

**COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION
NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY BRANCH**

**Report on the British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR)
Conference
Gibraltar, 11-15 May 2008**

Attendees:

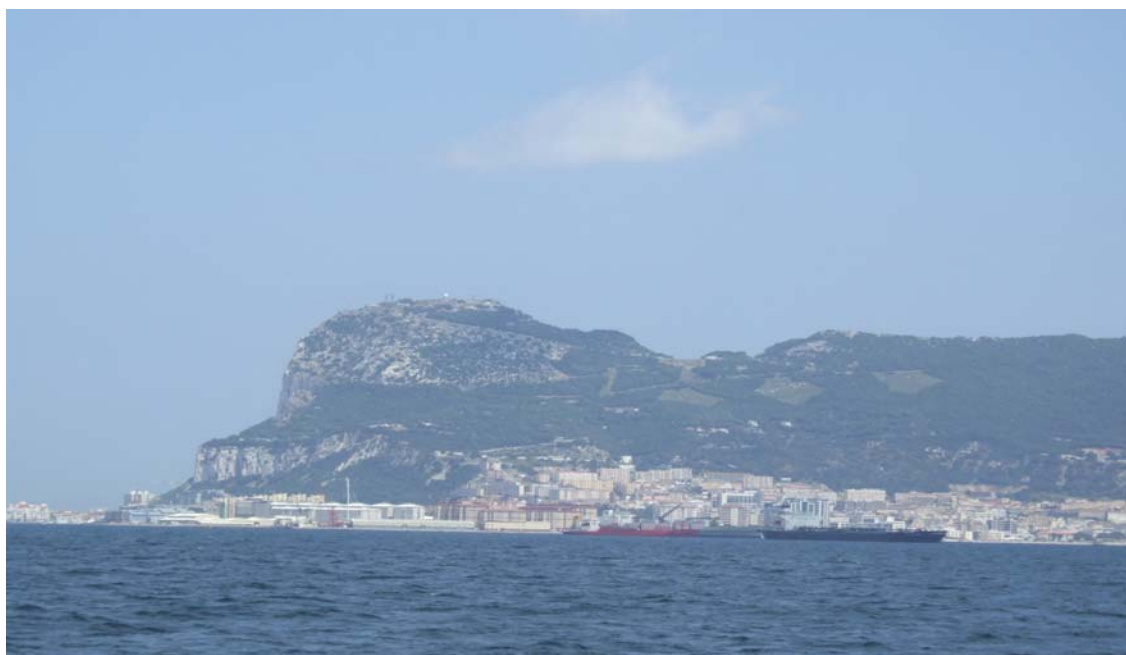
Ms Dawn Purvis MLA, Leader of the Delegation

Mr Billy Armstrong MLA, Delegate

Mr Jim Wells MLA, Delegate

Mrs Judith Murdoch, Secretary to the delegation

A delegation of 3 MLAs attended the British Islands and Mediterranean Regional (BIMR) Conference held in Gibraltar from 11 – 15 May 2008. The theme for this year's Conference was the Environment. The delegates took part in a number of highly constructive sessions discussing the approaches legislatures in the region were taking towards protection of their respective environments, the generation of renewable and clean energy sources, and managing the environmental impacts of tourism.



The Conference was officially opened by the Hon E M Britto OBE, ED, MP, Minister for the Environment and Tourism. Minister Britto acknowledged that

the protection of the environment is a goal shared by all legislatures in the region.

He welcomed the opportunity for delegates and observers to share their knowledge and experiences on the environmental responsibilities and commitments faced by each legislature from a wide a variety of sources. . He urged delegates/observers to remember the slogan “Think Globally, act Locally”.

Delegates and observers enjoyed a short cultural programme which included a tour of the Rock, and Dolphin Safari on the Straits of Gibraltar, this gave delegates and observers an opportunity to see at first hand the environmental issues faced by Gibraltar, and the potential effects of tourism on the local environment.



The Secretary-General, Dr William F. Shija addressed delegates and observers and gave an update on the work of the CPA Secretariat. He confirmed that Tanzania would host the Annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in 2009.

