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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF BELIZE PARTICIPATES IN COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

- Friday, 18th September 2026 - A delegation of the National Assembly of Belize is participating in the 69th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), being held in Cape Town, South Africa from 13th to 19th September 2026.

The delegation comprises Hon. Carolyn Trench-Sandiford, President of the Senate; Senator Sheena Pitts, representing the Belize Women's Parliamentary Caucus; and Mrs. Clarita Pech, Clerk to the National Assembly. The Speaker of the House, Hon. Valerie Woods, attended the conference in her capacity as Chair of the Small Branches Network of CPA and a member of the International Executive and Coordinating Committee of CPA.

Hosted by the Parliament of South Africa, the 69th CPC brings together Parliamentarians, Presiding Officers and parliamentary officials from across the Commonwealth. This year's Conference is being held under the theme, **"Strengthening International Law and Parliamentary Democracy in a Changing World Order: Commonwealth Leadership."**

As Chairperson of the CPA Small Branches network, the Speaker Hon. Woods delivered the opening remarks at the 42nd Small Branches Conference which is held as part of the annual conference for the smaller parliaments of the Commonwealth. Held under the theme "Supporting Independent and Resilient Parliaments in the Commonwealth," the conference highlighted the importance of collaboration and practical partnerships among smaller Commonwealth jurisdictions.

The Hon. Trench-Sandiford participated as a panellist in the CPA conference workshop themed "Parliamentary Leadership in Promoting Climate Adaptation and Resilience." The session examined the role that parliamentarians have in advancing climate adaptation and resilience through effective oversight, and the development of national and local responses to the increasing impacts of climate change.

Senator Pitts participated in the 10th Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference with women parliamentarians from all nine regions of the CPA. The workshops examined gender sensitivity, ethics, accountability and structural change in parliamentary institutions.

Mrs. Pech attended the 60th Meeting of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table (SOCATT) in Commonwealth Parliaments. The meeting brought together Clerks and parliamentary officials to share experiences on matters including public engagement, artificial intelligence, institutional memory, committee work and ethical parliamentary administration.

The CPC is one of the largest gatherings of Commonwealth Parliamentarians. The Belize delegation's participation provides an opportunity to contribute Belize's perspectives to Commonwealth parliamentary dialogue while exchanging knowledge and practices that can support the continued strengthening, modernization and resilience of the National Assembly.

The annual conference concludes with the General Assembly of all delegates from across the Commonwealth's nine geographical regions to discuss governance and administrative matters of the association, CPA membership and other areas of work of interest by the members.

The Belize delegation is scheduled to return on 20th September 2026, and participation was facilitated by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

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