



**CPA UK Parliament of Sri Lanka Workshop on Sectoral Oversight Committees**

**15-17 February 2016**

**Report**





## Contents

1. Background
2. Delegation
3. Objectives
4. Summary
5. Workshop comments
6. Programme
7. Outcomes and follow-up activities
8. Acknowledgments
9. About CPA UK & WFD
10. Annex
  - a. Delegation biographies





## 1. Background

1.01. In April 2015, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution of the Republic of Sri Lanka was passed, reducing the term and prerogative of the President and de facto addressing the balance between the Executive, the Legislative and the Judiciary. Amongst the most significant characteristics of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment featured the reduction of the presidential term from six to five years; the re-introduction of a two-term limit; the change to the President's power to dissolve parliament only after four and a half years; the revival of the Constitutional Council as well as the establishment of independent commissions.

1.02. In line with the Unity Coalition Government's emphasis on the need and support for an enhanced role for Parliament, the Parliament of Sri Lanka under the leadership of Speaker Karu Jayasuriya MP, identified the implementation of a Sectoral Oversight Committee System as a key output to the reforms to be undertaken. It was decided that these committees would replace the existing 48 consultative committees which had under previous parliaments remit to 'inquire into and report such matters as are referred to it by the chairman or by Parliament, including any Bill, proposals for legislation, supplementary or other estimates, statements of expenditure, motions, annual reports or papers'<sup>1</sup>.

1.03. It is generally considered that parliamentary committees play an important role in holding governments to account and influence policy and legislation. In this context of parliamentary reforms, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK (CPA UK) was approached by the Leadership of the Parliament of Sri Lanka to coordinate a Workshop for Members and Clerks exploring the oversight functions of sectoral committees using the UK Departmental Select Committee System as basis for discussions.

1.04. The International Outreach team at CPA UK designed a three day workshop which took place from 15-17 February 2016 in the Parliament of Sri Lanka, Colombo. The Workshop was attended by over 120 parliamentarians and parliamentary officials. Three UK Members and one Clerk from the House of Commons acted as resource persons and helped facilitate the discussions. Simultaneous translation from English to Sinhala and Tamil was available throughout the Workshop.

1.05. The Workshop which was opened by the Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka and championed by the Leadership of Parliament, provided an excellent platform for the exchange of knowledge and practice between parliamentary colleagues from the UK and Sri Lanka. It also helped lay solid foundations for the establishment of the new committee system in the Parliament of Sri Lanka by highlighting some of the potential challenges faced, along with practical suggestions on how to best manage their running.

1.06. This activity formed part of a one year Parliamentary Partnership Programme between the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK (CPA UK)

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.parliament.lk/en/component/committees/categories?id=2&Itemid=533>





# HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

and the Parliament of Sri Lanka. The programme was co-funded by CPA UK, WFD and the Foreign and Commonwealth Magna Carta Fund for Human Rights and Governance Fund.

## 2. The UK delegation participating in the workshop was:

- 2.01. Rt Hon. Fiona Mactaggart MP (*Lab*) - Delegation Leader
- 2.02. Richard Bacon MP (*Con*)
- 2.03. Julie Elliott MP (*Lab*)
- 2.04. David Weir, Clerk of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee
- 2.05. Mariam El-Azm, Deputy Head of International Outreach & Project Lead, CPA UK
- 2.06. Also in attendance: David Thirlby, Senior Asia Programme Manager, WFD and Priyanga Hettiarachi, Country representative, WFD.

## 3. Objectives

In the context of the Westminster model and through briefings, roundtables & practical sessions, Parliamentarians and Clerks from Sri Lanka and the UK the programme aimed to deliver the following objectives:

- 3.01. Objective 1. Promote a broader understanding of the key features and functions of parliamentary committees in holding the Executive to account.
- 3.02. Objective 2. Explore the role, responsibilities and relationships of the Committee Chair, Members and Clerks in operating an effective Committee.
- 3.03. Objective 3. Develop the practical skills of Members and Clerks in conducting an inquiry; identifying witnesses, making best use of evidence, engaging with the public and reporting.
- 3.04. Objective 4. Discuss the limitations in conducting efficient policy and financial oversight at the Committee level.
- 3.05. Objective 5. Share experiences and identify solutions on how to best address some of the challenges faced in implementing, reviewing and monitoring a Committee System.

