive on behalf of the electorate is more restrained.

d. **Committee system.** The Committee system in the National Assembly was yet to be fully reconstituted after the Election in November 2015. Committees did not currently have a specific budget allowing them to cover travel expenses of witnesses or employ specialists or advisors. If there is a special interest requiring support, committees must make an application to the Clerk. This process means that creating a work plan in advance is often not feasible. There was broad support for simplifying this process now that the Officer of the National Assembly is operating from an independent budget.

5.02. Separation of Powers

a. **Financial independence of Parliament.** Officials informed the delegation that Parliament of Guyana has recently become financially independent. The Office of the National Assembly informed the





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delegation that they were now focussing on preparing their procedures and structure for the change. The Office explained that previously proposed spending had to be applied for from the Ministry of Finance, and required their approval before the transfer of project funds. Now, although spending will need to be justified to the Ministry of Finance, the Office of the National Assembly will have a separate independent budget.

b. **Membership of Committees.** There was considerable disagreement between Guyanese Members on the ability of Ministers to sit on, and Chair select committees. Opposition Members argued that good practice suggests that including Members of the Government represents a conflict of interest and hampers the ability of committees to scrutinise government policy and spending in an active and transparent manner. Members explained that the practice of including Ministers in committee membership in Guyana had a long history, and had been continued by the new government, arguing that the presence of experienced Ministers is required on Committees where the former Minister may well be also sitting. Additionally, the current Government is a multi-party coalition keen to involve its smaller components in government. This means that a large number of Members have government positions, creating a smaller pool of backbenchers from which to draw committee Members. However, it was discussed that the presence of Ministers of committees could undermine the independence of backbench MPs of the governing party, as well as compromise the evidence gained from permanent secretaries and other civil servants within the relevant department. The current opposition stated that they were unhappy with the situation and some were in favour of reforming Standing Orders to entrench separation of powers.

5.03. Managing Committee Business.

a. **Attendance at Committees.** It was mentioned by a number of Members that commitment to committee meetings can vary, which was an experience shared by the Canadian and UK parliamentarians. With Members employed on a part-time basis in Guyana and often balancing external employment with their parliamentary and party responsibilities, it was raised by MPs that it is not uncommon for Members to attend committee meetings without engaging with the matter at hand, and to discuss issues at a tangent instead of brokering agreement and fostering consensus on committees. The idea of election of committee members was touted as a possible solution to the challenge of apathetic members. Those MPs with the time and capacity to effectively scrutinise would then be subject to the election by their peers for places on Committees, and then for the position of Chair.

b. **Reaching a Quorum.** Members listed difficulty with reaching and retaining a quorum for committee meetings as a barrier to a fully effective committee system. Chairs and Members of committees expressed frustration that Meetings were often adjourned because a quorum was not reached, and there was little way of knowing in advance whether this will be the case. Clerks expressed frustration at preparing for committee meetings that were abandoned when the quorum was not reached. The UK and Canadian delegation shared case studies of MPs who failed to commit to regular attendance of committee





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meetings and therefore stalling progress of inquiries. The Canadian delegation explained that in their context records of attendance can be kept and if attendance drops below a threshold the member can be replaced. Failing the existence of a discipline system, the pressure applied by colleagues who are frustrated by a lack of attendance can force members to resign.

c. **Engagement of Members.** Members discussed how sporadic engagement of committee members could have an adverse impact on the influence of the committee and influence of reports and recommendations. It was reported that there is variation between Ministers with regard to reading committee reports, reducing pressure for action based on ‘the embarrassment factor’; that is, that reports highlight government misjudgements or errors and Ministers feel pressurised to respond. This then leads to the introduction of policy changes as a result of pressure from the press, public and other parliamentarians. It was noted through discussions with Clerks and Members that committee membership was not always viewed as an acquisition of status, an opportunity to gain knowledge or make policy changes, which in turn in turn discourages Members from being more involved in the committee process or buying in to its wider value.

d. **Committee Consensus v Party Loyalty.** Members and Clerks expressed awareness of public discontent with the degree to which they feel MPs represent their interests and are accountable to them for their decisions. Guyanese Members suggested in theory that if both parties agreed to relax collective responsibility on backbench MPs, there would be more freedom to scrutinise bills and policy and advantages for both government and opposition.

e. **Management of Committee Business.** A number of strategies for managing committee business within the context of time constraints was explored by the Workshop participants, including:

