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The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to the  
54th Commonwealth Parliamentary  
Association Conference, Malaysia and  
to Thailand

4 August to 15 August 2008

October 2008  
Canberra

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## Membership of the delegation

Leader          Senator the Hon Alan Ferguson      Deputy President of the Senate

Deputy  
Leader          Mr Michael Danby MP

Members          Senator the Hon Bill Heffernan  
                         Mr Graham Perrett MP  
                         Mr Barry Haase MP

Mr Gerard Martin                      Senior Adviser to the President

Mr David Elder                          Delegation Secretary

Mr Ian Harris AO, Clerk of the      CPA Regional Secretary  
House



## Introduction

- 1.1 This report is in two parts Chapter 2 reports on the attendance of a delegation from the Parliament of Australia at the 54th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 4 to 10 August 2008. Chapter 3 presents the activities and observations of the Delegation's visit to Thailand from 10 to 15 August 2008. The membership of the delegation is listed at p. iv of this report.

### **Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference**

- 1.2 The 54th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 4 to 10 August 2008. The conference was hosted by the Malaysian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).
- 1.3 The theme of the conference - Expanding the Role of Parliament in Global Security: Environment, Development and Security - pointed to challenges that many nations and parliaments face. The conference plenary and workshop sessions provided insights and guidance for individual parliamentarians and parliamentary institutions on a range of topics and issues relevant to the theme of the conference.
- 1.4 The delegation was pleased to represent the Australian Parliament at the conference.

## Bilateral delegation to Thailand

### Aims and objectives of the Delegation

- 1.5 The delegation agreed on the following aims and objectives, which were formulated with advice from the Parliamentary Library and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- Renew contacts with Thailand's legislature and explore further avenues for dialogue and cooperation;
  - Gain an enhanced understanding of recent political developments;
  - Review recent economic developments and assess opportunities for further growth and foreign investment;
  - Explore Thai views (as a member of ASEAN and - with Australia - of the ASEAN Regional Forum and East Asia Summit) on the effectiveness of ASEAN in promoting regional economic integration and cooperation on regional security issues;
  - Gain an enhanced appreciation of national and regional efforts to deal with transnational issues including terrorism, narcotics, unauthorised people movements and health issues; and
  - Review the progress of the Australia-Thailand Free Trade Agreement and explore avenues for further trade and investment between Australia and Thailand.

### Overview

- 1.6 The delegation welcomed the opportunity to attend the 54<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Malaysia. The Conference provided the opportunity for delegates to engage with parliamentarians from other Commonwealth countries. It also enabled an exchange of views on a number of issues of current concern to Commonwealth countries.
- 1.7 In relation to the bilateral visit to Thailand, the delegation considers it achieved its objectives. In particular the delegation welcomed the opportunity to build better relationships with Thailand generally, and especially with the Thai Parliament. A copy of the delegation's program for the visit to Thailand is at Appendix C.



## Acknowledgments

- 1.8 The delegation wishes to express its appreciation of the efforts of all those who contributed to the success of its visit. In particular, the delegation wishes to acknowledge the following contributions:

### Canberra

- 1.9 The delegation received oral and written briefings from officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of the Parliamentary Library prior to its departure. The Delegation wishes to record its thanks to all staff who contributed to these briefings and assisted with administrative arrangements for the visit.
- 1.10 The delegation wishes to thank the staff of the Parliamentary Relations Office, in particular Ms Lyn Witheridge, for their administrative assistance prior to departure.

### Malaysia

- 1.11 The delegation wishes to thank HE Ms Penny Williams, Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia, and other High Commission staff, for their valuable initial briefing and for their assistance during the period of the delegation's visit.
- 1.12 The delegation wishes to record its appreciation of the work of the many staff of the Malaysian Parliament who contributed to the successful organisation of the CPA conference.

### Thailand

- 1.13 The delegation wishes to thank HE Mr Paul Grigson, Australian Ambassador to Thailand, and other Embassy staff for their assistance throughout the period of the visit. Particular thanks are given to Ms Bronte Moules, Deputy Ambassador and Mr Gareth Williams, Third Secretary, who accompanied the delegation on its visits. A comprehensive briefing provided by Embassy staff at the commencement of the visit was of great value in updating the delegation on the current social, political and economic situation in Thailand.
- 1.14 The delegation wishes to record its appreciation of the hospitality and courtesy extended to it by the President of the National Assembly and the Speaker of the House of Representatives HE Mr Chai Chidchob, and the President of the Senate, HE Mr Prasobsuk Boondech. The

delegation thanks them for the warmth of their welcome and for the opportunity to discuss matters of mutual interest and to confirm the good relations between Australia and Thailand.

- 1.15 The delegation also wishes to thank senior representatives of the Thai Government from a range of portfolios who made themselves available for meetings with the delegation.
- 1.16 The delegation thanks the Governors of Prachuap Khiri Khan, Kanchanaburi and Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Provinces for their hospitality and for the assistance provided by local officials in their provinces during the delegation's visit.
- 1.17 The delegation wishes to record its thanks to officers of the Thai Parliament for the excellent administrative support provided to the delegation during the visit to Thailand, and for their assistance on a range of matters. In particular, the delegation thanks Mr Pitoon Pumhiran, Secretary-General, House of Representatives, and other staff of the House of Representatives for their invaluable advice and assistance.

# Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference - Malaysia

## Introduction

- 2.1 The 54<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 1 to 9 August 2008. The Conference was hosted by the Parliament of Malaysia and led by the Hon Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Hiji Mulia, Speaker of the Malaysian House of Representatives and President of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).
- 2.2 The CPA is an association of Commonwealth parliamentarians. The aims of the Association are to promote knowledge and understanding about parliamentary democracy and respect for the rule of law and individual rights and freedoms, irrespective of gender, race, religion or culture.
- 2.3 The CPA is composed of branches formed in parliaments and legislatures in Commonwealth countries which subscribe to parliamentary democracy. There are over 170 branches at national, state, territory and provincial levels in 52 of the 53 Commonwealth countries, representing approximately 17,000 members. Branches are grouped, geographically into nine regions: Africa; Asia; Australia; British Islands and Mediterranean; Canada; Caribbean; Americas and Atlantic; Pacific; and South-East Asia.

- 2.4 More than 700 delegates, observers and officials from member parliaments attended the conference. The Commonwealth of Australia Branch of the CPA was represented by a parliamentary delegation consisting of two Senators and three Members of the House of Representatives, led by the President of the Senate, Senator the Hon Alan Ferguson (see p v. for a list of Delegation members). In addition, a number of delegates attended from other Australian parliaments.
- 2.5 The theme of the Conference was 'Expanding the Role of Parliament in Global Security: Environment, Development and Security'.
- 2.6 The conference encompassed a number of components and associated activities. These were:
- meetings of the Executive Committee of the CPA;
  - two plenary sessions and eight workshops;
  - the annual general assembly of the CPA;
  - meetings of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Steering Committee and of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians;
  - meetings of regional groups of the CPA;
  - the 28<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference of members from small countries; and
  - the 45<sup>th</sup> General Meeting of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table, comprising parliamentary officials.
- 2.7 In addition, many members participated in the pre-conference tour to the historic city of Malacca on 6 August 2008. The Rt Hon Chief Minister of Malacca, YAB Datuk Seri Hj Mohd Ali bin Mohd Rustam, hosted lunch for delegates.

## **Business of the Conference**

### **Opening ceremonies and speeches**

- 2.8 The official opening of the conference was held on Tuesday, 5 August 2008.
- 2.9 The President of the CPA and Speaker of the House of Representatives, Malaysia, Hon Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Hj Mulia,

- read a message of goodwill from the Patron of the Association, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth.
- 2.10 The guest of honour at the opening, Hon Dato' Sri Haji Mohd Najib Tun Haji Abdul Razak, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, formally welcomed Conference participants and officially opened the Conference.
- 2.11 The business of the conference commenced with addresses from the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Mr Kamalesh Sharma and the Secretary-General of the CPA, Dr William Shija. The text of these speeches is at Appendix A.
- 2.12 Mr Sharma, in his first address to the CPA as Commonwealth Secretary- General, discussed the role of the Commonwealth in democracy and development, which he said could now be referred to as governance and growth. To those he said a third strand could now be added – globalism, which recognised the interconnectedness of issues throughout the world. He noted that Parliaments and parliamentarians are at the heart of democracy.
- 2.13 Dr Shija reported on the activities of the CPA for the past year, and thanked and congratulated the Malaysian Branch of the CPA for the arrangements put in place for the conference. He also noted the continuing importance of climate change and global warming as an issue facing the world. He referred to a related issue – the global food crisis – which would also be an important topic to be discussed at the Conference.