## 4. Summary

4.01. This programme was extremely successful, encouraging discussions between UK and Sri Lankan Members of Parliament on the topic of the Select Committee System identifying key challenges arising from the establishment of oversight committees and how to best ensure they fulfil their responsibilities to hold government to account. The programme also provided an opportunity for the Leadership of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, Members and Clerks to discuss their respective roles in the planning, establishment and running of the committees.

4.02. The success of the programme was four-fold: firstly, it enabled the Leadership of the Parliament of Sri Lanka to expose its vision for the proposed reform to the consultative committees and re-affirm its commitment to create a strong and independent Parliament. Secondly, it enabled the UK delegation to gain

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION UK

Westminster Hall, Houses of Parliament, London SW1A 0AA  
T: +44 (0)20 7219 5373 F: +44 (0)20 7233 1202 E: [cpa@parliament.uk](mailto:cpa@parliament.uk) [www.uk-cpa.org](http://www.uk-cpa.org)

Registered Charity No.1095118 | Registered Company No. 4606846





greater understanding of the challenges faced by the Parliament of Sri Lanka in adopting a new oversight committee structure as well as the political dynamics following the recent elections. It is hoped that these discussions and reflections will contribute to informed discussions with UK colleagues upon the delegation's return to the UK. Thirdly, the feedback received from Members and parliamentary officials highlighted how useful the sessions were in terms of providing theoretical background and practical training to future Committee Chairs, Members and Clerks. Finally, the programme also helped reinforce the already strong links that exist between the UK and Sri Lankan Parliaments in the context of the recent changes to the political landscape. The exposure the UK delegation had during its time in Colombo illustrated the strong friendship that exists between the two Parliaments.

4.03. The Workshop took place over the course of three days (Monday 15 - Wednesday 17 February). The first half day consisted in an official ceremony opened by Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka followed by a series of briefings by the Parliamentary Leadership on the reform agenda. The afternoon of the first day, and on the second day of the programme, sessions explored key themes related to the functioning, powers, privileges and constitution of parliamentary committees. The last day of the Workshop consisted in a mock evidence session on the issue of public transportation in Colombo. Officials from the Ministry of Transport, the Sri Lanka Transport Board and the University of Colombo acted as witnesses.

4.04. Drawing on the wide range of experiences of the participating Members and Clerks, discussions highlighted good practice for oversight committees and helped identify some of the potential issues to be faced by sectoral committees. Discussions addressed: the balance of powers between the Executive and the Legislature, partisan politics, committee mandate, selection of topics for inquiries, powers and privileges of committees, links between the effectiveness of the committee and support available to Members and Clerks as well as how to best manage committee business, how to build consensus and finally how to deal with a lack of government responsiveness. The role of committees in undertaking financial oversight was also discussed during one of the Workshop's sessions.

4.05. The programme helped create momentum for the creation of the sectoral oversight committees in the Parliament of Sri Lanka and helped re-affirm the UK Parliament's commitment to supporting the Parliament of Sri Lanka in its ambitious parliamentary reforms agenda where and when requested by the Sri Lankan Parliament. It also helped illustrate the real appetite for strengthening democratic processes and how Members and parliamentary staff can help support making democracy constantly more efficient both in Sri Lanka and in the UK.

4.06. As a result of the programme, it was suggested by the Leadership of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, that a follow-up Workshop to be organised by CPA UK should take place within six months once the Committees have been created. This Workshop would help address the practical challenges of managing Committee business and provide a platform to reflect on the constitution, powers and functioning of the sectoral committees in view of improving their effectiveness.





## 5. Workshop comments

### 5.01. *Overview of recent political developments*

5.01.1. The first morning of the programme enabled the UK delegation to gain greater understanding of the recent political changes in Sri Lanka. During the briefing meeting for the UK delegation, HE James Dauris, British High Commissioner to Sri Lanka and the Maldives outlined the timeline of recent political developments from the conclusion of the thirty year civil war in 2009 to the 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections. The composition of the recently elected Government was discussed enabling the UK Members to understand the dynamics at stake within Parliament ahead of the Workshop. The delegation learned that Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's United National Party (UNP) won the elections as the largest party in a coalition known as the United National Front for Good Governance. The governing coalition has a majority of 11 seats over the opposition coalition, the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA), led by former President Mahinda Rajapaksa. The UPFA includes the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) headed by current President Maithripala Sirisena. The coalition is further complexed by the fact that some Members of SLFP who, opposed to former President Rajapaksa, decided to ally themselves to the governing coalition.