- Compiling a weekly calendar of external events relevant to the remit of the committee, in order to explore points of influence and opportunities for inquiries
- Creating a robust communications strategy in order to publicise inquiries to those who would not usually engage with Parliament
- Building relationships with NGOs and universities in order to access research and resources in a cost-effective way. The Parliament of Canada has an internship programme that draws students from university to assist with committee work for a period of time to relieve pressure on full time staff. Members of Guyanese Parliament were particularly keen to explore the potential of such a programme in Guyana
- The option of picking ‘media friendly’ subjects to attract public attention to the fact the committee is active, before turning attention to ‘worthier’ or more complicated subjects

5.04. Dynamic Inquiries.





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a. **Involvement of Civil Society, Non-Governmental Organisations and academia.** Members clarified that there was not a longstanding tradition of involving external stakeholders and civil society in committee hearings in Guyana, although there was a keenness to explore the possibility. Members and Clerks explained that often witnesses will be representatives from the relevant department or civil servants, and will be asked to give a presentation based on their submitted written evidence. It was agreed that utilising the knowledge of academic experts, NGOs and members of the public with experience or knowledge of the impact of an issue or certain policy could give committees a wider range of views. This would also prevent committee inquiries becoming politically motivated debates, and encourage committee hearings as evidence collecting exercises. The importance of committee clerks in suggesting and sourcing witnesses was emphasised, rather than Members dictating which witnesses to be called. While Members' views should ultimately be respected, it was noted by the visiting and local Members that Clerks may have more time to research the stakeholders in a given field and could offer Members valuable insight into the issues and organisations at play. The input of committee clerks in a collective decision making process should be noticeable and useful.

b. **The Value of an Effective Oversight.** Members questioned how best to 'sell' a more updated dynamic committee process while at the same time, ensuring the interests of each party are protected. The following points were made:

- The importance of being realistic; the best way to demonstrate the important role of committees and build support is by doing the job effectively and showing how committees can make a difference. This means producing clear consensual reports that the government has to take notice of.
- Visibility is vital so that the public realise the efforts of the committee. Action on behalf of the government on committee reports and recommendations relies on the strength of the work of the committee but crucially on the media to provide pressure.
- The value of focussing on issues important to people so that the public are aware of MPs working on their behalf
- The importance of publishing a report quickly and in a timely manner and to seize opportunities to show that the committee has reacted to an issue of public concern

5.05. Maintaining Committee Consensus.

a. **Liaison between Government and Opposition.** Discussions on maintaining consensus focused on the tension between the government and opposition and its ability to disrupt committee agendas. UK and Canadian Members highlighted that the role of opposition MPs on committees is not solely to attack and oppose the government's agenda. In the UK and Canada, the Principal Private Secretary to the Chief Whip, colloquially known as "the usual channels," liaises between the Whips of each party in situations where there is a political stalemate. The usefulness of a trusted impartial civil servant to break the deadlock in Guyana was explored, discussing whether such a position would alleviate the pressure of negotiating currently placed on the Speaker.





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- b. **The Role of the Opposition.** The role of the Opposition, as emphasised by the UK and Canadian delegations, is to hold the Government to account through oversight and scrutiny. They suggested that the role of the opposition on committees can be the same as that of government backbenchers, and scrutiny therefore remain as non-partisan as possible based on the evidence at hand. The role of the Chair, in setting the tone for committee interactions, is of great importance. The UK delegation emphasised that maintaining the independence of committee Members, free from collective responsibility means that the government and the public take unanimous reports and recommendations produced more seriously.
- c. The Canadian and UK delegations highlighted the important role of cross-party consensus on the committee system; parliamentarians working on shared priorities within an inquiry without partisan bias.
- d. **Committee Strategy and Decision-making.** The relationship between the government and opposition was a reoccurring theme throughout the Workshop. Members described that the lack of unanimity between the two main parties had resulted in committees replicating the debates and tensions of the Chamber. The Canadian delegation suggested the creation of a strategy sub-committee for each committee could be useful for cross party involvement in committee decision making. Such sub-committees in the Canadian Federal Parliament involve the Chair (from the opposition), Vice Chair (government), and two other Members from each party respectively. An example was given by the Canadian delegation that on occasions where committees cannot agree on statements or recommendations, the dissenting minority could publish an alternative report. Emphasis was placed on producing tangible documents demonstrating the value of the committee.

