



COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY BRANCH – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**3rd Meeting of the Executive Committee,
Tuesday 3 February 2009 at 5pm in the
Commonwealth Room**

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Present:

The President, Mr William Hay MLA
Rev Robert Coulter MLA
Mr Simon Hamilton MLA
Mr David McClarty MLA
Mr Sean Neeson MLA
Ms Dawn Purvis MLA

Apologies:

Mr Stephen Moutray MLA
Mr Nelson McCausland MLA

Also In attendance:

Mr Trevor Reaney, Clerk/Director-General
Dr Gareth McGrath, Director of Engagement
Ms Sheila McClelland, Head of Outreach
Mr Richard Good, Special Adviser to the Speaker
Mrs Judith Murdoch, External Liaison Unit

1. APOLOGIES

The President welcomed members to the 3rd CPA NI Branch Executive Committee meeting and agreed that apologies received would be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous Executive Committee meeting, held on 22 January 2008, were agreed.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

3. NI BRANCH CPA BUDGET REPORT

The President referred members to a brief report on the CPA NI Branch budget 2008/2009.

Ms McClelland provided a brief verbal update to members on the current CPA NI Branch Budget position.

4. REPORTS ON PREVIOUS CPA CONFERENCES/SEMINARS

39th British Islands and Mediterranean Conference held in Gibraltar, 11-15 May 2009

The President referred members to a report on the BIMR Conference in Gibraltar attended by Ms Dawn Purvis MLA, Mr Billy Armstrong MLA and Mr Jim Wells MLA. In the absence of Ms Purvis, Mrs Murdoch who accompanied the delegation to the conference gave a brief verbal report on the conference.

54th CPA Annual Conference in Malaysia, 1-10 August 2008

The President referred members to a report on the 54th CPA Conference held in Malaysia attended by Mr Declan O'Loan MLA, Mr Leslie Cree MLA and Mr Samuel Gardiner MLA. The President explained that Mr O'Loan (as the NI Branch delegate) would be asked to give a brief verbal report on the conference at the next Branch meeting.

UK Branch International Parliamentary Conference on International Development: Scrutinising Aid Effectiveness, 16-21 November 2008

The President referred members to a report on the International Parliamentary Conference on International Development: Scrutinising Aid Effectiveness attended by Mr Samuel Gardiner MLA. The President explained that Mr Gardiner would be invited to give a brief verbal report on the conference at the next Branch meeting.

6. ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY NKABOM PROJECT – YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME HELD IN CYPRUS, SEPTEMBER 2008

The President explained that Mr Richard Hargy attended the Youth Leadership Programme as the Northern Ireland representative, funded by the CPA NI Branch. The President referred members to a copy of Mr Hargy's report on his participation in the Youth Leadership Programme. The President recommended that Mr Hargy should be invited to attend the Commonwealth

Day commemoration event on Monday 9 March, to share his experience of the Commonwealth Youth Leadership Programme with invited guests.

Agreed: Members agreed that Mr Hargy should be invited to share his experience of the Royal Commonwealth Society Youth Leadership Programme at the Commonwealth Day commemoration event.

Action: Branch Secretariat to contact Mr Hargy and invite him to the Commonwealth Day event.

7. REPORTS ON PAST MEETINGS/VISITS

Visit by Members of CPA Scotland Branch Executive Committee

Members noted a report prepared by Branch Secretariat on the visit of Ms Roseanna Cunningham MSP and Mr Ted Brocklebank MSP to the Assembly on 20 May 2008 and their meeting with the NI Branch Executive Committee.

Visit by Ms Kayee Griffin MLC, Member of CPA New South Wales Branch

Members noted a report prepared by Branch Secretariat on the visit of Ms Kayee Griffin MLC to the Assembly on 8 September 2008.

8. FUTURE CPA CONFERENCES/SEMINARS

UK Branch Parliamentary Conference on International Migration and Human Trafficking in Westminster, 2-7 February 2009

Members noted that Mr Stephen Moutray MLA was representing the NI Branch at this conference.