5.01.2. The Workshop was officially opened with addresses from the leadership of Parliament as well as by Prime Minister Wickremesinghe. The Hon. Speaker, Secretary General and Leader of the Opposition gave an overview of recent political developments which included the defeat of the incumbent President Rajapaksa as well as the aspirations for the new Parliament. The Prime Minister mentioned in his speech that the presidential elections were contested on an agenda of democratisation and constitutional reforms following what the Prime Minister called the end of an 'autocratic rule'. The Secretary General then provided an overview of the parliamentary reform and the expectations for the oversight sectoral committees. He re-enforced that this was in line with the reformist agenda that Sri Lanka was undergoing. He outlined that these oversight committees represented a new era, one of enhancement of the authority of Parliament over the Executive powers. He also outlined the expectations for the programme, which related to the development of skills and knowledge necessary to the effective management of committees.

### 5.02. *The key features of oversight committees*

5.02.1. From the various presentations, it became apparent to the UK delegation that the implementation of the new sectoral oversight committee system was expected to differ from the previous consultative committees in a number of ways. For instance, they would not include Ministers as Chairs (which was the case under the consultative committees), would scrutinise a number of ministries and would be chaired by a Member of the Opposition. It was expected that 16 sectoral committees would be created to oversee the work of ministries and that one additional committee would oversee public finances.

5.02.2. The selection of Committee Chairs and Members was subsequently discussed. The UK delegation outlined the processes currently in place in the UK Parliament. Whilst it had not been clearly defined how





Chairs and Members would be selected in the Sri Lankan Parliament, the idea that the composition of the Committee should reflect the composition of Parliament was raised with political parties being allocated seats based on their representation in Parliament. Additionally the Chair would be elected by the Committee Members. This would differ from the UK Parliament where Committee Chairs are elected by the whole House. Finally, in order to preserve the independence of committees, Ministers would not be allowed to hold the chairmanship of the Committee that scrutinises its Ministry, unlike under the consultative committee system.

### 5.03. *The role of oversight committees in holding government to account*

5.03.1. Sessions included discussions on the power and limitations of parliamentary committees in holding Government to account including the power that committees have to summon witnesses, including Ministers. The UK delegation gave an overview of the creation and development of the Select Committee System in the UK parliament highlighting its introduction in 1979 and changes thereafter, emphasising the message that democracy was always work in progress. The difference between pre and post legislative scrutiny was also discussed.

5.03.2. The power to summon was discussed in the context of the consultative committees, the sectoral committees to be created in the Sri Lankan Parliament as well as in the UK context. While consultative committees had the power to summon witnesses as vested in the standing orders, in practice their ability to summon ministers to appear in front of the committee was limited.

### 5.04. *Key challenges & opportunities for oversight committees*

5.04.1. Building consensus: One of the key messages that came out of the discussions related to the need for Members to work together to produce a unanimous series of recommendations.

5.04.2. Resources and administration: Addressing the issue of a lack of resources is one of the key challenges faced by oversight committees. Having a sufficiently expert committee Clerk is key to be able to draft reports outlining the Committee's recommendations to the government. Participants were in agreement that the quality of the resources and expert advice available will to a large extent determine the quality of the recommendations.

5.04.3. Tools to mobilise public opinion: in terms of opportunities, oversight committees play an integral role to mobilise public opinion and promote an understanding of the oversight role of parliaments more broadly. The UK delegation outlined how in recent years parliamentary committees had gained greater public attention, including through the broadcasting of public hearings and increased media coverage. They argued that this had contributed to a greater understanding of the role of backbench MPs and to the raising of their profile.





## 5.05. *Managing Committee business*

5.05.1. The UK delegation emphasised the importance of having a robust Chair that is able to build consensus amongst Committee members. Discussions also highlighted the individual Member's responsibility to prepare and attend committee meetings; as well as the importance of building strong relationships between Committee Members and the Chair, as well as the Chair and the Clerk. Those relationships were identified as a key determining factor of the performance of the Committee.