Dr Liesl Mesilio-Torres, PhD, Environmental Officer, Department of the Environment gave a presentation on “Climate Change and Energy”, which included:-

- The impact of energy on the climate;
- Regional effects of climate change;
- Energy generation; and
- Local setting.

During her presentation she considered what is energy, the energy crisis, energy efficiency and conservation, the link between energy and climate change, how to address the climate change problem, the global response, EU response and the importance of local contributions. The presentation was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr Stephen Warr, BSc (Hons), Environmental Officer, Department of Environment gave a presentation on “Waste Management” including:-

- EU Waste;
- Energy from waste/recycling;
- Waste water treatment; and
- Gibraltar waste strategy.

During his presentation Mr Warr considered industrial waste, construction waste and the initiatives/practices used by Gibraltar for waste management. The presentation was followed by a question and answer session.

Delegates and Observers took part in three workshops on “Energy” which ran simultaneously:-

Workshop 1 - Energy Generation, considered energy generation now, and new methods of energy generation in the future.

Workshop 2 - Renewable Energy considered fossil fuel usage – how long can it last? and renewable energy solar, wind, tidal, geo-thermal.

Workshop 3 – Energy Efficiency considered the reduction of CO2 emissions and energy efficiency initiatives.

Delegates and observers chose their preferred workshop and after a short presentation by a chosen delegate there was a roundtable discussion which gave all delegates and observers an opportunity to share the experience and knowledge from their legislature. During each workshop delegates undertook the duties of Chairperson and Rapporteur, and visiting secretaries acted as secretary to the workshop assisting the Chairperson and Rapporteur.

Professor James C Finlayson, MBE, DPhil, Director of Gibraltar Museum and Director, Heritage Division Ministry of Culture, Heritage, Sport and Leisure gave a presentation on “Eco-Tourism” considering:-

- Striking a balance;
- Tourism – at what expense?; and
- Case studies

During his presentation Prof. Finlayson gave examples of hard eco-tourism and soft eco-tourism and considered the opportunities for eco-tourism, including Gibraltar. Prof. Finlayson concluded that “Eco-tourism is a World of opportunity and responsibility”. The presentation was followed by a question and answer session.



A further three workshops on “Tourism and the Environment” ran simultaneously:-

Workshop 4 – Maximising Tourism considered - Is the quality of the environment essential to tourism? making the holiday destination attractive to environmental tourism, and the cost to the environment of maximising tourism.

Workshop 5 – Tourism’s Impact on the Environment, which considered if tourism leads to overuse of fresh water resources particularly in drier places, if uncontrolled conventional tourism poses threats to natural areas and tourism’s impact on air emissions, noise, sewage and solid waste.

Workshop 6 – Tourist Industry’s Infrastructure considered the impact of tourism construction on activities and provision of tourism facilities on the environment, is there an optimum construction level above which there can be a negative impact? And is the impact of tourism on airports, railways and other means of transport being kept at a safe environmental level?



Dr John Cortes, MBE, DPhil, Director Gibraltar Botanic Gardens and General Manager, Wildlife (Gibraltar) Environmental Consultants gave a presentation on “Biodiversity Conservation” which included:-

- The 2010 targets / halting biodiversity loss
- Invasives

During the presentation Dr Cortes looked at ‘What is Biodiversity’. The presentation was followed by a question and answer session.



The Regional Annual General Meeting also took place during the Conference. During the AGM Mr Andrew Tuggey, Regional Secretary updated delegates on regional issues including the inclusion of the NI Branch on the rota for Regional Representatives, it was agreed that the NI Branch should be added to the end of the rota, which would mean that the NI Branch would have a regional representative in the year 2017.

Mr Tuggey reported on the 53rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference which was held in New Delhi in September 2007 and explained that it was a huge success. He referred to the outline programme for this year's Annual Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 1-10 August. He reported that future conferences would be held in following countries:-

Tanzania 2009

Kenya 2010

London 2011 (CPA Centennial Anniversary)

Mr Tuggey reported that the costs associated with hosting the annual conference were in the region of £2 million.