## Plenary and workshop sessions

- 2.14 The principal business part of the conference comprised eight workshops and two plenary sessions with the following topics:
- Workshop A: Democracy and Global Peace;
  - Workshop B: Rapid Urbanization and Rural Decline;
  - Workshop C: Credible Elections;
  - Workshop D: Reforming the Budget Process;
  - Workshop E: Collaboration among Large and Small States on Climate Change;
  - Workshop F: Parliament and Civil Society Engagement;
  - Workshop G: Parliament in Conflict Prevention and Resolution;

- Workshop H: Recognising Women's Issues in Budgets;
  - Plenary: The Global Food Crisis;
  - Plenary: The Communications Challenge for Parliament.
- 2.15 Members of the Commonwealth of Australia Branch delegation attended plenary and workshop sessions and participated in the discussions. The Leader of the Australian delegation, Senator the Hon Alan Ferguson, was a lead speaker for the plenary on the 'Communications Challenge for Parliament'.
- 2.16 A summary report of the workshop and plenary sessions is at Appendix B.
- 2.17 In addition to the conference, members of the Australian delegation took the opportunity during their visit to Kuala Lumpur to be briefed by staff of the Australian High Commission on political and economic developments in Malaysia.

## General Assembly

- 2.18 The 54<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference included the annual general meeting of the Association, the General Assembly of the CPA held on 9 August 2008. The main business of the meeting was the consideration and adoption of the Association's annual report and financial statements and the election of office bearers and regional representatives.

## Executive Committee

- 2.19 The Executive committee met on 2, 3 and 4 August. The Australian Region was represented at these meetings by the then President of the Senate, Senator the Hon Alan Ferguson.

## Small States Conference

- 2.20 There was discussion at the Small States Conference of the relationship between Small States and international institutions.

## Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Meeting

- 2.21 The theme of the meeting of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians was eliminating violence against women, especially domestic violence. The meeting stressed the need for relevant

legislation to combat violence against women, but also noted the role education and training can have in dealing with violence against women and in the home.

## Meeting of the Society of Clerks-at-the Table in Commonwealth Parliaments

- 2.22 The annual meeting of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table was held concurrently with sessions of the conference. The Clerk of the House, Mr Ian Harris, AO attended the meeting and presented the report on the Australian region. The delegation secretary, Mr David Elder, Serjeant-at-Arms, Department of the House of Representatives also attended a number of the sessions. The society aims to foster mutual interest among its members through the exchange of information, views and experience to assist them to exercise their professional duties in relation to their respective legislatures. The Parliaments of New South Wales, the Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria were also represented at the meeting.

## Concluding comment

- 2.23 The Australian delegation once again extends its thanks to the Malaysian Parliament for its work in hosting the 54<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference and congratulates it on the success of the Conference.





## Bilateral visit to Thailand

### Thailand at a glance

Official Name	Kingdom of Thailand
Form of State	Constitutional Monarchy
Head of State	HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej
Prime Minister	HE Mr Somchai Wongsawat
National Legislature	Bicameral. Senate has 150 members who serve 6 year terms - 76 elected - one from each province, and 74 appointed. House of Representatives has 480 members who serve 4 year terms - 400 elected from multi-seat constituencies and 80 on a proportional party basis
Capital	Bangkok
Language	Thai
Population	65.7 million (2007)
Land area	513,000 square kilometres
GDP	US\$272.5 billion (2008 forecast)

GDP per capita	US\$ 4104 (2008 forecast)
GDP growth	5.3% (2008 forecast)
Current Account Balance (% GDP)	3.4%
Inflation	3.5% (2008 forecast)

## Background

- 3.1 The Kingdom of Thailand covers an area of approximately 513,000 square kilometres. It is centrally located in mainland Southeast Asia and borders on Malaysia to the south, Burma to the west, Laos to the north and north-east and Cambodia to the east. Its population of approximately 64 million people is predominantly ethnic Thai (around 80 per cent) with communities of ethnic Chinese, Indian and Malay as well as a number of minority indigenous groups.
- 3.2 Thailand is strongly Buddhist, with more than 95 per cent of the population being practicing Buddhists. There is a small Muslim population, mainly in the far southern provinces bordering on Malaysia.
- 3.3 The first Thai state generally is considered to have been the Buddhist Kingdom of Sukhothai established in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. However, in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century a powerful kingdom based around Ayutthaya emerged. Ayutthaya played a role effectively as the capital of Thailand for a period of over 400 hundred years until it was invaded and destroyed by Burmese invaders in 1767. The delegation had the opportunity to visit the Ayutthaya region and observe some of the historic and cultural sites of Ayutthaya. Following the invasion of Ayutthaya, Bangkok was soon after established as the capital of Thailand.
- 3.4 Thailand was the only Southeast Asian country not to be colonised in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- 3.5 In 1932 the modern Thai state emerged with the reform of the absolute monarchy and the establishment of a constitutional democracy.
- 3.6 The Thai economy currently is undergoing a slowdown as a result of the global downturn. Growth this year will slow to around 4-4.5 per cent compared with 4.8 per cent in 2007. Inflation also is showing signs of accelerating.

## Political Developments

- 3.7 Since the establishment of the constitutional monarchy in 1932, Thailand's political history has been a difficult one. There have been 17 different constitutions or charters, with the latest constitution being adopted in 2007. There also have been a number of military coups and periods of military rule followed by periods of democratic governance.
- 3.8 The National Assembly is bicameral, consisting of a Senate with 150 seats, 76 members of which are elected by popular vote to represent the 76 provinces and 74 members selected by an independent body. Senators serve six year terms. The House of Representatives has 480 seats, with 400 members elected by multi-seat constituencies and eighty elected on a proportional party basis. Members of the House of Representatives serve four year terms. The delegation was pleased to meet the President of the National Assembly and Speaker of the House, HE Mr Chai Chidchob, and the President of the Senate, HE Mr Prasobsuk Boondech to discuss the current parliamentary scene and to strengthen parliamentary links.



*Delegation with HE Mr Chai Chidchob, President of the National Assembly and Speaker of the House of Representatives*



*Delegation with HE Mr Prasobsuk Boondech, President of the Senate*

- 3.9 The current coalition government led by the People Power Party (PPP) elected in 2008, was headed by Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej at the time of the delegation's visit. The PPP, a successor party to Thai Rak Thai Party headed by former Prime Minister Thaksin, is in coalition with a number of minor parties. The delegation had the opportunity to meet with then Prime Minister Sundaravej. However, a number of legal challenges and protests subsequent to the delegation's visit led to Mr Sundaravej standing down. Mr Somchai Wongsawat has been elected the leader of the PPP and Prime Minister of Thailand. The main opposition party is the Democratic Party led by Mr Abhisit Vejjajiva.
- 3.10 A constant in the Thai constitutional scene has been the hereditary monarchy, with the current King of Thailand, King Bhumibol Aduljadej having ruled since 1946. While governments have changed, they have all acknowledged the monarchy as the head of State. The delegation was honoured to have been given an audience with the King at the Klai Kangwon Palace in Hua Hin. The delegation also paid respect to the late princess (the King's sister),

Her Royal Highness Princess Galyani Vadhana, who is lying in state at the Grand Palace in Bangkok.

## Australia – Thailand bilateral relations

- 3.11 Australia – Thailand bilateral relationships generally are very strong. They have been built around close people-to-people ties, close cooperation in defence, security and policing matters and as strong and expanding trade relationship. The delegation's visit provided the opportunity to strengthen these ties, particularly at the parliamentary level.

### **People-to-People ties**

- 3.12 The people-to-people ties between Australia and Thailand have grown strongly over recent years.
- 3.13 The strong engagement Australia has with Thailand on education dates back around 55 years to the Colombo programme. The delegation was advised by the Speaker of the House of Representatives that Australia is now the second most popular destination for Thai students to study after the United States. The attractions of Australia were the relative cost of education and the hospitable way in which Thai students were welcomed. There are currently 19,000 enrolments by Thai students in Australia.
- 3.14 There are strong links between Australia and Thailand at the educational institutional level, ranging from universities down to schools. In response to Thai requests, Australia has also assisted the Thai education system with processes of educational reform.
- 3.15 Tourism has also been strong, with 650,000 Australians visiting Thailand in 2007. The Speaker expressed a desire for this number to increase to one million. Just under 100,000 Thais visit Australia annually.
- 3.16 The large number of Australian visitors to Thailand give rise to a significant number of consular issues and these are increasing. There are estimated to be 15,000 – 20,000 Australians living permanently in Thailand, also giving rise to consular issues. In 2007

there were 171 hospitalisation cases, 81 deaths and 657 whereabouts cases handled.

## Trade

- 3.17 Trade between Thailand and Australia has been strong for many years, but has been boosted particularly by the Thailand-Australia Free Trade Agreement (TAFTA) concluded in 2005. Bilateral merchandise trade rose from \$6.8 billion in 2004 (before TAFTA) to \$12.3 billion in 2007. While Thailand has been a net beneficiary of TAFTA, Australian trade to Thailand has nonetheless grown strongly (from \$3.1 billion in 2004 to \$4.4 billion in 2007).
- 3.18 A number of those with whom the delegation spoke referred to the high regard that the Thais had for Australian technology and expertise and felt there were opportunities for Australian involvement and investment in major projects in Thailand in areas where Australia had particular expertise.

## Defence, security and policing

- 3.19 Defence, security and policing have provided areas of strong cooperation between Australia and Thailand to the mutual benefit of both countries.
- 3.20 The focus of the defence and security relationship has been on the training of Thai officers in Australia. There also has been cooperation on bilateral and multilateral exercises. Thailand made an important contribution to the international peacekeeping force in East Timor.
- 3.21 On the policing front there has been strong cooperation in counter-terrorism, law enforcement and border protection. To observe this cooperation at first hand, the delegation visited the Royal Thai Police Bomb Data Centre. The Centre is one of the major projects in which Australia is working with the Thai authorities, in this case with the focus on forensic capacity building. The Centre has concentrated on dealing with bombings in Southern Thailand which have been generated by an ethno-religious insurgency.