5.05.2. How to select topics for inquiries was also discussed. The UK delegation explained that topics for inquiries were decided by the Committee at a private meeting and these were usually intended to cover a six-month period. All Members could put ideas forward and it was then down to the Committee as a whole to determine which inquiries to prioritise. The importance of making time to determine priorities for future inquiries at meetings was stressed, as the UK delegation noted that the temptation was often to dedicate all allocated time to evidence sessions and not forward planning.

5.05.3. The issue of the timing of inquiries was also discussed, as well as the importance of establishing a maximum amount of time within which Government needs to respond to a Committee's recommendations following an inquiry.

5.05.4. The issue of attendance was also raised. The UK delegation underlined the responsibilities that individual Members carry when elected to serve on a Committee. One of the issues raised during the discussions was that in Sri Lanka, Committee Members would be appointed, not elected, which was identified by some Members as a barrier to attendance.

5.05.5. The link between political affiliation and Committee work was also discussed at length at several of the Workshop's sessions. The UK delegation stressed that the Committee's power lied in its ability to produce unanimous report, and while politicians were de facto political, it was essential for Committee work not to be bound by party lines. Discussions reiterated at length the importance of Committee Members to act independently and impartially to ensure the credibility and efficacy of the Committee's work.

## 5.06. *Breakout session for parliamentary staff*

5.06.1. Parliamentary staff had the opportunity to discuss issues arising from the proposed changes, including the format of sectoral committee inquiries and other work and the resources required to service them adequately. The staff attending this session had clearly been briefed thoroughly on the purpose and likely workings of the new committee system, and sought comparative information from Westminster on the practicalities of such matters as preparing documents, including briefs and reports, and arranging witnesses for oral evidence sessions. Questions were also raised about the need for committees to have their own independent research capacity, either via specialists directly attached to individual committees or through a central pool of researchers who could be allocated to particular committees or inquiries as need arose.







The relationship between Members of Parliament and staff was also discussed at some length. Wider parliamentary resource requirements, in particular for robust IT systems, were of key concern, and, arising from that, media and public engagement tools to publicise the work of individual committees, and perhaps of the Parliament more widely, appeared to require strategic thought and improvement.

## 5.07. *Conducting effective evidence sessions*

5.07.1. The final day of the programme consisted of a mock evidence session related to the Colombo Urban Transport Master Plan. The aim of this activity was to familiarise the Sri Lankan Members and Clerks to the proceedings in place in the United Kingdom. The evidence session was split into two, one exploring how to make best use of the evidence from one single witness, and the second half from a panel of witnesses. Following a briefing by the acting Chairman of the Committee, Richard Bacon MP, and the Acting Clerk, David Weir, the Committee took evidence from Professor Amal Kuramage, Senior Professor at the Department of Transport and Logistics Management from the University of Colombo. The questions addressed the conceptualisation of the plan, its rationale for addressing some of the important issues faced in Colombo in relation to congestion, pollution and access as well as the methodology and assumptions used by the plan. The second half of the session which was attended by witnesses from the Ministry of Transport and the Sri Lanka Transport Board explored how the plan fitted within the strategy of the Ministry of Transport as well as lessons learned from previous transport plans.

5.07.2. This was a particularly helpful exercise and helped illustrate the need for effective preparation prior to an evidence session, as well as the importance of the methodology used for questioning witnesses. The session also helped illustrate how the Chair can effectively steer discussions to avoid any deviances from Committee Members from the inquiry topic. This activity also demonstrated the active role the Committee Clerk plays in terms of briefing the Chair and Members, as well as his/her role during the evidence session. It also helped emphasise the critical role played by parliamentary officials in terms of providing expert research on topics and gave a dynamic example of how parliament can effectively hold ministry officials to account for their policy and practices.

5.07.3. The report-back session from the mock committee hearing discussed the methodology for preparing for committee hearings, as well as the importance of holding private meetings ahead of public sessions to prepare the proceedings and agree on a list of suggested questions to ask the witnesses.





