

CPA News

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International Women's Day 2019: Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians highlight gender equality and women's representation in Parliaments

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) today marked **International Women's Day 2019** by highlighting the importance of gender equality and the urgent need to increase women's representation in Parliaments. International Women's Day (8th March) is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity, with the theme of International Women's Day 2019 calling for a more gender-balanced world - *'Better the balance, better the world'*.

To mark International Women's Day 2019, the CWP have published a video to launch its new **CWP Alumni Initiative** for former women Parliamentarians to deliver mentoring, coaching and advice to benefit sitting women Parliamentarians and to act as a resource for the CWP. **To view the CWP Alumni Initiative video please [click here](#) or visit www.cpahq.org/cpahq/iwd.**



The CWP Alumni Initiative Champion, Dr Lesley Clark, a former Member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland in Australia, will act as an Ambassador for the CWP initiative and will share her experience and expertise across the CPA and CWP's membership. The video highlights the importance of reaching the Commonwealth target of 30% female representation in Commonwealth legislatures and the vital role networks such as the CWP play in achieving change.

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Chairperson, Hon. Dr Noraini Ahmad, MP (Malaysia) said: *"I am also delighted that the CWP Alumni Initiative has been launched and I hope that CWP Members will support the new initiative which will benefit women Parliamentarians. In 2019, the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) will mark its 30th anniversary and reflect on the many successes of the past three decades. The CWP envisions a world where women and men have equal access to opportunities – a world where women's voices are recognised and respected. I urge all Parliamentarians, with the support of the CWP network, to pursue this vision with continued dynamism and enthusiasm. Together we can and will build the future we want, working towards a future of equal rights, equal opportunities and progress for all."*

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians across the nine regions of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association celebrated International Women's Day 2019 with a wide range of events and activities, for example by attending a high-level panel discussion hosted by the Commonwealth Secretariat at Marlborough House in London, UK at which the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland, QC spoke about gender equality in the Commonwealth. The panel discussion on *'Levelling the Law for Women's Equality in the Commonwealth'* focused on proposals to eradicate discriminatory laws that hinder women's full participation in leadership at decision-making levels. The CWP was represented at the event by Joyce Watson, AM, a Member of the Welsh Assembly.



A special issue of *The Parliamentarian*, the CPA's flagship publication and Journal of Commonwealth Parliaments, has also just been published to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) featuring articles by current and former CWP Members reflecting on women's empowerment and gender equality in Commonwealth Legislatures. To read this special issue of *The Parliamentarian* please visit: www.cpahq.org/cpahq/parliamentariancurrentissue.

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Notes to Editors:

The **Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP)** is the network of women Members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's Parliaments and Legislatures and the network is celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2019. The CWP network provides a means of building the capacity of women elected to Parliament to be more effective in their roles, improving the awareness and ability of all Parliamentarians, male and female, and encouraging them to include a gender perspective in all aspects of their role - legislation, oversight and representation - and helping Parliaments to become gender-sensitive institutions. The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) was founded in 1989 to increase the number of female elected representatives in Parliaments and legislatures across the Commonwealth and to ensure that women's issues are brought to the fore in parliamentary debate and legislation. www.cpahq.org/cpahq/cwp

The **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)**, now in its 108th year, exists to develop, promote and support Parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and to implement the enduring values of the Commonwealth. The CPA is an international community of around 180 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures working together to deepen the Commonwealth's commitment to the highest standards of democratic governance. Visit www.cpahq.org for further information. **Social Media:** Join the conversation online: Twitter @CPA_Secretariat | Facebook.com/CPAHQ.

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