*Delegation Leader, Senator Alan Ferguson and Deputy Leader, Mr Michael Danby MP, at the Thai Police Bomb Data Centre*

- 3.22 This shows that after strong growth in bombings through to 2007, these now seem to be trending down for the time being. A particular value of the work being done by the Centre is in using better technical forensic evidence as the basis for charging people, rather than relying on confessions.

## **Humanitarian assistance**

- 3.23 While Thailand itself, as a well developed economy, receives little assistance from AusAID programmes, AusAID provides considerable support from Bangkok into the Mekong Hub, overseeing programmes in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Burma.
- 3.24 However, the delegation was able to visit one AusAID project in Thailand. The Thai Red Cross AIDS Research Centre briefed the delegation on its work and on the Thai Australian Collaboration in HIV nutrition (TACHIN). TACHIN was established in 2005 as a three way collaboration between the Thai Red Cross AIDS Research Centre, the Albion Street Centre, Sydney and the Institute of Nutrition, Mahidal University. Funding for the project has been



provided by AusAID. The main aim of the project is to enhance the overall health and nutritional status of people living with HIV in Thailand. The project also involves training health care workers and volunteers in HIV nutrition and the implementation of nutrition based research.



*The Delegation with representatives of the Thai-Australian Collaboration in HIV Nutrition*

- 3.25 The project has been successful in raising awareness and understanding of the importance of nutrition in treating HIV patients and has improved the skills for those working with people living with HIV to enhance their nutrition. The delegation would support the continuation of AusAID funding for the project.
- 3.26 The delegation also was able to learn about the work of the Thai Red Cross AIDS Research Centre. HIV Aids first emerged in Thailand in 1985. After peaking in 1996 at around 100,000 new cases per annum it is now around 16,000 cases per annum (with around 1.2 million people having been infected in total). There is now a second wave of infection emerging from the sexual relationships between men. The public health response to HIV Aids generally has been very quick and positive. There is now almost universal access to anti retro viral drugs for HIV Aids patients. However, the public response in Thailand has tended to be intermittent and often controversial.

Matters such as the free issue of condoms and needle exchange attract controversy. It was considered there was a need to raise the political awareness of the HIV Aids issue and of the potential for it to re-emerge.

- 3.27 Australia also has assisted Thailand by accepting an increasing number of Burmese refugees, particularly those from camps along the Thai-Burma border. The total number of Burmese refugees resettled in Australia has increased from 64 in 2002-03 to an expected 2800 in 2007-08. Of these the overwhelming number are Burmese refugees in Thailand (2000) making them the largest national group of humanitarian settlers under Australia's Humanitarian Program. Australia also has agreed to resettle about 250 Lao Hmong in Thailand who were at risk of forced repatriation.

## Issues raised by the visit

### **Governance and democratic development**

- 3.28 This report has referred to the difficult nature of Thai political development. The delegation was able to explore some of the underlying issues in a frank and open discussion with King Prajadhipok's Institute (KPI). KPI was established in 1997 as a division of the secretariat of the Thai House of Representatives. In 1998 it became an autonomous institution under the control of the President of the National Assembly. Its main roles are to conduct research and training and to disseminate information about politics and governance in Thailand in order to develop democracy.
- 3.29 KPI representatives lead by Security-General, Dr Borwornsak Uwanno, noted that the development of democracy in Thailand had been a tale of two political cultures or systems. The majority of the population, which was rural based and often in the lower socio-economic strata of society, elected the majority of members of Parliament and so effectively was able to create the government. Recent Thai governments have sought to appeal to this broader constituency through popular appeals. However, the mainly urban (and Bangkok) based middle class find that their concerns differ from those of the major population and this creates tensions and strains in the political system.



*The Delegation with Dr Borwornsak Uwanna, Secretary-General, King Prajadhipok's Institute*

- 3.30 While coups may occur as a way apparently of resolving conflicts, the KPI representatives noted that they often did not really resolve issues as the most difficult challenge was governing the country after the coup. They noted that the last coup was widely acknowledged to have been a total failure from that point of view.
- 3.31 KPI representatives considered that the future required greater public participation in the political process and to provide the opportunity for all groups to play a role in political and governance processes. KPI can play some role in this through its research and training objectives.

## **People smuggling and trafficking**

- 3.32 The delegation had the opportunity to explore the issue of people smuggling and trafficking through a detailed briefing from Embassy staff and officials from relevant Thai agencies such as the Royal Thai Police, the Department of Special Investigation and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

- 3.33 Thailand is seen as a staging and transition point for people smuggling and trafficking. Part of the issue for Thailand is its large land and sea borders. The Royal Thai Police pointed to the extent of the problem they have in enforcing the border when they noted that there are only about 50 border check points but over 900 entry points. Every day about 1,000 illegal immigrants are arrested and deported. Over 20,000 suspect travel documents also were ceased by the Royal Thai Police last year.
- 3.34 People smuggling and trafficking is seen as part of the wider issue of immigration. Thailand has tried to promote immigration policies that address some of the issues that give rise to human trafficking problems.
- 3.35 There was reference also to Thailand's support for the so called 'Bali Process' which arose from the Bali Ministerial Conference on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transitional Crime held in Bali in February 2002. The Bali Process, which is co-chaired by Australia and Indonesia, is a voluntary non-binding grouping committed to regional action to disrupt people smuggling and trafficking. Thailand has been a very active player in the Bali process. The delegation supports the activities being undertaken under the Bali framework as an effective way to achieve regional cooperation on the issue of people smuggling and human trafficking.
- 3.36 Australia has worked closely with Thai authorities on these issues including in training and capacity building, sharing of information and data and cooperation on extradition.

## **Burma-Thailand Railway**

- 3.37 The delegation was privileged to have the opportunity to view a number of the key sites on the Burma-Thailand Railway and to pay honour to those who died in the construction and maintenance of the railway, including a large number of Australian prisoners of war.
- 3.38 In their efforts to construct key transport links to their army in Burma in 1942, the Japanese gathered a multi-national workforce of approximately 250,000 Asian labourers and more than 60,000 Australian, British, Dutch and American prisoners of war to construct a railway line from Thailand to Burma. The construction of the railway took a little over 12 months from October 1942 to October

1943 and an estimated 13,000 prisoners of war and 80,000 to 100,000 civilians died during the construction.

- 3.39 The delegation visited the JEATH (Japan, England, Australia, Thailand, Holland) War Museum in Kanchanaburi. The JEATH museum is a realistic reconstruction of a prisoner of war hut containing photographs on the experience of prisoners of war, articles written by former prisoners, their relatives and friends and a variety of items of memorabilia associated with the prisoners of war such as pistols, knives, helmets etc.
- 3.40 The museum, with its realistic and humble portrayal of conditions in a prisoner of war hut and the many moving items on display, created a striking impression on the delegation. Unfortunately the museum, opened in 1977, is now very run down and the hut and its exhibits are in danger of suffering irreparable damage. The delegation would like to see funds allocated urgently by the Australian Government to enable the JEATH hut museum to be restored and for the items in the museum to be protected.

### **Recommendation 1**

**The delegation recommends that the Australian Government urgently allocate funds to enable the JEATH War Museum to be restored and for the items in the museum to be protected.**

- 3.41 The delegation then visited the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery. This is the largest of the three war cemeteries on the Burma-Thailand railway. It contains nearly 7000 burials, of whom 1361 are Australians. Each of the graves is marked by a bronze plaque mounted on a pedestal and the cemetery is very well maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. It was a moving experience for the delegation to walk past the many graves and note the tragic circumstances in which the prisoners of war died. The delegation laid a wreath at the cemetery in honour of the sacrifice made by those who died in constructing the railway.



*The Delegation lays a wreath at the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery*

- 3.42 The delegation moved from the cemetery at Kanchanaburi to the Bridge over the River Kwai. The Bridge has been made famous by being featured in a number of books and films about the making of the Burma-Thailand Railway. The Bridge has come to symbolise in many ways the hardship endured by those building the railway. The bridge was constructed between October and December 1942 from a black iron bridge brought from Java and reassembled. The original bridge, about 100 metres from the current bridge, was the target of frequent Allied bombing raids and was demolished after the war. The curved spans of the current bridge are the original sections.

- 3.43 Finally, the delegation travelled up to the Hellfire Pass Memorial. Hellfire Pass (known as the section of the railway called Konya Cutting) passes through a steeper area where it was necessary to cut through the ridges to create the flat bed for the railway. Konya Cutting was given the name 'Hellfire Pass' because of the impression created by the flinking light on workers from the fires lit to enable work to continue into the night. The construction of this section coincided with the period referred to as 'Speedo' by the Japanese as they tried to accelerate the work on the railway to keep it on schedule. The additional pressures placed on the prisoners of war and other workers as a result took an even greater toll on their well being.



