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PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

The participation of the Maltese delegation in the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference taking place in Halifax kicked off by Speaker Angelo Farrugia and Member of Parliament David Agius attending the 38th session of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Small Branches Conference. Member of Parliament Naomi Cachia attended the 7th Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Conference.

The CPA Small Branches Conference brings together members of parliament from the smallest jurisdictions in the Commonwealth to discuss issues relevant to their legislatures in a series of workshops.

As the first elected Chairperson of the Small Branches between 2016 and 2019, Speaker Angelo Farrugia was invited to open the conference and to preside over the election procedure of Ms Joy Marie Burch, Speaker of the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly, as the new CPA Chairperson of Small Branches for the next three years. Joy Burch expressed her appreciation for the unanimous support and called on all members for greater co-operation across the CPA Small Branches network.

During this year's session, Commonwealth Parliamentarians examined the unique challenges facing the CPA's smallest legislatures through the following key thematic workshops:

1. Disaster Risk Preparedness for Small Jurisdictions;
2. Building Sustainable Economies in CPA Small Branches;
3. Financial Scrutiny and Oversight: How can small parliaments ensure effective accountability?; and
4. Wellbeing Indicators for CPA Small Branches.

As one of the key-note speakers of the second workshop, Speaker Angelo Farrugia addressed the floor on the issue of Building Sustainable Economies. (A copy of his speech is being attached.)

The workshop, which was also attended by David Agius, concluded its business by adopting the following recommendation which, subject to approval by the General Assembly, shall eventually form part of the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference outcomes.

“Through their legislative, oversight and representative functions, parliamentarians from small jurisdictions should actively engage in economic development policies to ensure that are responsive to all societal groups, are environmentally sensitive and are broadly aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).”



PRESS RELEASE

Member of Parliament Naomi Cachia participated in the 7th Commonwealth Women Parliamentarian (CWP) Conference which brought together women members of parliament from across the Commonwealth to discuss issues around gender equality, women's leadership and creating gender sensitive parliaments in a series of four workshops:

1. Empowering Women Parliamentarians and Promoting Diversity / Intersectionality;
2. Effectively Combating all forms of Abuse and Harassment in Parliament;
3. Financial Empowerment of Women and Gender-Sensitive Budgeting; and
4. Promoting Gender-Sensitive Parliaments Post-Pandemic.

The theme of the CWP Conference; 'BreaktheBias: Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow', provided an opportunity for sharing best practices in order to explore ways how to build gender equality and representation in parliaments.

In her intervention, Naomi Cachia referred to the legislation which introduced a gender-corrective mechanism with respect to representation in the Maltese Parliament as from the March 2022 general elections. She explained that this constitutional reform, which was adopted unanimously by the Maltese Parliament, gave renewed hope to women from across the political aisle to continue to address issues that directly affect their role in the country's decision-making process. While the results of this mechanism will be reaped in the coming years, she emphasised the importance of finding ways and means to keep on empowering women parliamentarians and to ensure that public discourse in this respect steers away from tokenism and symbolism.

Today, the delegation will participate in the official opening of the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, which is considered to be a unique platform that offers inter-parliamentary dialogue. This year's theme is: 'Inclusive, Accessible, Accountable and Strong Parliaments: The Cornerstone of Democracy and Essential for Development.'