5.06. Utilising the Experience of Committee Clerks

- a. **Increased Role of Committee Clerks.** Committee Clerks spoke encouragingly of their relationship with committee Chairs. However, it was noted in a number of sessions that Committee Clerks were keen to be more involved in committee research and advice. Clerks across Parliament felt they had a degree of experience and procedural knowledge that could be utilised more effectively by Members of Parliament. Examples were given from speakers of occasions where committee clerks could give informed advice on the subject of inquiries (utilising their knowledge of previous inquiry topics and challenges) and connect the committee with the appropriate contacts and organisations, especially ones external to Parliament.
- b. **The role of a Clerk in a Committee Hearing.** The importance of the Clerk was highlighted in the committee exercise, where Members received a Westminster-style committee brief before the roleplay exercise. The brief contained comprehensive background information on the inquiry subject, statistics and suggested questions. Although it was raised by participants that MPs often prefer to ask their own questions, Members agreed that having a committee strategy for questions would make sure the inquiry was as efficient as possible, especially when taking evidence from particularly difficult witnesses.





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Participants noted in feedback that the committee roleplay was particularly useful in highlighting the practical processes of an inquiry hearing.

c. **External Actors.** The benefit of sourcing external assistance was explored. For example, a number of committees in the UK Parliament have worked with an external communications consultant to provide effective questioning training. These practical sessions focus on the most appropriate question structure and method in order to extract the most useful information from a witness. It was noted that the involvement of an external actor can help manage internal committee relationships and provide a neutral forum for constructive comments and discussion.

5.07. Upward Mobility and Staff Management

a. **Career Development.** Parliamentary officials explained that clerks and parliamentary officials employed in the Guyanese Parliament were sourced and employed through the Public Services Commission, which was perceived by some as lacking impartiality. Discussions with officials highlighted a keenness for a career structure related to performance. A lack of vacancies at a senior level meant that committee clerks, though rotating between committees often do not have the opportunity to perform different roles, and some have been in the same position for 6-7 years. It was discussed that exposing committee clerks to other roles within the House would increase the breadth and depth of their knowledge, and improve the perception of their procedural knowledge to Members. Committee clerks expressed a keenness to give advice to Members supplementary to the advice provided by the Clerk of the House.

b. **Training of Clerks and Researchers.** Members agreed that there was a need for increased training for committee clerks and parliamentary researchers to enable them to support Members effectively.

1. Members also requested support for specific committee duties, giving the example of the Public Accounts Committee where Members rely on the opinion and information provided by the Auditor General in interpreting and understanding financial data.
2. Parliamentary researchers demonstrated enthusiasm in being more involved in the production of briefs and papers to inform the work of committees and Members. It was recognised by participants that the Public Relations department could have more influence in reporting and ‘selling’ the work of committees to the public.
3. Members mentioned that the National Assembly used to publish the schedules of committees each week but this was no longer occurring.
- c. **Opportunities.** There was an accepted need to utilise the opportunities of a newly independent Parliament and new term of Parliament to change and evolve areas where connectivity to the electorate can be increased.





5.08. Public Outreach and Accountability

- a. **Availability of the Internet.** Members explained that traditionally Guyanese committees and the Parliament generally have not utilised the internet as a tool for outreach. Members clarified that the lack of uniform internet coverage and access have been a constraint and that, impeded by the geography of the interior of the country, difficult logistics have halted any plans to use the internet for cost-effective outreach. Participants explained that as a portion of the population reside in the interior of the country, which is dominated by rough terrain and rainforests, they would not benefit from internet access and alternative methods of outreach are more relevant. However, there was a sense amongst the majority of participants that logistical problems should no longer impede the process. With 90% of the population residing in urban coastal areas¹ with adequate internet access, participants argued that online outreach is more than a viable route for communication with the electorate than traditionally perceived.
- b. **Training on Social Media.** There was an agreed need to utilise the knowledge of committee clerks and staff of the Parliament, especially in the Public Relations department who were familiar with social media and outreach strategy. There was also consensus on the need for training for MPs on social media websites like Facebook (and Twitter to a lesser extent) to increase their understanding and confidence that they can utilise social media without causing an embarrassing incident, or subjecting themselves to online criticism and abuse.
- c. **Public Engagement with Parliament.** Participants agreed that social media had been the most effective tool for engagement with young people during the most recent general and local elections in Guyana. It was mentioned that through an open policy on school groups visiting parliament to watch debates and business, MPs observed that children were not deferential towards MPs and highly unimpressed by their behaviour and tone in the Chamber. They observed that it was an eye-opening experience, realising young people want more credibility and maturity from MPs. It was mentioned that young people and the population in general were not seeing MPs debating or making legislation on issues important to them, resulting in a lack of engagement. Although Parliament now live streams debates, most of the interest comes from outside Guyana; the message is not going out to those who need to hear it. One MP noted that he often used Facebook to source questions from the public that he asks in Parliaments, and that MPs are realising that they have to engage on a different level and adapt their language, culture and platform to the electorate.
- d. **E-Petitions.** The UK delegation discussed the merits of the Petitions Committee, enabling E-petitions to be signed online through the government website. Petitions gathering 10,000 signatures secure a response from the relevant Minister, while petitions with 100,000 signatures trigger a debate on the floor of the House. Despite triggering some controversial debates, this instrument gives people a

