

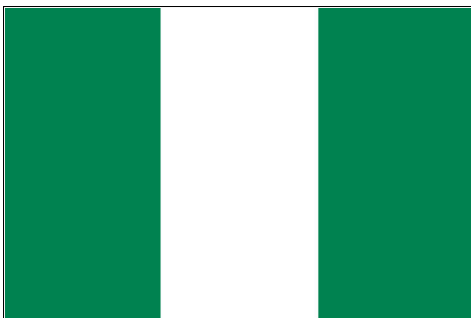
CPA UK Delegation Visit to Nigeria

03 - 07 March 2025

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

A CPA UK parliamentary delegation travelled to the National Assembly of Nigeria for a programme focused on women's political representation, global health and gender-based violence (GBV). The delegation also travelled to Lagos to engage with organisations to understand the response to GBV in Nigeria, and for meetings with businesses on UK-Nigeria trade. This visit follows a recent CPA UK visit of UK parliamentary officials to the National Assembly in July 2024 which built connections between committee clerks and officials in Nigeria and the UK.

This visit was an opportunity for CPA UK to connect with Nigerian parliamentarians on matters of shared interest as well as following up with those who participated in the Legislative Strengthening Seminar to address GBV in October 2024. CPA UK is grateful for the support of the National Assembly of Nigeria and the British High Commissions to both Abuja and Lagos who made this visit possible.



THE DELEGATION:

- Kate Osamor MP
- The Rt Hon Dame Karen Bradley MP
- The Rt Hon David Mundell
- Dr Beccy Cooper MP
- Fred Thomas MP
- The Lord Oates
- Professor Helen Xanthaki



The UK delegation pictured outside the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency.

National Assembly of Nigeria

FULL REPORT

03 - 07 March 2025

CPA UK IN NIGERIA, 2024

In 2024, CPA UK facilitated a visit to the National Assembly of Nigeria as an opportunity to rebuild and strengthen parliamentary ties. Designed specifically for UK clerks and officials, the visit aimed to enhance collaboration and share best practices on committee working and parliamentary standards and behaviour. Through discussions and exchanges, UK clerks and officials engaged with their Nigerian counterparts to explore ways to improve parliamentary processes and governance.



The UK delegation and representatives from GBV civil society organisations.

Women's Political Representation

Currently, 21 women serve in Nigeria's National Assembly across the Senate and House of Representatives. A new bill aims to increase female political representation in Nigeria. This bill has some similarities to measures that have been implemented in the Kenyan and Sierra Leonean parliaments. The Special Seats Bill, currently under consideration in Nigeria's National Assembly, proposes the creation of one additional legislative seat for women in each state, to be contested exclusively by female candidates. This would result in a total of 74 new seats across the Senate and House of Representatives (Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre, 2024).

The UK delegation appreciated the opportunity to meet with female Nigerian parliamentarians to discuss the broader barriers to women's political participation. Key challenges raised included election-related harassment and the lack of support from political parties.



A roundtable with the UK delegation and representatives from GBV civil society organisations.

The discussions emphasised the need for party reforms, with the UK delegation sharing the approach of all-women shortlists as a strategy to boost female candidacies, while also recognising that similar challenges to women's political participation and representation persist in the UK. Additionally, they discussed how increased female representation can create role models and mentors, encouraging long-term participation of women in Nigeria and the UK's political landscape.

Representatives from both Nigeria and the United Kingdom emphasised the critical need to sustain and strengthen efforts aimed at promoting female political participation within their respective countries. In recognising the ongoing challenges that women face in entering and thriving in political leadership roles, members stressed that continued advocacy, policy support, and grassroots engagement are essential to fostering a more inclusive political landscape.

HEALTH

During the delegation's visit to Nigeria, several key health-related challenges and opportunities were discussed. The country faces a dual burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, with malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS remaining significant public health concerns.

During meetings with chairs of healthcare committees, participants discussed the structure of healthcare institutions in both Nigeria and the UK. There are key institutional similarities, including the role of local doctors and the management of hospital care.



Members of the UK delegation meeting with various committee chairs from the National Assembly.



Members of the UK delegation meeting with various committee chairs from the National Assembly.

The delegation, alongside members of the National Assembly, explored common challenges faced by public healthcare systems, such as resource constraints, workforce shortages, and disparities in access to care. These discussions emphasised the pressing need for increased investment in healthcare infrastructure and workforce development. Strengthening these areas is essential not only for improving healthcare delivery and outcomes in Nigeria and the UK but also for addressing global health challenges more effectively.

CPA UK's visit to Nigeria was particularly timely in sharing experiences and insights on malnutrition. Malnutrition, especially in young children, has significant long-term effects on a country's health outcomes and places additional strain on already overburdened healthcare institutions. Delegates from both the UK and Nigeria expressed a strong commitment to continuing discussions on key health issues, including HIV/AIDS, malnutrition, and global health. Given recent cuts to US Aid and what that may mean for health projects currently operating in Nigeria, parliamentarians from both UK and Nigeria emphasised the urgency of strengthening health partnerships between the UK and Nigeria.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

GBV continues to threaten human rights, public health, and social stability. To gain deeper insight into its impact and prevalence in Nigeria, the delegation travelled to Lagos to engage with local stakeholders and explore the successes and challenges of how national GBV legislation is enforced and implemented at the state level. The implementation of national legislation is at the discretion of each state. Meetings with the Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) and the Mirabel Centre highlighted the significant work underway in Lagos State to provide holistic support to survivors.

