

**THIRD CPA ASIA REGIONAL CONFERENCE
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA
10TH – 16TH FEBRUARY 2011**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Asia Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, held in Opal-4 Room at Hotel Hilton, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Saturday, 12th February 2011 at 09.30 a.m.

Present:

- 01. Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa, MP, Speaker, Parliament of Sri Lanka – Chairman**
- 02. Hon. Md. Abdul Hamid, MP, Speaker, Bangladesh
- 03. Hon. Abdulla Shahid MP, Speaker, Maldives
- 04. Hon. (Dr.) Fehmida Mirza, MNA, Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan
- 05. Mr. Dhammika Dasanayake, Regional Secretary CPA Asia Region.

Hon. Muhammed Aslam Bhootani, Speaker, Provincial Assembly of Balochistan and Hon. Mir Jan Muhammad Khan Jamali, Deputy Chairman of Senate, Pakistan, were also present on invitation.

1). Consideration of the programme of the 3rd CPA Asia Regional Conference - 10th to 16th February 2011 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The Programme of the 3rd CPA Asia Regional Conference was unanimously adopted by the Committee.

2). Future programme and strategy of the CPA-Asia Region.

The observations and recommendations made at the Meeting of the Branch Secretaries on 11th February 2011, which emphasized the importance of organizing a Regional Conference on an yearly basis, was considered by the Committee. Concerns were raised by the Hon. Speaker of Bangladesh of meeting on an annual basis amidst the busy schedule of international conferences, seminars, etc.. that Parliamentarians had to attend each year. However, Hon. Dr. Fehmida Mirza, MNA, Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan and Hon. Abdulla Shahid MP, Speaker People's Majilis, Maldives both reiterated upon the importance of being more active as a region within the CPA and meeting at least once a year was a requirement clearly stipulated in the Regional Constitution as well, with a proper calendar of activities prepared for each year. The

Committee having discussed the matter at length agreed to meet at least once a year at a Regional Conference.

3). Establishment of a Regional fund to support activities of the Region.

The Committee agreed in principle to levy an annual subscription from the Member Branches of the Region but decided that it was still too premature to decide on an exact method of levying the fee. It was decided to entrust the Branch Secretaries to carry out a thorough study as to a suitable method of levying the subscription fee and the Secretaries were requested to circulate the report before the next meeting of the Regional Executive Committee so that it could be taken up for consideration at the next meeting.

4). Proposals for Amendments to the Constitution of the CPA Asia Region.

At the outset, the Regional Secretary informed the Committee the observations and recommendations of the Branch Secretaries in this regard. The Committee unanimously agreed to the adoption of the amendment proposed by the CPA Sri Lanka Branch, i.e., that the name of the Region be amended as the "*Asia Region* of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association" and also to adopt the amendment proposed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Branch that its name, "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" be incorporated in the Regional Constitution, subject to the approval by a two-third majority of delegates to the Conference.

In respect of the Amendments proposed by the Pakistan National Branch it was observed that these proposals have not been submitted within the time frame stipulated by the Constitution. However, the Committee deliberated extensively upon the proposed amendments suggested to the Article 6 to locate the Regional Secretariat in Islamabad, Pakistan and agreed in principle that the Secretariat of the CPA Asia Region be permanently located at a suitable place and agreed to reach a final decision at a future meeting once details such as the method of financing the Secretariat, etc., have been properly worked out by the Branch willing to host the Secretariat.

5). Venue for the next CPA Asia Regional Conference.

The Regional Secretary informed the Committee the proposal made by the CPA-Sindh Branch at the 4th CPA India & Asia Regions Joint Conference held in Chhattisgarh, India,

in October 2010 to hold the next Regional Conference in the Province of Sindh in Pakistan in the year 2012 and the Executive Committee unanimously approved the proposal to hold the next Regional Conference in Sindh, Pakistan.

6). Matters of importance to be taken up at the CPA Working Party.

Hon. Muhammed Aslam Bhootani, Speaker, Provincial Assembly of Balochistan who represents the CPA Asia Region at the CPA Working Party appraised the Committee the work done at the CPA Working Party to date. He informed that the first meeting of the CPA Working Party was held during the 56th CPA Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, during which the continuation of the CPA's current status as a charity organization was deemed to be untenable and the Working Party Members were requested to consult the Branches of their respective Regions about changing the present status of the Association to that of a diplomatic organization. However, the transformation would involve other complications such as liability to taxation. Accordingly, the Members were requested to look in to the issue of resolving the matter and to consider whether another country would like to host the Secretariat of the CPA in the future. The matter of how to make the resolutions of the Association binding upon the membership was also to be considered by the Members of the Working Party in consultation with the branches of their regions.