*The Delegation in Hellfire Pass*

- 3.44 The Hellfire Pass Memorial and the Hellfire Pass cutting have been very well managed on behalf of the office of the Australian War Graves by Mr William Slape. A new major stair case access to the cutting has been constructed and was officially opened in June 2008. The new stair case has ensured there is safe access to the cutting for the approximately 90,000 visitors annually. The delegates would support further funding to assist in providing access to and from the site.

- 3.45 By visiting the cutting the delegation was able to gain some appreciation, however, inadequate, of the enormous difficulties endured by those who worked on the railway. The delegation was honoured to lay a wreath in Hellfire Pass to recognise the sacrifice of those who died in working on that part of the railway.

## Thai culture

- 3.46 The delegation had the opportunity to appreciate some of the depth and beauty of Thai culture.
- 3.47 There has already been reference to the delegation's visit to the Ayutthaya region. In Ayutthaya the delegation visited the Ayutthaya Historical Study Centre which, as well as being a national research institute devoted to the study of Ayutthaya during its period as the capital of Thailand, also had an impressive museum which exhibits reconstructions from Ayutthaya's past. The delegation also visited the Grand Palace compound. The compound consists of a number of important buildings and ruins that illustrate that Ayutthaya was one of the most prosperous cities in Southwest Asia at that time and is now a site of historical and cultural significance worthy of its recognition as a World Heritage site.



*The Delegation visits the Ayutthaya Historical Study Centre*

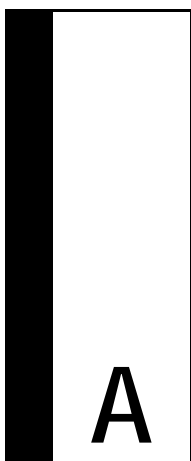


- 3.48 The delegation then visited the Royal Palace at Bang Pa-In, located about 60 kilometres north of Bangkok. Bang Pa-In consists of a number of buildings constructed over a number of years and used essentially as a summer palace by a number of kings. Today the King and Queen use the palace occasionally as a residence and also for functions.
- 3.49 Finally, the delegation had a tour of the Grand Palace in Bangkok. The first buildings in the complex date back to the time when the capital was relocated to Bangkok in the latter 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was the official residence of kings from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century when the current king moved to a residence at Chitralada Palace. The Palace complex was enormously impressive and was a demonstration of the devotion that Thais have to their culture and to the monarchy.

## Conclusion

- 3.50 The delegation considered that its busy program in Thailand enabled it to achieve the objectives of its visit.
- 3.51 The delegation welcomed the opportunity to strengthen Australia's already strong ties with Thailand. There is scope to further improve the already strong people-to-people ties and the trading relationship. In particular, the building of relationships at the parliamentary level was an important achievement of the visit.
- 3.52 Thailand has been through, and continues to go through, a difficult transition to a fully established democratic system. The delegation gained an insight into some of the difficulties being experienced and also the strong desire to ensure that democracy achieves a firm foundation in Thai political culture.
- 3.53 The delegation also was able to gain an understanding of a number of defence, law enforcement and immigration issues that are of mutual concern to Australia and Thailand. There is considerable opportunity for cooperation on these issues to be further enhanced.





## Appendix A

**Addresses to the 54<sup>th</sup> CPA Conference by  
Mr Kamalesh Sharma, Commonwealth  
Secretary-General and Dr William Shija,  
Secretary-General of the CPA**



## **54th COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION**

### **PLENARY CONFERENCE**

***KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, 5<sup>th</sup> August 2008***

Kamalesh Sharma, Commonwealth Secretary-General  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

### ***Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Annual Conference***

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**2008 Conference theme: 'Expanding the role of Parliament in Global Society: Environment, Development, Security'**

I am delighted to take part in the 54<sup>th</sup> annual conference of one of the oldest, largest and most respected of Commonwealth bodies – the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. 97 not out; some 40 years older than the inter-governmental Commonwealth itself; and with 16,000 members. I applaud you all, both Parliamentarians and London-based CPA staff under Secretary-General William Shija.

I also warmly thank the Honourable Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malaysia, the CPA's President and all our hosts from the Malaysian Parliament. Malaysia has always had a close relationship with the Commonwealth. This country hosted a CHOGM in 1989 that saw the Commonwealth establish itself firmly in the vanguard of international efforts to protect our environment. It works closely with us in the training of public servants. It is home to the Commonwealth Tourism Centre; and next year it will host the 17<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers – testimony, not least, to its passionate commitment to - and high standards in - educating its young people to take on the world.

This is, of course, my first CPA conference, four months into my new role. I have been given the warmest of welcomes to the Commonwealth, and feel enormously energised by the challenge to serve what I have called this 'great global good'.

So I am delighted to be here at the CPA Conference. Thank you for inviting me.

Let me begin by sharing with you some of the things that have happened in my **first four months**, before reflecting on those things we would wish to see happen over the **next four years**.

Perhaps I can highlight three mid-month happenings in London that have been of great significance.

In mid-May, six weeks into my tenure, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group lifted the suspension of Pakistan, which had been applied in late-November at the time of our last Heads of Government Meeting. Suspension need not imply censure: we accept that all of our member states are permanently journeying towards stronger democracy which reflects the fundamentals and reflects local needs and circumstances. Pakistan's derogations at the time of the State of Emergency were removed with parliamentary elections of February. Our commitment is to walk with that country now to support the Government's stated aim to make Parliament the ultimate authority in Pakistan. We are keen to work with the CPA towards that goal – strengthening parliamentary processes like the work of committees, drafting legislation, and more. And Commonwealth help can go further, for instance in strengthening an independent election commission, and local government structures where another of our associate bodies – the Commonwealth Local Government Forum – is also active.

In mid-May, our Board of Governors approved our new four-year strategic plan for the Commonwealth Secretariat, which continues to place promoting democracy as one of its two pillars, alongside fostering development, both economic and human.

In mid-June, we convened 11 Heads of Government in London, to develop a Commonwealth position on rethinking and reforming global institutions. Our leaders committed themselves to reform when they met for their CHOGM in Kampala. This London meeting was aimed at fleshing out some of the details and shared levels of ambition for reform. First, we seek a UN, World Bank and IMF which are equal to the expectations of a speedily transforming world. Second, we seek a new system of global governance for the environment and development. When all Heads of Government meet again next month in September, the weight of the 11 in arguing for specific global change, should become the weight of 53.

For almost a third of my time to date, I have been on the road, or more accurately in the air. An early visit to Uganda was a chance to share with President Museveni, the Commonwealth Chair-in-Office, the progress made to date on some of the political mandates we were given last November. A trip to Kenya bolstered practical Commonwealth support being given in the aftermath of the violence of early January and the subsequent formation of a national government.

A visit to Mauritius introduced me to Southern African leaders, and was a chance to recalibrate and reaffirm our Commonwealth concern, not only in meeting the persistent challenge of poverty, but also over the situation in Zimbabwe, and our wish to support African initiatives to help find a solution there.

Three Ministerial Meetings have shown me the Commonwealth in action – debating both policy and best practice. Youth Ministers met in Colombo; Health Ministers in Geneva; Law Ministers in Edinburgh. I was able to tell the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation's Summit in Rome how the Commonwealth can mobilize its networks of farmers to boost agricultural production. Last month I discussed at first hand the ways in which the Commonwealth brings its expertise to the small states of the Caribbean at the CARICOM Summit in Antigua – and next week, I shall be doing the same with those of the Pacific.

It has been a rich and intense baptism into the Commonwealth – its political reach, its practical impact, its role as a trusted partner. Our vision for it continues to develop. It will build upon the existing pillars of Democracy and Development, which alliterate just as well to Governance and Growth. Governance continues to be a core Commonwealth strength, with our superb track record in strengthening democratic processes and institutions. Growth will be the biggest determinant of success, and where we judge it evident in two particular groups of society – women, and young people – then we will know that it is for real.

But we envisage a third 'G' as part of our vision for the Commonwealth, and that is Globalism. Globalisation is a phenomenon; globalism is a positive orientation towards this compressing world.

We are part of a compacting world, in which change is unstoppable, and so, too, is the imperative of integration. The good effects of trade, culture and technology now cross borders as easily as the ill effects of disease, climate change and environmental degradation or terrorism. Global economic phenomena embrace all, whether they are rising energy or food prices, or financial turbulence. The Commonwealth belongs to that world – indeed, it straddles it. It must believe that it can help influence and shape it.

I have the trust that this organisation will become ever more globalist in its outlook, in keeping with the globalization of our collective lives. We can pursue our enlightened goals in alliance with more people who recognize our credibility, reach, global commitment and exceptional pedigree. We can find new partners in governments beyond our membership, in different inter-governmental bodies, in Foundations or the private sector. We can see our models of best practice used far beyond our own confines. Everything about the world that we live in, and the attributes that we ourselves bring to it, decree that we should continue to look outwards, and to invest our huge access and our authority, for even greater causes.

It is this word "Globalism" that brings me to the theme of this meeting, **'Expanding the role of Parliament in Global Society: Environment, Development, Security'**, the component parts of which merit unpacking.

Let me begin with **'global society'**. The interconnectedness of things is not in doubt. The click of a mouse secures a global audience. Whether it is avian flu or SARS travelling by airplane; 4 billion people watching a World Cup final; polluted rivers, oceans and air currents traversing countries, regions, even continents; goods produced cheaply in one continent becoming ubiquitous in another; financiers buying and selling millions around the globe in seconds; the reach of civil society, just as the reach of the uncivil society – whatever it is, our society is a global one, for better and for worse.

