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BELIZE PARTICIPATES IN THE 48TH CPA CONFERENCE OF THE CARIBBEAN, AMERICAS AND ATLANTIC REGION

- Friday, 4th September 2026 - A delegation from the National Assembly is participating in the 48th Regional Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic (CPA-CAA) Region. This year's conference is being hosted by the Jamaica Parliament from 30th August to 5th September 2026, at the Moon Palace Resort in Ocho Rios, St. Ann. Held under the theme, **"Strengthening Parliaments in the Digital Age,"** the Conference brings together parliamentarians and parliamentary officials from across the region to examine the opportunities and challenges presented by digital transformation.

The Belize delegation comprises the Hon. Valerie Woods, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Hon. Carolyn Trench-Sandiford, President of the Senate; Senator Janelle Chanona, Chairperson of the Belize Women's Parliamentary Caucus; and Mrs. Clarita Pech, Clerk to the National Assembly.

The programme included the 16th Regional Conference of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, the 48th Regional Conference, the 19th Presiding Officers and Clerk's Conference and the 19th Annual General Meeting of the regional parliaments of the Commonwealth and the 19th regional Youth Parliament. Discussions focused on artificial intelligence, regional cooperation, youth participation, parliamentary decorum, parliamentary independence, the effective use of Standing Orders and the use of digital technology in parliamentary committees.

Belize contributed to the conference through the participation of three members of its delegation as presenters. On 31st August, Senator Janelle Chanona presented during the session "Empowering Parliamentarians through Storytelling," which explored storytelling as a tool for strengthening leadership, advocacy and public engagement. On 2nd September, Speaker Valerie Woods presented during the Presiding Officers' Conference session "Parliamentary Privileges in the Digital Age," which examined the application and protection of parliamentary privileges amid evolving forms of digital communication and public engagement. On the same day, Mrs. Clarita Pech presented during the Clerks' Conference session "Providing Oversight to Parliamentary Institutions," which examined the role of parliamentary administrations in promoting accountability, supporting effective governance and strengthening parliamentary institutions.

The 19th Regional Youth Parliament was convened virtually on 3rd September under the theme, **"Youth Leadership in the Age of Artificial Intelligence."** Belize was represented by **Ms. Shahera Young** and **Ms. Juslyn Romero** who participated at Belize's first cohort of Young Women in Leadership parliamentary program earlier this year. The virtual format allowed for two young parliamentarians from each parliament across the region to exchange perspectives and contribute meaningfully to discussions on artificial intelligence and the future of parliamentary democracy. The youth parliamentarians also participated in a preparatory workshop intended to strengthen their understanding of parliamentary procedure and develop their research, debating and public-speaking skills.

The Belize delegation is scheduled to return on 5th September 2026. The cost of the Belize delegation was met by the Government of Belize as per the approved budget.

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Manuel G. A.