¹ <http://caribbean.unfpa.org/public/Home/Countries/Guyana>





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direct way of airing their views and showing their support for causes important to them, and witnessing this translating into political debate on their behalf. Sourcing contacts through databases of those who have signed e-petitions was also an example of a useful tool for expanding the reach of a committee in a particular relevant field.

e. **Engaging Citizens in Remote Areas.** Guyanese Members raised the idea of arranging regional meetings to communicate with a number of groups living in the Amazonian Hinterland as possible, including members of Amerindian tribes. The UK delegation shared experiences of regular Cabinet meetings held in a region or location outside of London. The meetings were compulsory and had a private element, but in the afternoon, the group visited a town or city and held an open public meeting in the evening.

f. **Cross-party Public Engagement.** A number of participants raised the issue that some communities are very hostile to the idea of visiting Members of Parliament, especially if they are from the “wrong” party. It was suggested that the Parliament could consider sending cross-party groups of MPs to areas where a controversial reaction is likely. This would eliminate reactions to particular party representatives and present a collaborative view of parliamentarians, willing to hear the views of citizens and earn their respect.

g. **Parliamentary Standards.** The issue of parliamentary standards and public life was raised. The opposition recently moved to introduce a register of external employment and a public declaration of assets to increase transparency and prevent conflict of interest. This was not passed, but in a legislature where the majority of MPs are part time, MPs recognised there is demand on the part of the public to insure there are no conflicts of interest, in line with internationally recognised standards of good practice. There was clear demand from participants to move forward with this in an agreed way, especially now that the National Assembly is financially independent and is looking to begin new processes.

Programme

6.01. Details.

Monday 4 April - Setting the Scene & Regional Case Studies	
0930	<i>Welcome and Introduction</i> <i>Coffee</i>
1000	Setting the Scene and Programme Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the aspirations for the committee system within the current parliament; short term goals vs long term objectives • Role of the UK and Canadian Parliaments in supporting these aspirations <i>Members and Clerks, Parliament of Guyana</i>
1100	Balancing the Executive and the Legislature: The Role of Parliamentary Committees in





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	holding the Executive to Account <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What powers do committees have? How can they best support the oversight function of Parliament? What are the major limitations to committee power and function? • The role of committees in overseeing policy, administration, and expenditure • The importance of representation/chairmanship & expertise of committee staff 		
1200	Committees in Action: Case Studies from the Parliaments of Guyana, Canada and UK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the major challenges to effective committee functioning in each of the three parliaments represented • How can Members balance party affiliation and role on the committee? • Coalition government presents a unique situation for Committee Chairs: what are the major challenges? 		
1300	<i>Lunch</i>		
1400	Split Session: Committees in Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for all Members and Clerks to discuss specific challenges with parliamentary colleagues in greater depth • Groups to nominate Chair and rapporteur 		
	<i>Group A</i> <i>Members - Guyana, UK, Canada</i>	<i>Group B</i> <i>Members - Guyana, UK, Canada</i>	<i>Group C</i> <i>Clerks - Guyana, UK, Canada</i>
1530	<i>Coffee</i>		
1600	Committees in Action: Report Back <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapporteur to report back to the group on the outcomes of discussions during the split sessions • Summary of first day 		
1700	<i>End of Day One</i>		
Tuesday 5 April - Committee Resources & Inquiries			
0900	<i>Coffee</i>		
0930	Improving the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Parliamentary Committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can committee's best operate with limited resources? • Creating a clear mandate - assessing the mandate of each committee • Consensus building 		
1030	Resources and Administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support provided by staff; balancing a lack of resources and efficiency -members & clerks will be asked to come prepared for this session • Subject specialists and researchers; ensuring adequate resource allocation • Support available to Members (office staff and committee staff) • Relationship between Committee Members and Staff 		
1130	Members only - Chairmanship &	Clerks only - The relationship between the	





	Membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee composition • The role of the Committee Chairman & leadership • Creating cross-party consensus • Creating an culture of mutual respect and understanding between Members and Officials 	Chair and Clerk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting efficiency and objectivity • Creating an culture of mutual respect and understanding • Internal communications
1230	<i>Lunch</i>	
1330	Managing Committee Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many Members balance parliamentary responsibilities with external employment: how do committees reach a consensus on a strategy that takes in to account Members time constraints? • What are the benefits of verbal and written briefs? What are the expectations of information sharing for Members and Clerks to create informed briefs? 	
1430	Conducting an Effective Inquiry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing inquiry subjects and assessing timing of inquiries • Sourcing witnesses; utilising the expertise of sector specialists, academics and civil society 	
1530	<i>Coffee</i>	
1600	Conducting Inquiries: Effective Questioning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective questioning increases the quality of briefing papers, witness statements and subsequent committee reports: how to formulate effective questions? • How to make the best from witness’s evidence: bridging the gap between the information needed and the information available 	
1700	<i>End of Day Two</i>	
Wednesday 6 April - Reports, Public Outreach & Coalition Governments		
0900	<i>Coffee</i>	
0930	Producing Reports with Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practice for report writing: How to create an effective committee report with tangible recommendations for government? • Expectations for Chair, Members and Clerks in developing the committee report • How to deal with a lack of responsiveness from the government 	
1030	Public Outreach for Committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the relationship between Parliament, People and the Media and how the latter can be used to strengthen parliament’s role in oversight • What methods do committees use to engage the public, creating an awareness of calls for evidence, committee reports and governments responses? 	





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the role of social media in committee work? • Creating access to groups not traditionally engaged with parliament: the role of social media
1130	<i>Coffee</i>
1200	Briefing on the Caribbean Twinning Initiative <i>Delegation from Canada and British Columbia</i>
1230	<i>Lunch</i>
1400	Briefing on Mock Committee
1430	Mock Committee A practical role-play exercise using the techniques discussed during the workshop
1530	Mock Committee Debrief
1600	Feedback, Outcomes and Follow up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing engagement and initiatives with the Parliament of Canada - Ongoing engagement with the UK Parliament
1630	<i>End of Day Three</i>

Outcomes and Follow-up Activities

7.01. Feedback.

a. Following the General Election, CPA Guyana Branch had yet to be formally created through a meeting of the Parliamentary Management Committee. Members of the Parliament of Guyana were keen to re-establish the Branch in order to ensure continuity and sustainable knowledge exchange. MPs emphasised that after attending conferences and seminars, there is was no parliamentary forum in which learning can be transferred. The Secretary General of CPA Secretariat had promised to assist in the creation of CPA Guyana Branch. All participants echoed the notion that activities should be part of a wider framework, and requested sustained support.

b. Feedback suggested that despite the joint nature of the Workshop, there was further demand for the provision of training and activities for committee clerks in a separate format. Feedback mentioned the possibility of conducting more split sessions to enable frank discussions between parliamentary officials without compromising the priorities of Members in the same session. Smaller focus groups and sessions would also ensure the topic of the session is addressed and discussions not led on a tangent because of underlying tensions and issues in particular areas. CPA UK would be happy to respond to requests to assist with further clerk training, whether it is a national or international project. There is also a possibility of conducting activities with individual committees, including Chair, Members and Clerk.

c. Pre-assessment and post-assessment forms completed by participants were used to evaluate and inform future engagement.





7.02. Follow Up.

- a. The support for particular areas of engagement noted in this programme and the *Visit of Parliamentary Leadership* from 18-21 April 2016 will inform the next stage of CPA UK activities with the Parliament of Guyana.
- b. These areas of engagement were identified as:
 - Provision of support to the Office of the National Assembly in reconstituting the remaining committees that have not yet met since the General Election, including programmes for specific committees focusing on committee practice and procedure, political consensus, creating and implementing a work plan, and the role of the Chair and Clerk
 - Support for the Public Relations department in public outreach, including on behalf of Committees
 - Support for the Public Accounts Committee in interpreting financial information and data in order to work effectively independent from the Auditor General
 - Exploring the modernisation and support provided by the Parliamentary Library and Research department, including potential training for researchers
 - Exploring the evolution of the processes of the Office of the National Assembly now that it is independently funded. This includes facilitating support and capacity building for members of staff related to innovation, technology, human resources, administration, and outreach

Funding Breakdown

8.01. The total cost of the programme was co-funded by the British High Commission, Georgetown, CPA Canada, and CPA UK. The Parliament of Guyana contributed all in-programme catering and additional transport costs.