The challenges of global society require global scrutiny and responses. Hence the importance of the global bodies we mentioned – how, for instance, can we safeguard the future of our natural world of lands and seas by doing anything other than agreeing amongst ourselves, in global forums, how to do so? How can we expect regional and bilateral trade deals to protect and promote trade in the way that a global rule-based arrangement ought to? Does it not make sense to debate desired global trading outcomes – particularly the development dividend – collectively but fairly?

The nation state is alive and well, but its power is receding. You as nation state parliamentarians may face constituents who want to lobby you about their local roads and schools, but increasingly many of the issues that people want solved will be lodged not only in your national assemblies, but also far away in global convocation. Again, trade and the environment are good examples.

'Global society' for the Commonwealth embraces in particular, the small and fragile and vulnerable states. We believe in an equal right to national salvation for all states, irrespective of size and endowment.

Let me turn to another clause in this conference's theme title: **'the role of Parliament'**.

Parliaments and parliamentarians are at the heart of the democratic process. In a sense, the parliament as an institution is the embodiment of democracy in a country. It is where the heart of the democracy beats, nourishing the entire polity of a nation.

In a system where legitimacy is predicated upon the will of the people, national parliaments, state assemblies and local councils are where the people's elected representatives gather, serving the people and holding governments accountable.

However, one of the great problems we face in so many places is how to get the animosity, the antagonism and the conflict out of politics. How can we help governments and opposition parties work together in a constructive and collaborative way, for the benefit of the nation? Political competitors, yes, but respecting the rule of law, and the rules of the game.

Parliament is where governments and opposition come together face-to-face to debate national issues, to disagree, to find compromise, to win some political battles, lose others, but take democratically derived public policy forward. One might say, when parliaments work, by providing the opposition with a voice and a fair chance to influence the policies and events of the day, then the democratic process works.

When parliaments do not work, by not allowing real debate and scrutiny of government business, then the democratic process does not work, and often conflict is not far away.

So it is imperative that we help to create strong and enduring democratic institutions. Visionary leaders play a vital role, but we should stress the importance of institutions, not individuals. Ultimately it is strong, credible and independent institutions which will prevail and ensure that the fruits of democracy are there for the many, and not just the few. And these institutions have to be nurtured, supported and strengthened in the right spirit. The invisible is as much a pillar of the democratic state as the visible.

Let me turn briefly to the final clause in the conference theme title: **'Environment, Development, Security'**.

Here, of course, the abiding point is that Parliaments have to look at these as more than just national challenges.

Climate change, poverty, terrorism: they have little respect for national borders. The value of the Commonwealth response is that it helps to bring global solutions to global problems.

Take climate change, where we are unfolding a Commonwealth action plan with regional and global dimensions. We are helping individual and groups of countries in their international negotiations in the run-up to Copenhagen and in the search for a post-Kyoto deal. We are mobilising the Commonwealth civil society network of statisticians, geographers, foresters, and meteorologists. We are examining best models for land management and forestation, and conducting studies on the export of agricultural produce. We are also taking initiatives in natural disaster preparedness and management.



Responses to poverty, and the quest for development, are also universal. There are different routes to economic growth, but economic transformation is a house built on weak foundations without the corollary of political and social transformation. Transformation is of limited lasting value if it's not democratic. We are currently doing some work on Public Private Partnerships around the Commonwealth, to contribute to the discourse on quality transformation. And we will share this with our Heads of Government when they meet in New York next month.

Also in New York, we will be presenting the best of our communal responses to the challenges which are born of fractures within society. Some of you will be familiar with the hugely important Commonwealth report last year, called *Civil Paths to Peace*. It came out of a mandate given us by Heads of Government – in the wake of 9/11 and an increasing sense of division in our societies – to examine what it is that holds societies together, and what it is that undermines them. Amartya Sen led a Commission which made us think anew about our multiple identities as human beings. The report looked at the fault-lines not just of different faiths, ethnicities and languages, but of young and old, urban and rural, rich and poor. As importantly, it also advised us as to how to do it better, giving examples of where we have successfully done so. In a melding and inter-connected world in which a triumph or a failure is not for one but for all, we are committed to sharing what we know.

In the face of the challenges of Environment, Development and Security, how can Parliaments transfer their inherent nation-ality to a region-ality, and beyond? That is the crux of this conference: we will know more of the answers in two days' time. No doubt you will examine the role of regional Parliaments. You may try to look at the work of the European Parliament – with its cross-party committees on '*Environment, Development, Security*' and more – and its capacity to affect policy and budget expenditure. You may also look at the role of provincial assemblies and local government – because international commitments have to be implemented on a national scale, and down to the local level.

But no doubt you will find, too, that challenges remain national, and remain in your national parliamentary domain. This is especially the case with security. The painful truth is that all societies have many potential sources of conflict, with domestic to national and regional concerns. Sometimes these can create a volatile mix of cultural, economic, and political divisions.

A democratically elected – and performing – parliament, in which candidates representing all shades of political opinion are free to be fairly elected through the ballot box, is the best means of securing convergence, preventing conflict and ensuring an enduring peace.

Before I finish, let me just offer a view of **recent parliamentary news in the Commonwealth**.

In recent times we have had difficulties in Kenya and Pakistan, both of which I have already mentioned. I have also referred to the Commonwealth's readiness to help both countries find parliamentary solutions to their problems. In both cases, parties from across the respective divides are coming together in parliament, to discuss, argue, and differ, but also find common ground and help their countries find a way forward. We confer the same hopes on Fiji – again, sadly suspended from the Commonwealth – that all parties will move swiftly towards elections by March 2009 to restore democratic legitimacy to that country.

In Sierra Leone at this time last year we saw a peaceful handover of power following an election victory by the Opposition. Of course, tensions and disagreements remain, and of course – given the chronic unemployment and illiteracy in the country – serious long-term challenges remain. However, how encouraging it is to reflect on this story, as the incumbent vacated office following a credible election.

Belize is another interesting example. A very different country, with a very different history. In the elections of February this year, the government went into the election holding 22 of the 31 seats. On polling day, the "opposition" won 25 and the incumbent just six. A peaceful, orderly exchange of power followed.

This is the type of model we need to emulate and support everywhere, through developing parliamentary procedures, respecting constitutional governance, developing a culture of participation. And this should be firmly supported by institutions such as election commissions respected for their integrity, transparency and even-handedness by the people, who are sovereign.

I have spoken of the pursuit of ideal, and I have spoken of the challenge of the reality. It's up to you as Parliamentarians – and us in the CPA and Commonwealth Secretariat – **to close the space between the two.**

It's happening all the time. This year, for instance, we jointly sponsored a strategic plan for the development of the parliament in Guyana. The CPA and the Commonwealth Secretariat ran a workshop in Nigeria in June, on the subject of 'Government and Opposition in West Africa'. It was a resounding success, bringing together governments and oppositions and making them partners in the development of the democratic process, and not adversaries. Participants highlighted what in their view were some of the key elements that can strengthen a parliament, and ensure that it is a place where both government and opposition alike can play a constructive role. These included ensuring that there is an adequate committee system, providing for freedom of information, and building up a professional and impartial parliamentary staff.

At the risk of making a less popular remark, I want to end by sharing another important conclusion of that Abuja event. It relates directly to the issue of

parliamentary integrity and relevance for the people. MPs spoke at length about their responsibilities in maintaining the spirit of the office. They concluded that MPs need to remember that they are in service of the people. Also, that their behaviour reflects on the integrity of the office and the institution, and that salaries must reflect national circumstances and not appear as a wealth accumulation exercise whilst the people are going through hardship.

I share these points because, as I am sure you will agree, they clearly affect the public perception of the parliament as an institution. And, as we all know: in politics, perception can be all!

Society is global, as are so many of the challenges we will be looking at, in environment, development and security. Following the trend, national Parliaments increasingly see that business needs to be settled far beyond their own debating chambers. But their first constituency is always at home, and their first principles are these that I have described. Parliaments and parliamentarians are the guardians of their countries' democracies. That is the weight of your responsibility – I urge you to carry it well. That is also the weight of our responsibility in the Commonwealth Secretariat, to continue to make ourselves available as dedicated strategic partners. We shall endeavour to carry it out to the best of our ability.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I spoke a few moments ago about one of our major publications. Let me conclude, before the next part of the programme, with a very short book launch.

We have spoken about globalization and globalism. But we must also not lose sight of the trend at the end of the spectrum in recent decades. I speak of the trend towards enhanced local government – strengthening democracy as close as possible to individuals themselves in their daily lives. We have been doing quite a lot of work to support this, and I am very pleased to commend to you our latest publication – “Financing Local Government”. Copies are available for you, but let me observe all ‘launching’ honours by presenting this copy to Dr Shija on your behalf.

Thank you.



**54th COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION**

**PLENARY CONFERENCE**

***KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, 5<sup>th</sup> August 2008***

**ADDRESS BY DR WILLIAM F SHIJA,  
CPA SECRETARY-GENERAL**

The President of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Speaker of The House of Representatives of Malaysia, the Hon. Tan Sri Datuk Pandikar Amin Haji Mulia, MP.