Hon. Muhammed Aslam Bhootani further informed that funds were provided for the Members of the Working party to visit at least one Branch within their Region to have consultations regarding the above matters but his attempts to do so were not successful and whatever recommendations that the Committee may arrive at during the present meeting, could be presented to the Working Party at its forthcoming meeting to be held in February 2011 in Canada as the collective recommendations of the Asia Region.

The Committee approved the recommendations made by the Branch Secretaries to inform the Working Party that the support extended by the CPA Headquarters towards the activities of the Asia Region has been inadequate and that representations be made at the CPA Working Party to ensure that adequate funding and support is made available for its future activities. It was also decided that since the Branches constituting the Asia Region finds it difficult to meet any additional costs relating to the annual CPA subscription, the present criteria in calculating the subscription be adopted in future too.

The Committee further deliberated that though the change of the status of the Association from a Charity organization to a diplomatic Organization could be

considered as appropriate, a final decision could not be arrived at in this regard without first examining the tax laws operating in the U.K.

Hon. Abdulla Shahid MP, Speaker of Maldives, was of the view that it was the prerogative of individual states to decide whether a resolution arrived at an international forum should be binding upon itself or not.

It was agreed that the above recommendations be conveyed to the CPA Working Party, through the representative of the CPA Asia Region, Hon. Muhammad Aslam Bhootani, Speaker, Provincial Assembly of Balochistan.

7). Any other business

I). Election of the Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee to be held in 2011

Hon. (Dr.) Fehmida Mirza, informed the Committee of the interest of the Pakistan National Branch to contest for the above post representing the CPA Asia Region and further stated that this has been already intimated at the 56th CPA Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya. She also informed that the Pakistan National Branch has already begun canvassing for the same at the local level.

Hon. Abdulla Shahid, MP, Speaker of Maldives, also stated the interest of the CPA-Maldives Branch to nominate its Speaker as the Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee in 2011 and informed that the same has been indicated during the 56th CPA Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya. He further informed that the Secretary General of the CPA will be undertaking a tour of the Member Branches of the CPA the following month and he is also scheduled to visit the Asia Region as well. Hence it would be a great advantage for the Asia Region if it could decide on a single candidate by that time so that the Secretary General could carry the message of the nomination from the Asia Region to the rest of the Branches that he will be visiting..

The Committee members agreed in principle to have only one candidate from the Asia Region contesting for this position and reiterated upon the importance of reaching a consensus in nominating a suitable candidate as early as possible. Thereupon the Chairman concluded by requesting the Hon. Speakers of Maldives and Pakistan to resolve the matter between themselves and indicate the decision at the earliest to the rest of the Branches.

II) Nomination of Chairpersons for the three Plenary Sessions.

The Committee agreed that the following Speakers will preside over the three Plenary Sessions:

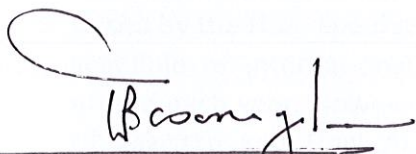
- Plenary 1- *Climate Change and Natural Disasters*- **Hon. Abdulla Shahid, Speaker, Maldives**
- Plenary II- *Poverty Alleviation* - **Hon. (Dr) Mrs. Fehmida Mirza, Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan**
- Plenary III- *Mother and Child* - **Hon. Abdul Hamid, Speaker, Bangladesh**

III). Regional Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Activities for the year 2011.

The Committee was informed by the Regional Secretary that the CPA Headquarters has made available some funding (£ 7,778.00) to conduct an activity relating to the Regional Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and that it should be made use of by the Region. Hon. (Dr) Mrs. Fehmida Mirza, Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan, informed the Committee that Pakistan, which has a significant number of women Parliamentarians in the National Legislature as well as the Provincial Assemblies, has already established a Women's Caucus which was meeting on a regular basis and conducting regular activities. She urged the other Speakers to establish similar caucuses within their respective Parliaments and emphasized the importance of having such a body at the Regional level, especially in overcoming the challenges of meeting the 4th and 5th MDG's. She further informed that Pakistan was willing to host the Secretariat of such an organization, if it be formed at the regional level.

IV). Programme for the Closing Ceremony.

The Committee agreed that the floor be open for any Speaker to make few observations at the closing ceremony.



Dhammika Dasanayake,
Secretary-CPA Asia Region