40th British Islands and Mediterranean Regions (BIMR) Conference

The President reported that the 40th BIMR Conference will be held in Guernsey from 14-19 June 2009, no further details have been circulated to Branches. Members noted the dates for the conference.

9. UPDATE ON PROPOSAL FOR NI BRANCH SEMINAR

At the President's request, Ms McClelland updated members on the proposal for the NI Branch to host a seminar/conference around the theme of Conflict Resolution and explained that this had been postponed due to a number of reasons including the fact that there are two other conferences are being held in Belfast in July/August 2009 with a similar theme.

Agreed: Members agreed that the seminar should be re-scheduled for the Spring or early summer 2010.

10. PROPOSAL FOR COMMONWEALTH DAY 2009

The President reminded members that Commonwealth Day 2009 will be commemorated on Monday 9 March 2009 and the theme chosen by the Commonwealth Secretariat for this year's event is 'The Commonwealth @ 60

– serving a new generation’. The President explained the proposal for this year’s commemoration event to be held in Parliament Buildings and sought the Executive Committee’s approval.

The President will host an informal reception in Parliament Buildings on 9 March 2009. The External Liaison Unit (ELU) has commenced planning for this event. Invited guests will include overseas students from Commonwealth Countries who are currently studying at Northern Ireland Universities, Commonwealth Community groups, Honorary Consuls, and other community based organisations, Executive Ministers and MLAs. Guest speakers at the event will include Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson MP MLA Junior Minister and Mr Danny Kennedy, Chairperson of the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister. Entertainment will be provided by A-Freek-A a cross community youth group from Belfast playing the African drums.

Agreed: Members agreed to the proposal for commemorating Commonwealth Day 2009.

11. NI BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The President reported to members that it is proposed to hold the Branch Annual General Meeting towards the end of April or beginning of May 2009.

Agreed: Members agreed the the Branch AGM should be held at the end of April or beginning of May 2009.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a. Occasional participation in CPA UK Branch Outward delegations
Members considered correspondence from Mr Andrew Tuggey, Secretary to the UK Branch regarding NI Branch participation in occasional CPA UK Branch outward delegations.

Agreed: Members agreed to NI Branch occasional participation in principle, however, agreed that such participation would be considered against the aims and objectives of a visit and its relevance and/or potential benefit to the NI Branch.

b. A CPA Benchmarks Self-Assessment of Your Parliament
Members considered correspondence from Dr William Shija, Secretary-General CPA inviting Parliaments to undergo a self-assessment based on “Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures” developed by CPA.

Agreed: Members agreed that as much of the content of the self-assessment was relevant to the Assembly Commission as the Corporate Body of the NI Assembly the correspondence should be referred to the Assembly Commission for their consideration.

c. CPA NI Branch Rules

The President explained that Branch Secretariat had identified potential anomalies in the NI Branch Rules and sought Members agreement that Branch Secretariat should seek legal advice on possible amendments to the Rules. The President also explained that any amendments to the Branch Rules would be considered at the Annual General Meeting.

Agreed: Members agreed that the Branch Secretariat should seek legal advice on the potential amendments to the NI Branch Rules.

d. Proposal to invite the CPA Secretary-General, Dr William Shija to a future NI Branch meeting.

Members considered a proposal to invite the CPA Secretary-General Dr William Shija to a future Branch meeting to share with Members the ongoing work of CPA, its plans and priorities, and how the NI Branch can best contribute to the work of CPA.

Agreed: Members agreed that the Secretary-General be invited to a future NI Branch meeting.

e. NI Branch establishing a "Partner" country link

The President invited Ms McClelland to brief members. Ms McClelland referred to the links established by CPA Branches in the other devolved regions of the UK, Scotland has links with Malawi and Wales has links with Lesotho, both have proved very successful creating tangible benefits for both the donor country and recipient partner.

There was a general discussion around the proposal of establishing a "Partner" country link.

Agreed: Members agreed to invite Members of the CPA Wales Branch Executive Committee to brief members on their links with Lesotho at the next NI Branch meeting.

13. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed: The next NI Branch meeting will be held on Tuesday 3 March 2009 at 5.00pm.

**WILLIAM HAY MLA
The President**