Acknowledgements

9.01. CPA UK thanks the British High Commission Georgetown for their assistance in the inception and funding of the wider programme with the Parliament of Guyana. CPA UK would also like to thank the Parliament of Guyana, and in particular the Clerk and Deputy Clerk and Committee Division for their cooperation and support.

About CPA UK

10.01. CPA UK is one of the largest and most active branches in the CPA community and delivers a unique annual international outreach programme in Westminster and overseas. CPA UK works to encourage parliamentary diplomacy and build parliamentary capacity on behalf of the UK Parliament and the wider CPA. Through activities such as conferences, seminars, delegations and parliamentary strengthening teams, CPA UK provides Members with a practical, current and first-hand perspective on international





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issues facing fellow parliamentarians across the Commonwealth. Working with CPA UK's international outreach programmes also enhances Members' understanding of issues facing diaspora communities in their own constituencies.

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Speaker Biographies



Rt Hon. Baroness Primarolo DBE (Labour), UK Parliament

Dawn gained a BA (Hons) 2:1 in Social Science at the University of the West of England and went on to undertake PhD research into Women and Housing at University of Bristol until her studies were interrupted by her election to Parliament in 1987.

As a Member of Parliament for over 28 years, Dawn held a number of shadow ministerial posts in opposition and ministerial posts in Government. She was a Minister of State for the 13 years of the Labour Government from 1997 to 2010.

Dawn is now a Member of the House of Lords. She was appointed in August 2015 after retiring at the General Election in May 2015. Dawn is married and has three grown up children, a son and two daughters, and four grandchildren.

Dawn was Second Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons from 2010-2015; Shadow Minister (Children, Young People and Families, 2010-10; Minister of State (Children, Young People and Families), 2009-10; Minister of State for Public Health, 2007-09; Paymaster General HM Treasury, 1999-07; Financial Secretary HM Treasury, 1997-99; Shadow Spokesperson (Treasury), 1994-97; Shadow Spokesperson (Health), 1992-94.

Dawn has been a member of the following Select Committees: Panel of Chairs, House of Commons 2010-15; Tax Law Rewrite Committee, 1997-2007; Public Accounts Committee. 1997-1998; Members' Interest Committee (forerunner of the Parliamentary Standards Committee).

Other appointments include being appointed DBE in 2015, appointment as a Privy Councillor in 2002; Elected Chair, EU Code of Conduct Committee, 1998-2007; Chair, Remuneration Board, National Assembly for Wales 2015-; Visiting Professor at University of West of England 2015-.



Rt Hon. Alistair Carmichael MP (Liberal Democrat), UK Parliament

Alistair Carmichael has been Liberal Democrat MP for Orkney and Shetland since 2001. He is currently his party's spokesperson on Home Affairs and is Deputy Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats. He previously served as Liberal Democrat Chief Whip and Government Deputy Chief Whip in the coalition government (May 2010 to October 2013) and as Secretary of State for Scotland (October 2013 to May 2015).





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Prior to his election to parliament Alistair worked as a solicitor in private practice, a Procurator Fiscal Depute (a public prosecutor in Scotland) and as a hotel manager.

Alistair was born in 1965 on the Hebridean island of Islay where he was educated in local state schools. He is a graduate of the University of Aberdeen (LLB, Dip LP). He has been married to his wife Kathryn since 1987. They live in Orkney with their two sons Sandy (18) and Simon (14).



Nigel Evans MP (Conservative), UK Parliament

Nigel Evans has been the Conservative Member of Parliament for Ribble Valley since 1992. Nigel was the Shadow Secretary of State for Wales between 2001- 2003 and is a former Vice-Chair of the Conservative Party. He has also held the post of First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means (2010-13).

During his time in Parliament, Nigel has been a member of several committees, including Culture, Media and Sport (2005-09), Public Administration Committee (2014-15) and the Backbench Business Committee (2014-15).

