

## CPA News

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### Speakers meet in Canada for the 25<sup>th</sup> Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth to discuss parliamentary engagement, transparency and accountability

Speakers and Presiding Officers from across the Commonwealth have met in Canada for the 25<sup>th</sup> Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) which took place from 6 to 10 January 2020. Speakers and Presiding Officers from 37 Commonwealth Parliaments were hosted by the Senate of Canada's Speaker, Hon. George Furey and the Speaker of the House of Commons, Hon. Anthony Rota, MP.



The biennial conference focused on the topics of parliamentary engagement: openness, transparency and accountability; and on Parliamentarians as effective legislators and representatives. A special plenary session was also held on inclusive Parliaments where Speakers and Presiding Officers discussed the role of the Speaker in supporting emerging procedures and practices to embrace the changing needs of modern Parliaments.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth was opened by the Governor-General of Canada, Her Excellency Rt Hon. Julie Payette at a ceremony held in the Senate of Canada. The Governor-General said: *"The Commonwealth is a remarkable union of diverse nations and jurisdictions with 53 different members that touch every single continent of this planet, representing almost a third of the world's population. From small to big, poor to rich, we are all united, and we come together, by choice, to share values, to share languages and to share parliamentary traditions. It is incredible what different people and different nations can do and can achieve when they work together and when they put their smarts, their will and their resources together to advance the common good for the prosperity of their people."*

The Speaker of the Senate of Canada, Hon. George Furey said: *"The more effective we are in our roles as Speakers and Presiding Officers, the stronger debates and parliamentary processes can be, and correspondingly, the more our citizens will have faith in our systems of government. It is no surprise that the Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers Conference takes place under the auspices of the Commonwealth – we are united by our diversity, by our shared history and by our commitment to parliamentary democracy."*

The Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada, Hon. Anthony Rota, MP said: *"It is a matter of great pride to us that the very first Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth was held in Canada in 1969, an initiative created by Hon. Lucien Lamoureux, 27<sup>th</sup> Speaker of the House of Commons which focused on the role of Speakers within parliamentary institutions. Then, as today, the aim of the conference was to maintain, foster and encourage impartiality and fairness on the part of Speakers and Presiding Officers"*



*of Parliaments, to promote knowledge and understanding of parliamentary democracy in the various forms and to develop parliamentary institutions.”*

To mark the ceremony being held on the traditional lands of the Algonquin people, Mrs Claudette Commanda, Algonquin Elder gave a traditional welcome to delegates.

To view the CSPOC25 opening ceremony – please [click here](#) or view the video on **YouTube**:  
<https://youtu.be/Bvkk8zeZiMs?t=732>

The CSPOC conference brings together the Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Parliaments and Legislatures of the Commonwealth. It focuses on the sharing of experiences, collaboration and partnership across the Parliaments of the Commonwealth. CSPOC was created in 1969 and is a separate independent organisation, although many of its participants are also members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. CSPOC operates on a two-year cycle, holding a conference of the full membership every two years.

The next hosts for the biennial conference are Australia in 2022 and Uganda in 2024, with additional CSPOC Standing Committee meetings to be held in Guernsey in 2021 and Trinidad and Tobago in 2023. For more information about the Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) please visit [www.cspoc.org](http://www.cspoc.org).

**For images of the CSPOC25 conference please visit [www.cpahq.org/cpahq/flickr](http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/flickr).**

**Images courtesy: Parliament of Canada/Parliament of Uganda.**

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The **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)**, now in its 109<sup>th</sup> year, exists to develop, promote and support Parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and to implement the enduring values of the Commonwealth. The CPA is an international community of around 180 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures working together to deepen the Commonwealth’s commitment to the highest standards of democratic governance. [www.cpahq.org](http://www.cpahq.org). **For media enquiries:** T: +44 (0)20 7799 1460 (switchboard) or email [communications@cpahq.org](mailto:communications@cpahq.org).