In meeting with the DSVA, an arms-length body of the Lagos State Ministry of Justice, the delegation gained insights into how state-level agencies can deliver a coordinated, survivor-centred approach to GBV.



Lord Oates with founder of the Mirabel Centre, Itoro Eze-Anaba.

They also learned about the importance of cross-agency collaboration, prompt response mechanisms, and the role that state institutions can play in bridging gaps between survivors and access to justice. These discussions resonated with delegation leader, Kate Osamor MP, who reflected on her participation at the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians' meeting on gender-based violence looking at the role of state and national level response.



CPA UK delegation meet colleagues from the Mirabel Centre.

The CPA UK delegation also met with staff from the Mirabel Centre, a non-governmental organisation and Nigeria's first sexual assault referral centre. Located within the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, the Mirabel Centre provides direct free medical care and psychosocial support to survivors of rape and sexual violence, including men, women, and children. The delegation noted that the Mirabel Centre's work in supporting survivors of GBV serves as a strong example of effective state-level initiatives. They highlighted that such initiatives could help inform and influence the development of national legislation.



(left to right): Dame Karen Bradley MP, Lord Oates and Dr Beccy Cooper MP at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital to better understand how to support the Mirabel Centre.



UK delegation meeting with Lagos based NGOs and CSOs Gender Based Violence at State Level.

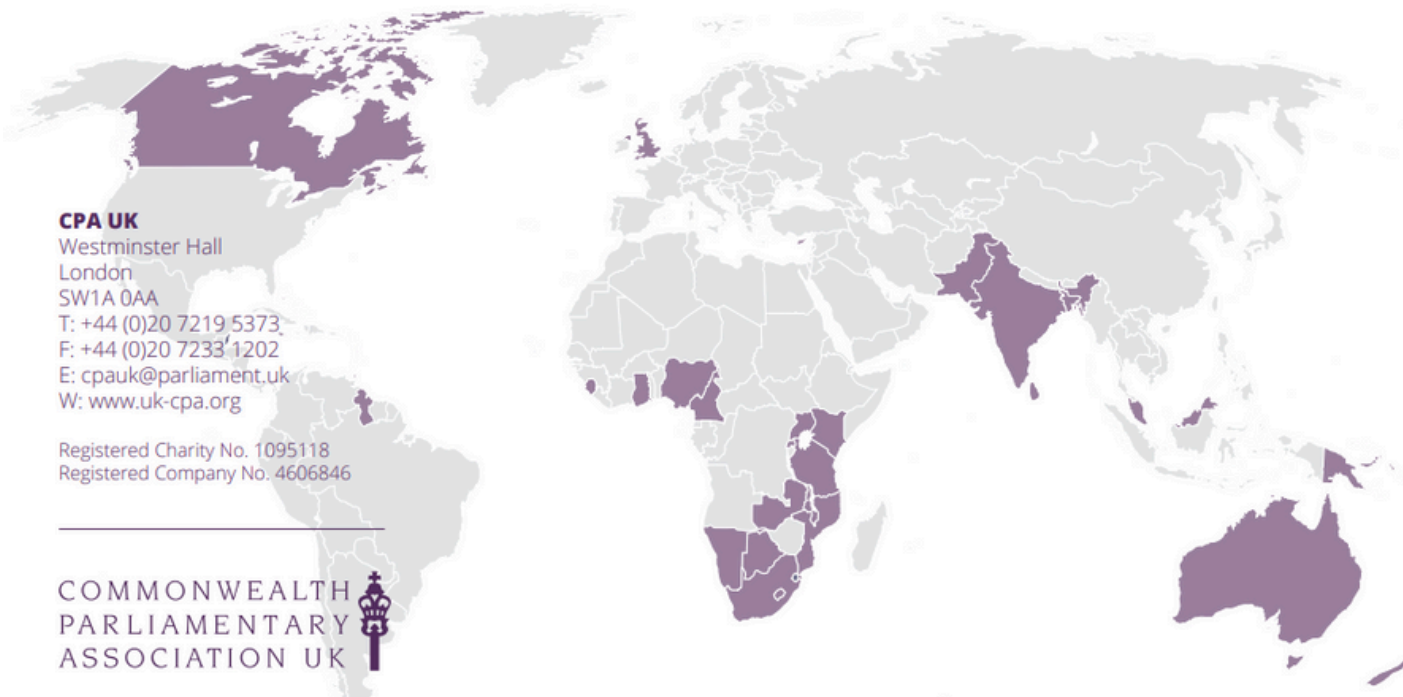
The National Assembly of Nigeria and the UK Parliament: Next Steps

CPA UK looks forward to continuing its partnership with the National Assembly of Nigeria through upcoming programmes. These will likely focus on global health, women's political representation and empowerment, and support for committee clerks.

Additionally, CPA UK looks forward to supporting the growing dialogue around UK-Nigerian trade and business. This builds on a business networking event organised by the Lagos British High Commission, which gave the UK delegation an opportunity to engage with local businesses and explore future UK-Nigerian collaborations.



(left to right): David Mundell MP, Dr. Kemi DaSilva-Ibru MD, founder of Women at Risk International Foundation, Deputy High Commissioner Lagos, Jonny Baxter, Kate Osamor MP and Amina Oyagbola, Founder and Chairperson of Women In Successful Careers.



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