



**PARLIAMENT**  
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Levels G - 7, Tower D  
The Port-of-Spain International Waterfront Centre  
1A Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain

# REPORT

## **Standing Committee Meeting of the Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth States of Jersey, Channel Islands January 15 to 18, 2015**



## **Introduction**

Every two (2) years the Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) brings together the Speakers and Presiding Officers of the national parliaments of the independent sovereign states of the Commonwealth. The Standing Committee oversees CSPOC activities and is composed of fifteen (15) members. The functions of the Standing Committee are:

- a. to decide dates, venues and procedures of the next Conference;
- b. to propose subjects for discussion at the next Conference and to prepare a Draft Agenda;
- c. to review the Standing Rules and to propose, as it deems necessary, draft amendments to the Rules for the consideration of the Conference, and
- d. to consider all matters concerning the organisation and conduct of the Conference, including financial arrangements.

## **Approval, Travel Details and Courtesies**

Cabinet Vide Minute No. 3464 of December 18, 2014 approved the attendance of the Hon. Wade Mark, MP, Speaker of the House and Ms. Candice Skerrette, Procedural Clerk Assistant at the Standing Committee Meeting of CSPOC to be held in St. Helier, States of Jersey from January 15 to 18, 2015.

Hon. Wade Mark, MP and Ms. Candice Skerrette departed Trinidad and Tobago on Tuesday, January 13, 2015. They arrived in London on January 14 and were met by officials from the Office of the High Commissioner in London. They then departed on the evening on January 14 for States of Jersey. On the same evening they arrived in States of Jersey and were greeted by Mr. Michael de la Haye OBE, Greffier of the States of Jersey (Clerk).

For its outward journey, the delegation departed States of Jersey on Sunday, January 18 for London and were again met by officials from the Office of the High

Commissioner in London. The delegation departed London for Trinidad on Monday, January 19, 2015. The programme of activities is provided in Appendix A.

### **Standing Committee Meeting**

The Meeting of the Standing Committee was held on Friday, January 16, 2015 at the Old Library, States Building. In attendance were representatives from Legislatures of States of Jersey, Malaysia, Namibia, Kenya, Botswana, Australia, United Kingdom, Canada, India, Singapore and Trinidad and Tobago (*See Appendix B*) and Mr. Eric Janse, CSPOC Secretary. The proceedings were chaired by H.E. Tan Sri Datuk Seri Panglima Pandikar Amin Haji Mulia, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Malaysia.



### **22<sup>nd</sup> CSPOC Conference held in New Zealand in January 2014**

The Committee expressed its collective gratitude to New Zealand for a successful Conference. It must be noted that the Committee agreed to maintain the format of the Conference with keynote speakers and to encourage members to engage in spontaneous contributions for each plenary.

## **23<sup>rd</sup> Conference to be held in Malaysia in January 2016**

Past CSPOC conference formats for the period 2010 to 2014 were outlined by Mr. Eric Janse, CSPOS Secretary. Ms. Datuk Roosme Hamzah, Clerk of the House of Representatives of Malaysia also outlined the draft agenda and programme for the 2016 Conference. After much deliberations the Committee agreed on the format for the 2016 Conference.

### **Conference Topics**

Hon. Wade Mark, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Trinidad and Tobago submitted the under-mentioned topics for consideration by the Committee for the 2016 Conference:

1. The Challenges faced by Presiding Officers in Commonwealth Parliaments by Judicial Activism and/or intervention in matters of parliamentary privilege;
2. The Principle of the Independence of the Legislature/Parliament from Executive Influence – myth or reality;
3. The Role of Speakers in the Security of Parliaments and their precincts in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century;
4. The Challenges faced by Parliaments in scrutinizing Executive Action given the predominance of the Executive in the Legislature; and
5. The low citizen confidence in Parliamentary Institutions – How can Commonwealth Parliaments build trust in Legislatures.

Topics 2, 3 and 4 were incorporated into the final list of plenary topics while the Committee agreed that topic 5 would be utilized as a Special Plenary Topic. Although six (6) topics were proposed by H.E. Tan Sri Datuk Seri Panglima Pandikar Amin Haji Mulia, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Malaysia and three (3) topics by Smt. Sumitra Mahajan, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, India only one (1) of their respective topics were incorporated into the approved list.



The topics outlined below were agreed to by the Committee for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Conference to be held in Malaysia during the period January 9 to 14, 2016:

1. The challenges facing the independence of Speakers
  - The Principle of the Independence of the Parliament from Executive Influence
  - Influence of political parties
  - Administrative autonomy
2. The role of Speakers in the Security of Parliaments and their precincts
  - Ensuring the access and security of members
  - Balancing the ease of public access and security – safety versus openness
  - Tackling the challenges of terrorism
3. Parliamentary Privilege – protecting the effective functioning of democracies
  - The Challenges faced by Presiding Officers in Commonwealth Parliaments by Judicial Activism and/or intervention in matters of parliamentary privilege
  - Recent developments in Commonwealth jurisdictions
  - Influence of human rights legislation

#### 4. Orientation and Development for Parliamentarians

- Induction for new Parliamentarians
- Continuous professional development
- Recent innovations

#### 5. The low citizen confidence in Parliamentary Institutions – How can Commonwealth Parliaments build trust in Legislatures?