The Vice President of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania, the Hon. Samuel John Sitta, MP.,

The Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee and Speaker of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, the Hon. Hashim Abdul Halim, MLA.,

The Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Rt Hon. Mr. Kamallesh Sharma,

The Acting Vice Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee and Regional Representative, South East Asia Region, the Hon. Hawazi Daipi, MP.,

The Acting Treasurer of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Member of the Legislative Council of the Island of Man, Mrs. Clare Christian, MLC.,

Rt. Hon. Speakers and other Presiding Officers,

CWP Chairperson, Hon Kashmala Tariq, MP.,

Distinguished Delegates and Observers,

Parliamentary Clerks and Staff,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Member of the Diplomatic Corps.

I wish first to thank you all, Distinguished Delegates and Friends, for your decision to attend this 54<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference here in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. I join you in thanking most sincerely our host, the CPA Malaysia Branch, the Government and the people of Malaysia for the wonderful reception, hospitality and facilities that have been availed to us for the success of the Conference. We say in traditional Malaysian expression: "Terima kasih, dan semoga tuhan merahmati semua". (We thank you very much and God bless you). We also wish to sincerely thank the CPA Malaysia Branch for the offer to produce the Conference Documentary this year, as was the case for India last year.

Chairperson, at this conference, we are delighted to have been joined by new members of our Commonwealth family: the new Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Rt. Hon. Kamallesh Sharma and Mrs Sharma. I wish to take this opportunity to heartily welcome to our conference the new Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, having taken up his appointment in April this year. Mr. Sharma is widely known in the Commonwealth community and in the diplomatic circles of the world, having served his mother country, India, in many public and diplomatic assignments around the world. Please join me ladies and gentlemen, in welcoming Rt. Hon. Sharma and give him a round of applause. We wish him and his family the best of health and a successful term of service as Commonwealth Secretary-General. On your behalf, I wish to assure Mr. Sharma of our utmost cooperation and support for the benefit of the Commonwealth.

Chairperson, the delegates will have noted that this year the General Assembly will elect a new Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee to replace you Hon Hashim Abdul Halim, MLA., after completing your three-year term, having been elected at the 51<sup>st</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Fiji, in 2005. I wish to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you, Hon. Halim, for the guidance and leadership you

extended to me since I took office as Secretary-General in January last year. Together with the rest of the members of the Executive Committee, you were very patient to hear what I planned to do at the Secretariat, particularly in my mission to take the Association to all the members and the public, as well as to deepen our collaboration with other international organizations in parliamentary democracy, research, documentation and information sharing. When I accompanied you Chairperson, to the United Nations in New York last year, you conveyed the Commonwealth Parliamentary message to those who deserve to know more about our work. I wish you, Hon. Halim, and the other outgoing members of the Executive Committee, the very best in the continued service to this noble parliamentary organization.

In the same vein, I wish to pledge my loyalty and service to the next Chairperson and other incoming members of the Executive Committee for what I will share with them in terms of policy developments and program implementation to further strengthen the Association.

In this note, and on behalf of all the staff members at the Secretariat, I also wish to thank you all for the cooperation and assistance extended to us when we joined you in Branches and Regions to implement various programmes, in accordance with our Strategic Plan for 2008-2012, as adopted in India.

Since India, the Secretariat staff and I were happy to join you in our parliamentary activities in, just to mention a few, Australia, Kenya, Scotland, Papua New Guinea, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Canada, Zambia, Turks and Caicos, South Africa, Maldives Gibraltar, Guyana, Nigeria and at Westminster in London. Also, to all our international collaborators, some of whom are represented at this conference, we thank you very much for your cooperation, resourcefulness and partnership.

I also wish to thank most sincerely all the staff members at the CPA Headquarters who work long hours to ensure that our services to you are efficiently discharged. Similarly I wish to thank most heartily all the Parliamentary Clerks and Staff in all our Branches and Regions for their untiring support to the Association's activities. May God bless you all.

Chairperson, with regard to the conference theme, as we all know, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conducts its activities in accordance with the wishes of Members and as influenced by global contemporary issues. At the choice of Branches, this 54<sup>th</sup> Conference has set out to debate on the theme "Expanding the Role of Parliament in Global Society: Environment, Development and Security". This concern is a continuation from last year. This year the Executive Committee has added to this concern the issue of the current problem of the world food crisis, in terms of prices and supply. The whole purpose is to provide an opportunity for Commonwealth parliamentarians to discuss and identify policy options on the issues of environmental degradation and climate change as it affects human development, security, and the often recurrent food shortage in the world, resulting in poverty.

It should be noted that before and after our 53<sup>rd</sup> Conference in India last year, several regional and international fora have continued to address the issue of climate change and its effects; at the United Nations, the European Union, OECD, African Union, CARICOM, ASEAN, as well as individual countries all over the world. In fact, the available information shows that a number of our CPA Regional Conferences this year, such as the ones in Anguilla for the Caribbean Region; in Zambia for the Africa Region; and in Gibraltar for the British Islands and the Mediterranean, have addressed the issue of climate change. We expect the policy solutions suggested by the regional debates to make inputs into the proceedings at this conference so as to benefit the Commonwealth and global communities we serve; small or large, poor or rich, industrialized or agrarian, island or continental.

I am happy to say that with effect from this year, the CPA will produce a conference summary to show its opinion on the subject or issue discussed and deliberated upon. The document will then form one of the major products or outcome of the conference theme for the year, to be duly shared with all members in Branches and the general public at large. Indeed, gone are the days when the CPA would hold such a major conference and disperse without a tangible product.

Secondly, Chairperson, the issue of climate change and global warming has been with us for quite some time now. It is a complex issue. Even before the Kyoto Protocol was brought into force in 2005, policy makers and the public at large has been extensively informed of the reality of climate change. Global warming has been presented by many fact-finding projects such as the Al Gore Climate Change Project, the United Nations Environmental Programme Studies on Climate Change and several regional, national and individual scientists. At the Commonwealth Day Lecture last year in London, sponsored by the Commonwealth Foundation, Environmental Scientist from Canada, David Suzuki, admitted that the climate change problem was so complex that it required a balanced attention of everyone of us, rich or poor. Almost every scientist admits that the effects of climate change include increased exposure to drought, rising temperatures, more erratic rainfall and extreme weather events that threaten water, agricultural systems and so forth, to the detriment of millions of people.

The numerous studies further support the hypothesis that global warming and climate change are, or is, imminently disastrous and therefore joint steps should be taken by the international community to solve the problems. From these studies, the policy option being advocated most is that climate change and global warming must be tackled in a unified global approach. In an environment where some countries may lose their geographies; floods and hurricanes destroying people's lives and properties; pollution weakening people, animals and plants, and slowing industrialization by selected countries, the unity to overcome global warming is critical. Similarly, if energy and food prices have been soaring, how should we shape the policies to implement cuts in global warming emissions? How soon are we going to turn around our economic reliance from traditional to alternative sources of energy? Who will bear the cost of these changes?

In response to these and other challenges, the international community has started to identify mitigation measures on global warming. In highly industrialized countries, the major option is to cut carbon dioxide emissions by significant targets during the next 25 – 50 years. This approach embraces what is termed as the Kyoto-plus plan of action which centers on zero greenhouse gas technology to wipe out pollution. This and other approaches will require continued extensive negotiations between developed and developing countries on the best policies and methods to implement a new climate-change friendly economic system. Many players believe that partnership will be the key to the solutions to climate change and global warming. Delegates to this conference will have the opportunity to exchange with experts on the options available and the methodology for global consensus building on this complex subject.

Thirdly, Chairperson, delegates to this conference will also have the opportunity to discuss a related issue to climate change; the current global food crisis. Both climate change and food crisis have serious development and security implications across the world. Again, a number of studies by the United Nations, the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the World Bank and other agencies, suggest that there is a relationship between climate change/global warming on the one hand, and the high cost of energy and food on the other. Climate change is making agriculture, especially in developing countries, unpredictable and unproductive. Unproductive agriculture results in hunger, which sometimes breeds violence and insecurity. And yet deforestation and destruction of water sources continues unabated, especially in poor Commonwealth countries.

Figures by the World Bank and DFID show that the main drivers of food prices are: demand growth for food; change in food consumption patterns due to middle class growth; the use of grains for biofuels; market volatility; rise in the cost of agricultural inputs – especially energy; water scarcity; and land availability.

It is, however, argued by a number of observers that the real driver of food prices is poverty. A report by the International Development Committee of the UK House of Commons observes that:

“The main obstacle to reducing hunger is poverty. Poor people cannot get enough food either by growing it or buying it. Introducing measures to reduce poverty helps reduce hunger. Developing countries' poverty reduction strategies have, however, often focused too much on treating the symptoms of hunger; e.g. through providing food aid, rather than dealing with the underlying causes. Country strategies and donor responses are getting better at broadening the focus especially highlighting economic growth as a powerful way of pulling people out of poverty.

Economic growth creates higher incomes, which help people save, invest, send children to school and protect themselves. And as



economies grow, governments can raise the money they need for public services.”