## 6. Programme outline

<b>Sunday 14 February</b>	
<b>Arrival day</b>	
pm	<b>Briefing with Delegation Secretary</b>
1900	<i>Dinner at Hotel &amp; briefing with representatives from the Parliament of Sri Lanka</i>
<b>Monday 15 February</b>	
<b>Introductions, Setting the Scene, Characteristics &amp; Administration of Select Committees</b>	
0700-0745	<b>Briefing with HE James Dauris, British High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Kingsbury Hotel</b>
0845-1030	<b>Opening Ceremony</b> Arrival of Hon. Rajavarithiam Sampanth MP, <i>Leader of the Opposition</i> Arrival of the Hon. Karu Jayasuriya MP, <i>Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka</i> Arrival of the Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe MP, <i>Prime Minister of Sri Lanka</i>
0900	Welcome speech by Dhammika Dasanayake, <i>Secretary General of the Parliament of Sri Lanka</i>
0910	Address by Rt Hon. Fiona Mactaggart MP, <i>UK delegation leader</i>
0925	Address by the Hon. Rajavarithiam Sampanth, <i>Leader of the Opposition</i>
0935	Address by the Hon. Karu Jayasuriya MP, <i>Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka</i>
0945	Keynote address by the Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe MP, <i>Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, on Sectoral Oversight Committees</i>
1130-1215	<b>Session 1: Setting the scene</b> This session contextualised the recent reforms undertaken by the Parliament of Sri Lanka along with key priorities for the new Parliament and addressed the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of parliamentary reforms (from Consultative &amp; Standing Committees to Sectoral Oversight Committees)</li> <li>• What the aspirations are for the Committee System within the current Parliament</li> <li>• Overview of the established powers of Sectoral Oversight Committees and Committee on Public Finance</li> <li>• Role that the UK Parliament can play in supporting these reforms</li> <li>• Overview of the UK Committee System (Bill Committees, Departmental Select Committees)</li> </ul>
1315-1400	<b>Session 2: Balancing the Executive and the Legislative: The role of Committees in holding the Executive to account</b> This session explored the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Privileges, Power and Independence of Committees</li> <li>• Timing of inquiries and Government responses</li> <li>• Balancing party affiliation and committee work</li> <li>• Resources and administration</li> </ul>
1415-1500	<b>Session 3: Managing Committee Business</b>





	<p>This session explored the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee mandate</li> <li>• How do Committees reach a consensus on strategy that takes into account Members' time constraints</li> <li>• Subject of inquiries</li> <li>• Resources available to the Committee</li> <li>• Preparing for Committee meetings</li> </ul>	
1500-1600	<p><b>Practical Session 1: How to improve the efficiency &amp; effectiveness of a Committee</b></p> <p>The session took the form of a Q&amp;A discussion addressing more in depth some of the points raised during previous sessions.</p>	
1900	<p>Dinner hosted by Hon. Karu Jayasuriya MP, <i>Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka</i></p>	
<p><b>Tuesday 16 February</b></p>		
<p><b><i>Exploring Specific Issues in relation to Party Politics, Clerk &amp; Member Relations; Reporting</i></b></p>		
0930-1030	<p><b>Session 4. Members: Role of Committee Chair, Members and Clerk</b></p> <p>This session explored the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection of Members</li> <li>• Role of the Chair</li> <li>• Relationship with other Committee Members</li> <li>• Responsibility of the Clerk</li> </ul>	
1045-1145	<p><b>Session 5a. Members: Accountability mechanisms</b></p> <p>This session explored the following accountability mechanisms: Bill Committees, Committee of the whole House, Secondary legislation, Parliamentary questions</p>	<p><b>Session 5b. Clerks: Tips on how to brief Members effectively and conducting an effective enquiry</b></p> <p>This session provided Clerks with practical advice on the responsibilities of the Clerk in supporting committee enquiry process, with a particular focus on the role of the Clerk in briefing Members effectively. It also addressed the relationship between the Committee Clerk and Chair.</p>
1145-1245	<p><b>Session 6: Conducting an effective inquiry</b></p> <p>This session addressed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timing of an inquiry</li> <li>• Effective questioning</li> <li>• Preparing for hearings</li> <li>• How to make the best from witnesses' evidence - bridging the gap between the information needed and the</li> </ul>	