A former Chair of CPA UK and current Chair of the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Nigel Evans has visited many Commonwealth countries in Asia Pacific and has chaired the CPA’s meetings of the Annual Conference on Climate Change. He currently sits on the Panel of Chairs, the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, and the International Development Committee, which saw him travel to New York for the signing of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. Nigel is also currently a member of the Council of Europe, whilst having previously been a member of the Council’s Environment Committee from 2005-2010. In this capacity he led an inquiry into biofuels.



Gosia McBride, Clerk of Women & Equalities Committee, UK Parliament

Gosia McBride is the Clerk of the Women and Equalities Committee in the House of Commons, a new select committee established in May 2016. She has been a Clerk in the UK Parliament for 12 years, where she has had a varied and exciting career, with a wide range of committee and corporate roles. Most recently she was Deputy Manager of a programme to digitise the work of select committees. Before that she ran the Private Office of the Clerk of the House of Commons, also supporting its Audit Committees and Management Board.

Gosia has significant experience working for select and legislative committees. She has been a clerk for the Work and Pensions, Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs Committees. She has also worked in the House’s Public Bill Office and as Deputy Head of the House’s Scrutiny Unit which supports committees on draft





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bills. Her work has taken across the world, both on Committee inquiries and to support the work of international assemblies. Last year she spent a week in Cambodia delivering a parliamentary capacity building programme.

Gosia grew up in Tottenham, north London. She has two young children and is a committed (if unskilled) footballer.



Yasmin Ratansi MP (Liberal), *Canadian Federal Parliament*

Ms Ratansi is the Member of Parliament for the riding of Don Valley East. She was first elected to parliament in 2004 and served until 2011. She was re-elected in 2015. In her tenure from 2004 - 2011, she served in many executive capacities. She was the Liberal Caucus Deputy Whip, Vice Chair of Procedure and House Affairs Committee, Chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, Chair of the Standing Committee on Status of Women and Vice Chair of Public Accounts.

She has authored numerous committee reports, including, Economic Security for Women, Human Trafficking, Gender Budgeting, Accountability and Transparency in Government.

In the current session of Parliament, Ms Ratansi is the Vice Chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, which oversees expenses of all federal government departments and several Crown Corporations, including Canada Post. She is the Chair of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, which bridges the divide between various commonwealth parliaments and shares best Westminster practices.

Ms Ratansi is a well sought after speaker in the areas of Gender Lens Budgeting, Governance and Accountability. She has helped parliamentarians in the developing world in implementing gender budgeting tools, and in strengthening their governances and transparency measures.

As an activist parliamentarian, she encourages young people to be actively engaged in social justice and civic issues. She works with multi-faith groups in promoting peace, harmony and respect for each other.

Ms Ratansi is a Fellow of the Chartered Professional Accountants (FCPA), a Certified Management Consultant (CMC) and a recipient of numerous business and professional awards. She is the Vice Chair of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC).





Rodger Cuzner MP (*Liberal*), *Canadian Federal Parliament*

Rodger Cuzner was first elected on November 27, 2000. He is about to mark his 13th year as a Member of Parliament, having been re-elected in 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2011 to represent the people of Cape Breton-Canso.

Rodger has held many key positions during his time in Parliament, including Parliamentary Secretary to former Prime Minister Jean Chretien, chair of Nova Scotia Caucus, chair of Atlantic Caucus, and Chief Opposition Whip. He currently serves as the Liberal Critic for Human Resources & Skills Development and Labour.

Rodger represents the Liberal Party on the weekly M.P. panel on CTV News Channel’s Power Play, with host Don Martin, and he is regularly asked to appear on other national political affairs programs, on television and radio.

Prior to entering politics, Rodger studied physical education at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish. He worked as the Special Event Coordinator for the Cape Breton Department of Recreation, Culture and Facilities, where he was responsible for major events like the Millennium Countdown 2000.

Rodger has been very involved with hockey throughout his life. He coached Team Nova Scotia at the Canada Games in 1995 and 1999.

Rodger and his wife Lynn live in Glace Bay and they have three sons: Mitch, Scott and Brad.



Chandra Arya MP (*Liberal*), *Canadian Federal Parliament*

As the Member of Parliament for Nepean, a strong community advocate, and dedicated father, Chandra Arya is relentless in his efforts to improve the lives of those around him.

