



COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY BRANCH – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Executive Committee,
Monday 3 October at 5 pm in
Room 21**

Present:

The President, Mr William Hay MLA
Mr Basil McCrea MLA
Mr Jim Wells MLA
Mr Jimmy Spratt MLA
Mr David McClarty MLA
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA
Mr Paul Givan MLA (Item 4 only)

Apologies:

Dr Alasdair McDonnell MP MLA

Also In attendance:

Ms Sheila McClelland, Head of Outreach
Mr Robin Ramsey, Advisor to the Speaker
Ms Louise Simpson, Outreach Manager
Ms Pamela Carson, External Liaison Unit (Minutes)

1. WELCOME

The President welcomed Members to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Dr Alasdair McDonnell was unable to attend.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Mr McClarty requested the amendment of the apologies.

4. 57th COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

The Speaker referred Members to Tab 2 and asked attendees Mr McCrea (Delegate) and Mr Givan (Observer) to give a brief outline of their experiences at the conference.

Mr Givan submitted his report to the Board Members and thanked them for the opportunity to attend such a worthwhile conference. He gave a summary of the meetings he attended relating to the Justice Committee, for example, 'Handling Migration Issues' and 'Technological Threats to International, National and Personal Security'.

Mr McCrea outlined his experience at the conference and advised that he felt Northern Ireland had an opportunity to exert a positive contribution as a small nation as we have excellent relationships with the larger, more established nations. He welcomed the Assembly's attendance at such conferences and events as it provided a significant opportunity for Members to network and make contacts. He also suggested that the Board should consider sending the same Members to similar events for consistency purposes.

The Speaker thanked both Members for their useful feedback.

Mr Givan left the meeting at 5.20pm.

5. 4th COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PARLIAMENT

Ms McClelland advised the Board that Anna Chestnutt, former Northern Ireland Youth Panel Co-Chair, represented the Northern Ireland at the 4th Commonwealth Youth Parliament held in Westminster from 6-10 September. She directed Members to Anna's report at Tab 3.

6. INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Speaker asked Ms McClelland to outline the conference. Ms McClelland gave a brief overview and advised Members that Conall McDevitt MLA had been asked to attend due to his link with the All Party Group on International Development.

7. NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY & BUSINESS TRUST (NIABT) WESTMINSTER VISIT

Mr McClarty advised the Committee that he attended the recent NIABT Visit to Westminster with 30 other Members and business representatives to look at the workings of central government. Mr Clarty advised that the programme had been excellently organised and allowed the attendees to make valuable contacts.

Ms McClelland expressed her gratitude to the CPA UK Branch who had provided the use of their rooms and facilities throughout the duration of the programme. She advised that the location was perfect and due to the ease of access it allowed NI MPs to drop in on the group. Ms McClelland also wished to record her thanks to Sir Alan Haselhurst for taking the time to address the group.

8. INTERNATIONAL PEACE BUILDING CONFERENCE

The Speaker referred Members to Tab 5 and asked Ms McClelland to outline the proposal for the NI Assembly to host an International Peace Building Conference in February 2012. Ms McClelland advised Members that due to the overwhelming response from the International Peace Building Conference in 2009, it was hoped that the CPA Executive Branch would grant permission for another conference to be held in 2012.

Ms McClelland advised that this conference would be aimed at 40 delegates from post conflict countries. She outlined the proposed programme and advised that a charge would be introduced to cover accommodation and administrative expenses.

Mr Wells expressed a concern that charging could reduce the uptake and as the conference will be held on sitting days, that thought should be given to the possible effect on the Plenary.

The Speaker suggested that the Executive Committee become the Steering Committee for the conference. Mr McClarty seconded this suggestion.

Ms McClelland advised that the Speakers from Uganda and Kosovo would be invited as special guests due to the link established in Uganda by the APG on International Development and the CPA connection with Kosovo.

The Speaker advised Members that suggestions and amendments to the programme would be welcomed as it was in draft stage. Mr McCrea suggested that an opportunity for the delegates to discuss the difficulties experienced in their countries would be very beneficial.

Discussions around the keynote speaker also took place with agreement that it should be someone who is familiar with NI politics and is familiar to the delegates.

Members agreed with the concept of this conference and approved the proposal for a delegate fee.

9. KOSOVO

The Speaker asked Ms McClelland to update the Members on Kosovo. Ms McClelland briefed the Members on the on-going link with Kosovo and advised that the Assembly is keen to help the Parliament build capacity for the future. She advised that since her visit to Kosovo in March 2011, two groups from Kosovo had visited the Assembly with another visit planned to look at committee processes in December 2011.

The Speaker advised that the Commission were keen to provide resources and that the Executive Branch should visit Kosovo. The Members agreed to decide how to proceed after the visit by the Kosovan delegation in December.

10. VISITS

The President advised that recent visits have been wide and ranging he would like to record his thanks to the politicians who take time to meet with the delegations. Ms McClelland outlined upcoming visits and advised that she would like to introduce a visits magazine to help keep Members updated with who has been visiting and upcoming delegations.

Mr Dickson outlined his experience at a recent visit by the Royal Oman Police. Ms McClelland advised that it is only the beginning of the dialogue between the Assembly and some of the recent groups. Mr McCrea agreed with this adding that this provided a developing role for the Assembly.

11. AOB

- **7th Annual Summer Residency Program for Public Accounts Committees**

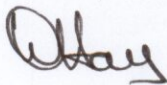
The Speaker advised that while the programme for this conference was excellent, it would be difficult justifying sending a delegate to Australia. Mr McClarty agreed and suggested that the invitation should be declined. Mr Dickson suggested that would be worth requesting the papers for the conference to help the Executive Committee make an informed decision. The Speaker expressed a desire to forward the invitation to the Public Account Committee. Ms McClelland to explore if there are plans to host a similar programme closer to home.

- **CPA Revised Funding**

Ms McClelland outlined the revised funding arrangements advising that larger legislatures would be expected to self-subsidise to allow the CPA to assist smaller countries to attend conferences and seminars.

- **BIMR**

Mr McCrea advised that Scotland and the Falklands will host the BIMR for the next two years and that Northern Ireland should consider hosting in 2014.



**WILLIAM HAY MLA
PRESIDENT**