	<p>information available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources available - external sources</li> </ul>	
1345-1445	<p><b>Session 7: The role of Committees in financial oversight</b></p> <p>This session explored the role of Committees in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considering departmental budgets</li> <li>Interpreting financial information</li> <li>The relationship with the Auditor-General</li> <li>The relationship between the Public Accounts Committee and the Supreme Audit Institution</li> </ul>	
1500-1600	<p><b>Session 8a: Committee work, people and the media</b></p> <p>This session explored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relationship between committees, the public and the media and how the latter can be used to strengthen parliament's role in oversight, including social media</li> <li>Methods that can be used to engage the public, creating awareness of calls for evidence, committee reports and government's responses</li> <li>Report launch</li> </ul>	<p><b>Session 8b: Questions &amp; Answers</b></p> <p>This session provided an opportunity for participants to ask any follow-up questions.</p>
1800-2000	<p><b>Evening Reception hosted by HE James Dauris, UK High Commissioner to Sri Lanka</b></p>	
<p><b>Wednesday 17 February</b></p>		
<p><b>Committee in Action</b></p>		
0900-0930	<p><b>Briefing on Mock Committee Evidence Session</b></p>	
0945-1245	<p><b>Practical session 2: Mock Committee Evidence Session</b></p>	
1245-1300	<p><b>Report-back on Mock Committee Evidence Session</b></p>	
1400-1500	<p><b>Session 9: Producing reports with impact</b></p> <p>Following the mock committee hearing, this session explored best practice for report-writing and coming up with recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best practice for report-writing: how to create an effective committee report with tangible recommendations for Government?</li> <li>Expectations for Chair, Members and Clerks in developing committee reports</li> <li>Building consensus &amp; agreeing recommendations</li> </ul>	





1500-1600	<p><b>Programme review, assessment and next steps</b></p> <p>This session reviewed the success of the programme in achieving its intended aim and objectives. It also provided an opportunity to discuss any potential follow-up work.</p>
-----------	--

## 7. Outcomes and follow-up activities

7.01. CPA UK will continue to maintain an open channel of communications with the Parliament of Sri Lanka in order to determine the support that might be needed from UK Colleagues with a specific focus to be determined by the Parliament of Sri Lanka.

7.02. It was suggested by the Leadership of the Parliament of Sri Lanka that a follow-up Workshop would be organised by CPA UK once the Committees were in place in order to address the practical challenges of managing committee business, and provide a platform to reflect on the constitution, powers and functioning of the Committees.

7.03. A reference document will be produced by CPA UK and circulated to all Members and Clerks from the Parliament of Sri Lanka. This will outline ways forward in terms of addressing some of the challenges generally faced in the administration of the committees.

7.04. A debrief meeting took place on 10 March. The aim of the meeting was to report back on findings to representatives from the FCO and House of Commons as well as for the delegation to assess ways forward in terms of future support and areas of work with the Parliament of Sri Lanka.

7.05. Within the period of three months from the conclusion of the Workshop, CPA UK Secretariat will conduct an evaluation follow-up activity with the Parliament of Sri Lanka - the format of which is currently being designed.

## 8. Acknowledgments

8.01. Sincere appreciation is given to the Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe MP, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Hon. Karu Jayasuriya MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, Hon. Rajavaroatham Sampanth MP, Leader of the Opposition and Dhammika Dasanayake, Secretary General of the Parliament of Sri Lanka for their support in attending the Workshop's sessions. Acknowledgement is also extended to all Members and Clerks for their active participation in the sessions and their contribution to the discussions. This made for an interactive and stimulating exchange of ideas.

8.02. Thanks are also extended to His Excellency James Dauris, British High Commissioner to Sri Lanka and the Maldives and to his team for briefing the delegation upon its arrival in country. The UK delegation is also grateful for his support and hospitality during the programme.





8.03. Thanks also go to Kushani Rohanadheera, Assistant Secretary-General of Parliament, Tikiri Jayatillake, Assistant Secretary-General of Parliament and Jagath Gajaweera, Director of Legislative Services for their valuable contribution to making the Workshop a success.

8.04. Thanks also go to: Professor Amal Kumarage, Nihal Somaweera, J M Thilabarathna and BAP Aruyarathne for acting as witnesses during the mock evidence session, and to Michael Cockle, Deputy Head Sri Lanka Team at the FCO and Philip Aylett, Senior Clerk at the Scrutiny Unit, House of Commons for briefing the delegation prior to their departure.

## 9. About CPA UK & WFD

9.01. 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 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.

9.02. The Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) was established in 1992 to support democratic practices and institutions in developing democracies. WFD specialises in parliamentary strengthening and political party development; works at national, regional and local levels; and is uniquely placed to draw directly on the expertise and involvement of the Westminster political parties.