***House of Commons International Development Committee;  
Tenth Report of Session 2007-08: volume 11: pp. 37***

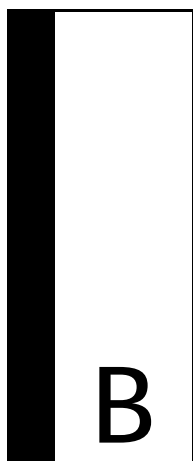
This statement of the report is important because of its high relevance to national and international contexts of hunger, poverty and partnerships. These contexts actually remind us of the global resolve to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, in which the question of poverty and hunger is priority number one. At the recent Rome Food Summit, it was noted that plans must be put in place for a global partnership in agriculture in order to accelerate the achievement of the MDG 1. The key word is partnership. How to forge the partnerships between various world blocks and agencies calls for full commitment by both developed and developing countries. Individual and joint country challenges, particularly through parliaments, must be undertaken to invest in agriculture together with the research that goes with it.

What is being suggested here is that plans, strategies and goals for climate change, as well as the eradication of poverty and hunger will not be easily achieved without strong regional partnerships and a single sincere global partnership, as stated in MDG 8 of the United Nations to which we are part.

Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, I wish once again to thank you all, our Resource Persons, Discussion Leaders and Moderators for making yourselves available for the success of the conference. I wish you all fruitful discussions and deliberations.

I thank you for your kind attention.





## Appendix B

### **Summary Report of the 54<sup>th</sup> CPA Conference**



## 54<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference

# Summary Statement

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
1 – 10 August 2008

An extensive programme of policy and legislation priorities for governments and international agencies was proposed by Parliamentarians attending the 2008 Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference and related meetings in Kuala Lumpur in August.

The 54<sup>th</sup> annual Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), hosted by the Parliament of Malaysia, put forward the policies as over 600 Members and officials of approximately 170 Parliaments and Legislatures of Commonwealth nations, states, provinces and territories considered solutions to key global issues.

The meeting, chaired by Hon. Tan Sri Datuk Pandikar Amin Haji Mulia, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malaysia, included the CPA Small Branches Conference and the meeting of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians. Summary Statements from all three conferences appear below.

## 54<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference

### Workshop A: Democracy and Global Peace

Parliament will be able to contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts if it retains the trust of the people in its ability to be an effective forum for open and inclusive dialogue, argued participants in the conference's first workshop.

Calling on Parliament and political parties to bring the views of all sectors of society, including minorities, into the political debate both through representation in Parliament and through the involvement of civil society, non-governmental organizations and the media in the parliamentary process, Members said Parliament will build public confidence in it as a forum for resolving disputes.

Trust, dialogue, opportunity and legitimacy were considered as prerequisites for parliamentary involvement. Others emphasized the need for the CPA to look into assisting in the fight to preserve the environment. The respect for minority views and the participation of various stakeholders in achieving peace were prominent among the views expressed by speakers.

Parliament must promote respect for human rights and especially encourage freedom of expression. It must be seen as playing an important part in developing policies on issues such as climate change and sustainable development so people have faith in representative democracy.

## **Workshop B: Rapid Urbanization and Rural Decline**

It is absolutely necessary for nations to pursue the United Nations HABITAT Action Plan to sustain development of the world's cities, towns and villages. This should not be left to individual governments alone, but rather it should be a partnership among all nations and societies. It must move beyond arguments about urban versus rural life to recognize the reality of urban growth and migration and focus on effective management of the process.

All speakers agreed that sustainable development and sustainable urbanization should meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Importantly, all Members noted the prediction of the United Nations that in 2008 urban population will equal rural population and this will lead progressively to the dominance of urban population.

Sustainable development encompasses a number of inter-related areas and highlights sustainability as an idea of environmental, economic and social progress and equity, all within the limits of the world's natural resources. This also addresses the global issues of poverty, inequality, hunger and environmental degradation.

The principal challenges to sustainable urbanization lie in the general lack of planning, implementation and management capabilities on the part of local government and their local partners. Urban governance and management should take into account fiscal and political decentralization, spatial planning, management and climate change, along with pro-poor equal access to land and housing and the provision of basic infrastructure and services.

There should be a coherent overall framework involving governments, local authorities, private sectors, non-governmental organizations and professional groups.

## **Workshop C: Credible Elections**

The desire for all CPA Members to move towards ever more credible elections was emphasized by all the speakers. The need for fully independent electoral commissions and their essential role in the democratic process was stressed by a large number of speakers, especially those from India where they said a well established and successful commission already exists.

The points that emerged most clearly from the workshop were that the will of the people was the basis of the authority to govern and all voters should be treated equally.

## **Workshop D: Reforming the Budget Process**

Parliamentarians agreed that their roles in setting the budget and its implementation have expanded. They stressed that Parliaments need an independent source of information to improve their participation in budget preparation.

They noted that several nations have established Parliamentary Budget Offices to help them counter the information deficit between the executive and the Parliament. Some of the delegates said that the offices were created in their respective nations through legislation.

After sharing experiences, they expressed agreement on the effectiveness of the office. They agreed that it will provide transparency and accountability and enhance credibility and will also improve the budget process. They recommended that the office should be non-partisan, independent, objective and analytic. They further expressed the view that the core functions of

the office should be provided in legislation. With the sharing of experiences, other nations could also create such offices to assist their budget processes.

### **Workshop E: Collaboration among Large and Small States on Climate Change**

Parliamentarians expressed the shared view that as climate change is a global concern, solutions to combat its impact can only be achieved through international co-operation among all states, large and small, initially working through a special Task Force.

MPs shared the view that enough has been said on its detrimental effects, especially on small island states, little has been done about climate change. To this end, it is widely agreed that immediate actions be taken and the MPs at this session proposed the establishment of a Task Force to formulate actions to combat the impacts of climate change.

A few reservations on the establishment of such a Task force – such as its cost implications and mandate to deal with governmental policy issues – were highlighted; but at the conclusion of the discussion, the establishment of the Task Force was unanimously supported. The workshop endorsed a proposal that the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Executive Committee consider the establishment of a different Task Force, one on the role of legislators to combat climate change.

### **Workshop F: Parliament and Civil Society Engagement**

Parliamentarians expressed the shared view that the urgent engagement of Parliament with civil society must be encouraged by all nations. Democratic governance can be achieved and promoted if Parliamentarians engage all interest groups in the legislative process in order to identify the best policies to benefit both rural and urban people.

Members expressed diverse views on how this relationship can produce better policy-making mechanisms. They passionately expressed the need for Parliament to engage civil society in the planning of better policies as civil society provides ground support in the implementation of government policies such as the alleviation of poverty, improvement of public infrastructures and the observance of fundamental human rights related to the rule of law, freedom of movement, speech and association.

There was a common acknowledgement that the need for better relations between Parliamentarians and civil society is inevitable as both have the same interests.

Workshop participants unanimously agreed that there can be no meaningful democracy without the positive engagement of civil society. Where this relationship does not exist, member countries must provide an enabling environment through legislation on the involvement of civil society and its attendant rights and freedoms.

### **Workshop G: Parliament in Conflict Prevention and Resolution**

Discussion leaders acknowledged the multi-faceted range of challenges that lie ahead for Parliamentarians in demonstrating leadership to remove and resolve conflict. Sources of conflict – history, inequality, economics, human rights abuses, and election manipulation – must be tackled not just in policy and legislation but in the very behaviour and action that go with the responsibility of being an MP.

A number of key messages emerged during the debate: development and the resolution of issues are difficult whilst violent conflict continues; elected representatives must be allowed to vent the emotions of their communities openly or risk losing peoples' faith; policy and legislation should be used effectively as a vehicle to head off potential conflict situations; Parliamentarians should use innovative approaches to problem-solving, and external influences and involvement can play a very useful if not essential role in avoiding or resolving conflict.

Workshop attendees called on the CPA to play its part, within both member and non-member countries, to promote harmonious government.

## **Workshop H: Recognizing Women's Issues in Budgets**

As the budget is the government's most important policy instrument, this comprehensive statement of the nation's priorities must pay special attention to societal issues which particularly affect women. These include education, employment, housing, availability of financing, facilities for the care of children and the elderly and the plight of rural women. Participants unanimously recognized that these problems have a greater impact on women and children, making them among the most vulnerable in society.

In identifying strategies to ensure that account is taken of women's issues in budgetary processes, foremost among the recommendations was the need for the CPA to be the forerunner in gender budgeting by, first, ensuring adequate funding for women's programmes with the organization's budget and, secondly, assisting member Parliaments and Legislatures to develop gender-sensitive budgets.

The following matters should also be considered:

- Sensitizing persons involved in the budget process, as well as women themselves who are affected by these budgets;
- Will and commitment of decision-makers;
- Transparency in the budget preparation process, and
- Evaluating and monitoring budget processes.

## **Plenary: The Global Food Crisis**

Commonwealth governments must lead a new global partnership against soaring food prices through co-ordinated policies to increase food production, curb the cultivation of biofuel crops instead of food, curtail corporate profiteering in the food industry and improve soil, water and land use management, said delegates speaking on the current worldwide food pricing crisis.

Although speakers attributed the crisis to many possible causes, there was agreement that a co-ordinated international programme on food production, distribution and pricing should replace the piecemeal and sometimes contradictory policies they accused intergovernmental agencies of pursuing. The Commonwealth can lead the way in promoting co-operative policies and legislation, including pooling knowledge about technological developments and scientific research to clarify the sources of the food crisis and its most effective solutions.