Mr Tugged reported that future Regional Conferences will be held in the following countries:-

2009 Guernsey

2010 Isle of Man

The CPA Scotland Branch delegation volunteered to host the BIMR Conference in 2012.

The Leader of each delegation was invited to report on the CPA activity of their Branch.

The Conference concluded on Thursday 15 May 2008 with delegates and observers agreeing a communiqué (copy attached).

Copies of presentations given during the conference are available on the Ministry for the Environment website <http://www.gibraltar.gov.gi/> click on Government and Public Services, and then on Environment, see CPA conference 2008.

Ms Dawn Purvis, MLA
Delegation Leader

Mr Billy Armstrong, MLA
Delegate

Mr Jim Wells, MLA
Delegate

BRITISH ISLANDS AND MEDITERRANEAN REGION

COMMUNIQUÉ FROM THE CPA BRITISH ISLANDS AND MEDITERRANEAN REGION CONFERENCE ON THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE ENVIRONMENT HELD IN GIBRALTAR 11-15 MAY 2008

1. We, the 40 parliamentarians from 12 Commonwealth legislatures met in Gibraltar on 11-15 May to discuss the impact and challenges of climate change from the particular perspective of small countries and territories.
2. We **welcome** the statement from the Commonwealth Heads of Government at Lake Victoria in November 2007, the later communiqué from the CPA Climate Change Conference and other initiatives to bring together legislators to share experiences, knowledge and to develop shared understandings on the environment, and on the implications of climate change.
3. We **acknowledge** the significance of the Stern Review of 2006, of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali in 2007 and of the imminence of 2012 as a target date for action. **We recognise** the fact that human activities are making a contribution to global changes that are affecting climate and will increasingly demand responses from legislatures and governments.
4. We **accept** that while the impact of action in small countries and territories on a global scale can be limited, the **need for adaptation will not be diminished, nor will responsibility for initiating mitigation be any less.**
5. Tackling climate change and its effects are fundamental to sustainable development. We **believe** that the only way to secure climate, energy, economic, food, health and physical security for all is to support fair and effective global treaties with strong policies adapted to the needs and responsibilities of small countries and territories which will achieve sustainable production and use of energy, leading to stabilisation of greenhouse gas emissions, while supporting sustainable economic growth.
6. As representatives of legislatures from the British Islands and Mediterranean Region of the CPA, which in the main are limited in size or population, we have studied in detail the significance and impact of the following environmental issues:
 - Climate change and energy
 - Waste management
 - Eco-tourism
 - Biodiversity conservation

7. We **are aware of** the opportunities that exist to seek, implement and support measures that will ensure that our needs are met without significant negative impact on our environment.

8. We **pledge** to do all we can by:

- a. **Ensuring** that our actions are motivated by sound environmental practice, especially in relation to the implications of climate change and biodiversity loss.
- b. **Calling on our domestic political leaders** to support an ambitious and ethical post-2012 treaty.
- c. **Encouraging debate** in our legislative bodies to ensure that we develop and legislate for national climate change plans, and strengthen links between us to better implement and monitor such plans, and to recognise the role of education in strengthening awareness.
- d. **Using our links** with political leaders, citizens and the media in our jurisdictions to raise awareness of and to highlight the opportunities that exist to tackle the impacts of climate change on our environment.
- e. **Encourage** our Parliaments and their members to engage proactively and educate our communities in the work of the CPA, on this issue.
- f. **Holding** our Executives to account on commitments made.

9. Success will result in the creation of opportunities for introducing new technologies that will diversify our economies, for improving air quality, protecting biodiversity and providing greater climate and energy security, as well as promoting sustainable economic growth. There is a challenge to achieve these aims in the smaller countries and territories, at the same time it may be more achievable and serve as an example to others of our commitment to the most demanding challenge of the 21st Century.

10. In conclusion, we **call** on the CPA to explore the creation of a modern interactive website and database which will provide a free on-line resource, to encourage the sharing of information between our members, their contacts and associated experts in all fields, with the aim of improving and addressing the needs of our fellow man and our environment.