## 10. Annexes

### 10.01. Delegation biographical details

#### **Rt Hon. Fiona Mactaggart MP (Labour), Member, Intelligence and Security Committee**

Fiona was the Founder and is the secretary of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Prostitution and the Global Sex Trade, and is the Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Human Trafficking/Modern Day Slavery.

Fiona has served as a Member of the House of Commons Health Committee, the Children, Schools and Families Committee, Public Accounts Committee and Public Administration Committee. Fiona previously held the portfolio of Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities and also served as Chair of the Women's Parliamentary Labour Party.

Prior to entering Parliament, Fiona was National Secretary of the National Union of Students, General Secretary of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, and Chair of Liberty for two years. She secured a right of appeal against deportation for those living in the UK for more than seven years. Fiona also worked for the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and was an inner London primary school teacher and a university lecturer.

#### **Richard Bacon MP (Conservative), Vice-Chair, Public Accounts Committee**

Richard Bacon MP is the Member of Parliament for South Norfolk. Before his election to Parliament in 2001, he worked in investment banking, journalism and consultancy. He is vice-chairman of the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, on which he served since 2001. He has twice been named the *Spectator magazine's* 'Parliamentarian of the Year', while parliamentary colleagues have voted him the *House Magazine* 'Backbencher of the Year' and 'Commons Select Committee Member of the Year'. He chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Self-Build, Custom and Community House-Building and Placemaking, as well as the All-Party Parliamentary group on Iran. He is the co-author of the book *conundrum: why every government gets things wrong and what we can do about it* published by Biteback Publishing in 2013.

#### **Julie Elliott MP (Labour), Member, Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport**

Julie Elliott is the Member of Parliament for Sunderland Central, first elected in 2010 and recently re-elected in May 2015.

Julie was a Shadow Minister for Energy and Climate Change from 2013-2015. Her brief covered a wide range of topics, including low carbon and renewable energy generation, climate change policy, energy intensive industries and the green economy. Prior to this, Julie served as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Caroline Flint as Shadow Energy Secretary.

From 2011-2013, Julie sat on the Business Innovation and Skills Select Committee, which hosted multiple enquiries into issues such as apprenticeships, higher education and Royal Mail privatisation.





## HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

She also served on the European Scrutiny Committee, which assesses the legal and political importance of draft EU legislation deposited in Parliament by the Government. Julie currently sits on the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, which has recently been holding enquiries into doping in athletics and the BBC Charter Renewal. Julie is also Chair of the Backbench Housing and Planning Committee and is chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Rugby Union.

Julie also has experience of sitting on a number of Standing Bill Committees. In the last Parliament, she sat on the Welfare Reform Bill and the Localism Bill. Recently, she was a member of the Trade Union Bill Committee.

Before being elected as a Member of Parliament, Julie was a regional organiser for the Labour Party. She was the agent for Tynemouth in 1997, playing a central part in the historic victory that year, winning the seat for Labour for the first time since 1945. In 1998 Julie went to work for the National Asthma Campaign, and the following year became a Regional Organiser and Political Officer for the GMB trade union. In this role, Julie worked and negotiated with some of the North East's largest employers in both the public and private sectors, including the nuclear and defence industries. She also held responsibility for political affairs.

### **David Weir, Clerk of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, House of Commons**

David has worked at the House of Commons for more than 20 years and is clerk of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, one of 19 that scrutinise the work of government departments, and whose recent work includes investigation into food security, broadband for rural areas and milk prices. Previous posts include Northern Ireland Affairs and the internal Administration of the House of Commons committee. He has also worked in the Northern Ireland Assembly and the National Assembly for Wales on secondments. Before joining the House, he was a journalist in his native Scotland and in Norfolk.

### **Mariam El-Azm, Deputy Head of International Outreach, CPA UK**

Mariam is an international relations professional and project manager with over six years' experience managing projects on behalf of the UK Parliament, including international conferences, overseas delegations and parliamentary strengthening programmes.

As the Deputy Head of International Outreach at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK (CPA UK), Mariam is responsible for managing a team of five in delivering high profile diplomatic and capacity building programmes for parliamentarians in the UK and overseas. She has worked with many Commonwealth countries including Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Ghana, Tanzania, Kenya, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea.

Mariam has a Master's degree in Global Governance and Ethics from University College London and a trilingual BSc in Business Administration. She is fluent in French, English and Spanish and from 2012-2014 served on the board of an international sightseeing company, Big Bus Tours Limited (BBTL).