##### **Proposed venue for the 2018 CSPOC Conference**

The Committee was informed that the Isle of Man would be unable to host the 2018 CSPOC Conference. United Kingdom proposed and the Committee agreed that it would host the 24<sup>th</sup> CSPOC Conference.

##### **Proposed venue for the 2019 Standing Committee Meeting**

Hon. Wade Mark, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Trinidad and Tobago proposed and the Committee agreed that it would host the 2019 Standing Committee Meeting.

##### **Proposed venue for the 2020 CSPOC Conference**

Hon. Andrew Scheer, MP, Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada proposed and the Committee agreed that it would host the 24<sup>th</sup> CSPOC Conference.

##### **Expressions of Condolences and Solidarity**

The Standing Committee directed the CSPOS Secretary to record its condolences and solidarity on the 2015 disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Plane Flight 370 off Australia's west coast and the 2014 shooting at Canada's parliament.

## **Other Business**

### **Social Events**

His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, Sir John McColl and Lady McColl graciously hosted participants to a reception on Friday 16, 2015. Hon. Wade Mark, MP was chosen to express remarks of gratitude on behalf of the Standing Committee.



For the duration of the meeting the staff of the Bailiff of Jersey made very kind arrangements for the conference participants to visit the States Chamber, the Royal Court, the Jersey Museum, the Occupation Tapestry Gallery, St. Brelade's Parish Church, St. Peter's Parish Hall and the north-west coast of Jersey.

## **Expressions of Thanks**

Hon. Wade Mark, MP leader of the delegation, conveyed appreciation to Sir Michael Birt, Bailiff of Jersey for the very exceptional hospitality and kind assistance extended during the visit.



## **Conclusion**

In accordance with House of Representatives Standing Order 22 (6), which states, *“Within twenty-one days of the return to Trinidad and Tobago of an officially recognized parliamentary delegation composed in any part of Members of the House, the head of the delegation, or a Member acting on his behalf, shall present a report to the House on the activities of the delegation”* this Report is submitted for laying in Parliament.

Hon. Wade Mark, MP  
Head of Delegation

**February 02, 2015**



**PROGRAMME**

**Thursday 15th January 2015 – official arrival day**

- All day            Participants arrive at Jersey Airport. All participants will be met on arrival and transported to the Radisson Blu Hotel.
- Remainder of afternoon free.
- 18.15            Welcome reception at Radisson Blu Hotel hosted by Sir Michael Birt, Bailiff of Jersey.  
*Smart casual attire*
- 19.00            Informal dinner for participants in the Le Hocq Suite, Radisson Blu Hotel, hosted by Sir Michael Birt, Bailiff of Jersey.  
*Smart casual attire*

**Friday 16th January 2015**

- 07.00 to 08.30    Breakfast at Radisson Blu Hotel.
- 08.45            Coach departs for Old Library, States Building, St Helier.
- 09.00 to 12.15    Meeting of Standing Committee.  
*Business attire.*
- 12.15            Official photograph.
- 12.30 to 13.00    Tour of States Chamber and Royal Court.
- 13.00 to 14.00    Buffet lunch in members' common room, States Building, St. Helier.
- 14.00 to 16.00    Meeting of Standing Committee reconvenes [*or free time in St. Helier if meeting concluded*].
- 16.30            Coach departs States Building for Radisson Blu Hotel.
- 17.30            Coach departs Radisson Blu Hotel for Government House.
- 18.00            Reception for delegates at Government House hosted by His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, Sir John McColl and Lady McColl.  
*Lounge suits or national dress*
- 19.00 to 21.30    Dinner hosted by Sir Michael Birt, Bailiff of Jersey, together with invited guests at Banjos Restaurant.  
*Lounge suits or national dress*

21.45 Coach returns to Radisson Blu Hotel.

**Saturday 17th January 2015**

07.00 to 09.30 Breakfast at Radisson Blu Hotel.

10.00 to 16.00 All day tour including lunch at the Oyster Box Restaurant, St. Brelade.

*Casual attire*

Free evening.

**Sunday 18th January 2015– official departure day**

All day Participants depart from Jersey Airport. All participants will be transported from the Radisson Blu Hotel to the Airport

**Members of the Standing Committee Present**

1. Sir Michael Birt, Bailiff of Jersey, States of Jersey
2. H.E. Tan Sri Datuk Seri Panglima Pandikar Amin Haji Mulia, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malaysia
3. Hon. Asser Kuveri Kapere, Chairperson of the National Council of Namibia
4. Hon. Justin Bedan Muturi, Speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya
5. Hon. Gladys K.T. Kokorwe, MP, Speaker of the National Assembly of Botswana
6. Sen. the Hon. Stephen Parry, President of the Senate of Australia
7. Rt. Hon. John Bercow, MP, Speaker of the House of Commons of United Kingdom
8. Hon. Andrew Scheer, MP, Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada
9. Hon. Wade Mark, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Trinidad and Tobago
10. Smt. Sumitra Mahajan, Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha of India
11. Mr. You Fook Charles Chong, Deputy Speaker of Singapore