High priority should be given to encouraging people, especially the young and small land-holders, to stay in agriculture and this must be complemented by incentives and infrastructure projects to improve production and access to markets. Urgent action is required so past progress in reducing poverty and hunger and the future achievement of the Millennium Development Goals are not undermined.

## **Plenary: The Communications Challenge for Parliament**

Improving parliamentary governance depends on the prompt provision of better information on policy issues to Parliamentarians and to the people, so governments must not use financial constraints to justify restricting Parliament's ability to communicate with the people. Hampering Parliament's ability to inform the people about issues and Parliament's contribution to their resolution will undermine public support for parliamentary democracy, argued delegates at the final plenary session.

Parliaments in turn must make full use of broadcasting, websites, email, e-petitions and the electronic publication of all documents so citizens are fully informed about issues and can have direct access both to their elected representatives and to debates. Parliaments should provide people with information unedited by the media as well opening both Chamber and committee meetings to full media coverage, including, where possible, live broadcasting.

Public access to the parliamentary process should be increased through more face-to-face interactions between people and their elected representatives, including by holding periodic House sittings and committee hearings away from the capital and facilitating school visits to Parliament.

There was some support for ensuring that parliamentary Standing Orders allow Parliamentarians to access the internet in the Chamber.

## **28<sup>th</sup> Small Branches Conference**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Plenary: Water and Waste Management in Sustainable Development**

Delegates agreed that small states need to take appropriate measures, through planning and the enactment of appropriate legislation and regulations, to manage and protect their water resources and to deal with waste. The need to protect water resources, which were already sparse in some small states, was particularly important in the light of on-going concerns about climate change.

Delegates also discussed the associated topic of waste management and noted that steps are now being taken in a number of jurisdictions represented at the conference to reduce and re-use waste and to recycle as much as possible of the residual waste. Education plays a significant part in waste reduction as Members stressed the value of raising awareness of the issue to ensure that everyone in the community knows the steps that can be taken to ensure that there is the minimum environmental damage caused.

### **2nd Plenary: Conflicts of Interest and Corruption**

Measures to improve government transparency and accountability and strengthen parliamentary oversight and audits of the executive were advocated as the most effective ways to curtail corruption and reduce the debilitating effects of wrong-doing on development and on the provision of public services in small states.



In the parliamentary field, the establishment of codes of conduct for Ministers and for Members as well as requirements for them to declare their assets were seen as deterrents to misconduct by Parliamentarians and as symbols to convince the people that they should not tolerate instances in which MPs or civil servants use public positions for personal gain.

While none of these measures alone was seen as completely effective in stopping corruption or conflicts of interest, participants recognized their cumulative effect in promoting honesty in public service. Freedom of information legislation and the promotion of freedom of the press were also seen as essential in exposing improprieties and raising public expectations of good governance in the best interests of all, especially the most vulnerable as they rely most heavily on government services which are undermined by corruption.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Plenary: The Challenges of Democratic Elections**

Although all electoral systems are different and each state must adopt the system most suited to its jurisdiction, it was agreed that the fundamental questions of how to get people involved, the age they should become involved and steps to ensure that people who want to vote can do so need to remain in the forefront of the minds of those responsible for a state's political development.

To ensure that the electoral system keeps up with changing times and methods, methods which would allow people wishing to participate in the electoral process to do so as effortlessly as possible merit close consideration, agreed delegates.

Among the electoral issues which should be considered are compulsory voting, election financing, electronic voting, candidate eligibility rules and the reduction of the voting age to 16 and other ways of involving young people in politics.

### **Plenary 4: Small States in International Institutions**

Small states must maintain a constant direct dialogue with intergovernmental agencies and with large nations critical to their development in order to protect themselves and their economies from destabilization by international decision-making, said speakers in this debate on how small states should protect their interests in the global community.

While acknowledging that Commonwealth multilateral assistance is valuable in helping small states deal with such intergovernmental agencies as the World Trade Organization, Members urged small states to maintain individual bilateral relations with intergovernmental agencies rather than leaving it to large nations to protect their interests. Dependent territories must also keep pressure on their metropolitan powers to respect and fully represent their interests, as should small independent states which have close links with larger countries. But Members agreed that these contacts should supplement, not replace, direct relations as several jurisdictions, including dependencies, reported significant successes in protecting their rights through bilateral dialogue.

Small states were also urged to use Commonwealth assistance to strengthen their international positions as it works effectively in such areas as the protection of skilled workforces, climate change and the protection of small states' brands.

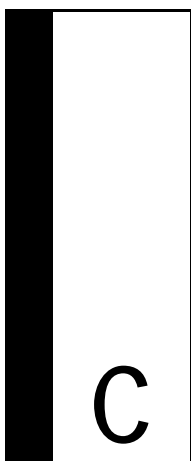
## **Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Meeting**

### **Plenary:           Eliminating Violence against Women, Especially Domestic Violence**

Parliamentarians must ensure legislation is in place to guarantee equality and remove discrimination. It was agreed by women Parliamentarians speaking at their conference that legislation should also be introduced to address issues such as domestic violence, sexual harassment in the workplace and honour killings, and that laws could be usefully shared among Commonwealth Parliaments. Parliamentary committees can be used to ensure violence against women and children remains on the political agenda.

Members of Parliament, both male and female, should be made aware of the impact of domestic violence on family and community life. The education of boys and girls in schools should be an integral part of the process to combat and prevent domestic violence. There was also agreement that it is vital to provide training for police personnel dealing with domestic violence cases and to provide shelters and resources for women and families wishing to leave their abusers. Participants welcomed the introduction in some jurisdictions of national resource centres for victims of domestic violence.

Members also advocated non-legislative measures, such as raising awareness about “non-violent communication” and building partnerships between government and the private sector in providing solutions such as programmes for batterers. It was also noted that the trafficking of women and children is increasing and that Parliamentarians have an important role and responsibility to introduce anti-trafficking measures.



## Appendix C

### **Delegation Program to Thailand**

#### **Sunday 10 August 2008**

The Australian Parliamentary delegation led by the Hon. Alan Ferguson, President of the Senate, arrives at Bangkok airport

Embassy briefing (Ambassador and other senior Embassy Staff)

Tour of Jim Thompson's House

#### **Monday 11 August 2008**

Arrive at Government House

Courtesy call on H.E. Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej

Depart Government House for Parliament House

Arrive at Parliament – Wreath laying ceremony at Monument of King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) in front of Parliament House

Visit the Parliamentary Chamber

Call on H.E. Mr Chai Chidchob, Speaker of the House of Representatives and President of the National Assembly

Call on H.E. Mr Prasobsook Boondech, President of the Senate

Lunch hosted by H.E. Mr Prasobsook Boondech, President of the Senate

Proceed to Prachuab Khiri Khan Province

H.E. Mr Chai Chidchob, the President of the National Assembly leads the Australian Parliamentary delegation to an audience with His Majesty the King, Piamsuk Villa, Klai Kangwol Palace

Dinner with Governor of Prachuab Khiri Khan Province

## **Tuesday 12 August 2008**

Depart for Kanchanaburi Province

Visit the JEATH Museum

Depart the JEATH Museum for the Allied War Cemetery

Wreath laying ceremony

Lunch hosted by the Governor of Kanchanaburi

Proceed to Hellfire Pass

Arrive at Hellfire Pass

Visit the Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum, proceed to walking trail (wreath laying ceremony)

## **Wednesday 13 August 2008**

Delegation depart hotel for King Prajadhipok's Institute (KPI)

Meet with Mr Borwornsak Uwanno, Secretary-General, King Prajadhipok's Institute and other staff

Depart KPI

Arrive at the Royal Thai Police Bomb Data Centre, briefing and tour of facility

Proceed to the Australian Embassy

Lunch hosted by the Australian Ambassador with the Australian Chamber of Commerce (Auscham) Board

Briefing on people smuggling hosted by Embassy

Tour of embassy

Afternoon tea with embassy staff

Cocktails and dinner hosted by H.E. Mr Chai Chidchob, President of the National Assembly and Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Thai-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group

### **Thursday 14 August 2008**

Depart for the Thai Red Cross Society

Visit to the AusAID-funded HIV AIDS Project, a Thai-Australian Collaboration on HIV Nutrition (TACHIN)

Welcomed by Mr Phan Wannamethee, Secretary General, Thai Red Cross, TACHIN Project

Depart for Ayudhya Province

Lunch hosted by the Governor of Ayudhya

Depart for Phra Nakhon Si Ayudhya Historical Studies Centre

Arrive at the Phra Nakhon Si Ayudhya Historical Studies Centre

Briefing and tour of historical sites

Depart for Bang Pa-In Palace

Tour of Bang Pa-In Palace

Depart for Bangkok

Reception hosted by H.E. Mr Paul Grigson, Australian Ambassador to Thailand, Residence of the Australian Ambassador

### **Friday 15 August 2008**

Depart for Grand Palace

Pay respect to HRH Princess Galayani Vadhana

Tour of the Grand Palace and the Temple of the Emerald Buddha

Depart the Grand Palace

Tour of Ananda Samakhom Throne Hall

Visit to Arts of the Kingdom Exhibition

Return to Australia