Chandra recognizes the importance of attracting highly-skilled, high-paying jobs to the National Capital Region. His experience as a businessman and board member of Invest Ottawa has provided him with an understanding of what is required to attract the high-quality jobs of the future. As your Member of Parliament, he is working with all levels of government and the private sector to achieve this.





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Chandra has also served on the boards of the OCISO Not-for-Profit Housing Corporation, Ottawa Community Immigrants Services Organization and the Hindu Society of Ottawa Carleton. He previously served as Chair of the Indo-Canada Ottawa Business Chamber, President of the Indo-Canadian Community Centre Inc, and was the founding director of the Federation of Canadian Brazilian Businesses. Chandra holds Bachelor of Engineering and Masters of Business Administration degrees, and was professionally certified by the Canadian Securities Institute as a Canadian Investment Manager.

Chandra currently lives in Nepean with his wife Sangeetha, who works with the Ottawa Catholic School Board. Their son, Sid is in the process of qualifying as a Chartered Professional Accountant.



Hon. Senator Cools (Independent), *Canadian Federal Parliament*

Senator Anne Cools is an Ontario Senator representing Toronto-Centre-York. She was summoned to the Senate in January 1984 by His Excellency Governor General Edward Schreyer on the recommendation of the Rt. Hon. Pierre Trudeau. She is the first black person appointed to the Senate of Canada and is the first black female senator in North America. Born August 12, 1943 in Barbados, British West Indies, at age 13 she moved to Montreal with her family. Senator Cools was educated at Queen’s College Girls School, Barbados;

Thomas D’Arcy McGee High School, Montreal; and Montreal’s McGill University, from which she holds a Bachelor of Arts. In the 1979 and 1980 federal general elections, Anne Cools was a candidate with Trudeau’s Liberals in Toronto’s Rosedale riding. In June 2004, after 20 years as a Liberal Senator, she joined the Conservatives for a short time. Currently, Senator Cools has no party affiliation and sits as an Independent.

Prior to the Senate, Senator Cools was a social worker in innovative social services in Toronto. In 1974, as a pioneer in domestic and family violence, she founded one of Canada’s first women’s shelters, Women in Transition Inc., serving as its Executive Director. She assisted with the establishment of several other women’s shelters in Ontario. She co-organized Canada’s first domestic violence conference, *Couples in Conflict*. She presents the evidence that men and women are equally capable of good and bad, and that violence and aggression are not gendered characteristics, but are human ones, and often are a pathology of intimacy.

Craig James, *Clerk of Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, Canada*

Craig James has worked in parliament since 1978, and first appointed to the position of Clerk Assistant in the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly in 1984. In 1987 he was appointed Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, and he served in this role supporting the work of parliamentary committees and the House for twenty-three years. In June 2010, Craig was appointed





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Chief Electoral Officer for the Province of British Columbia and served in this position as the head of Elections BC temporarily during a very tumultuous period in the Province, until September 2011. Upon his return to the Legislative Assembly in September 2011 Craig was appointed by the Legislature to be the Clerk - the 12th person to hold this position in British Columbia.

Craig is Executive Director of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees (CCPAC) and has been since 1985. He is an active member of the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table in Canada, the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments, the Canadian-American Clerks Association and is a member of the advisory board of the CCAF, Inc - a national body comprising legislative auditors and parliamentarians with representation from banking and private and public sector organizations.

Craig is Editor and Publisher of the Table Review - a periodic journal of the Association of Clerks-at-the-Table in Canada dealing with procedural, administrative and technical issues in parliament. As well, he is Editor and Publisher of Scrutiny, another periodic journal for the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees. He is a regular contributor to the Parliamentarian and to the Canadian Parliamentary Review.

Over the past few years, Craig has been a consultant to the World Bank, World Bank Institute and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association participating in seminars in countries such as El Salvador, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, Bangladesh, Ghana, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bhutan, India, Nigeria, Malaysia, South Africa, Malta, Thailand, Kenya and others from the training of parliamentary staff to designing parliamentary committees systems to parliamentary financial oversight including the oversight of Parliament, itself. Most recently, Craig has been a guest lecturer to a new program on parliament established by Rick Staphenurst at the political science department at McGill University in Montreal. He has been assisting the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK Branch in establishing an international association respecting public accounts committees. He is presently assisting former Canadian Auditor General, Ken Dye with a parliamentary governance project in the Caribbean.

Strengthening the institution of parliament through better governance structures, modernizing parliamentary practice and procedure and the proper training of parliamentary staff continue to be subjects of keen interest to Craig.

