

## INTERPARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITY REPORT

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### 61ST COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION (CPA) CANADIAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE AND COMMONWEALTH WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS (CWP) CANADIAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Host	National Assembly of Québec
Location	Québec City, Québec
Dates	July 19 – 25, 2025
Activity Type	Conference
Participants	3 Member of the Legislative Assembly, 1 Assembly support staff

#### PARTICIPANTS

- Hon. Raj Chouhan, MLA, Speaker
- Mable Elmore, MLA, Deputy Speaker
- Janet Routledge, MLA, CWP Representative and CWP Canadian Regional Steering Committee Member
- Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Delegation Secretary

#### PROGRAM SUMMARY

The 61<sup>st</sup> CPA Canadian Regional Conference hosted by the Quebec National Assembly opened on Monday, July 21 with Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) sessions, bringing together Speakers and delegates from across Canada to share experiences, insights, and reflections on gender, leadership, and institutional change in parliamentary life.

The opening discussion underscored the evolving role of women in legislative leadership, beginning with a candid exploration of the environments in which women Speakers work. Some described their legislatures as supportive and welcoming, while others contrasted these with previous experiences, particularly in municipal politics, where gender-based exclusion and discrimination were more overt. As legislatures diversify, the presence of women in leadership roles, especially those who also represent racialized or Indigenous communities, was seen as critical to advancing more inclusive institutions.

One of the most impactful parts of the CWP program focused on family-friendly initiatives in parliamentary workplaces. Delegates visited the National Assembly of Quebec's childcare centre, along with a family room and nursing room. These facilities were discussed as examples of how physical infrastructure can help remove barriers to participation for parents and other caregivers and normalize caregiving responsibilities within political life. Conference delegates recognized that formal supports like these are essential to retaining and encouraging a diversity of members.

The program also included discussion of harassment and expectations of respectful conduct in legislatures. While there is increasing recognition of the prevalence of harassment, often toward women in public life, CWP delegates observed that cultural change remains incomplete. Efforts to set clearer standards for respectful behaviour, reinforce accountability, and model inclusive leadership were identified as ongoing priorities.

The full CPA Canadian Regional Conference opened on Tuesday, July 22 with jurisdictional reports from all Canadian jurisdictions. Speaker Chouhan presented the update on behalf of the British Columbia delegation. Each jurisdictional briefing offered a brief overview of current parliamentary issues, institutional challenges, and recent changes, providing opening context for further discussions throughout the conference.

One of the central themes of the conference was the role of parliamentarians in advancing inclusion and accessibility. A dedicated session explored parliamentarians' strategies to uphold human rights and enhance participation for parliamentarians with disabilities. Delegates shared best practices, reflected on persistent barriers, and emphasized the importance of creating conditions for full and equitable participation in public life.

Digital transformation was another discussion theme throughout the week. Participants considered the influence of the Internet and social media on civic engagement, as well as concerns around screen time, disinformation, and the impact of digital technologies on younger generations. These conversations reaffirmed the responsibility of legislatures to be adaptive and responsive to rapid technological change.

Sessions on modernizing parliamentary institutions featured presentations on infrastructure renewal. The National Assembly of Quebec described current project work to modernize its legislative Chamber, while federal representatives provided an update on the comprehensive restoration program of Parliament. Both projects demonstrate the importance of physical renovations to support institutional change, growth and renewal.

A procedural business session led by Speaker Chouhan focused on the exercise of the casting vote by presiding officers, offered insights into the Speaker's responsibility in maintaining neutrality and fulfilling the procedural obligation to provide a casting vote when required.

During the final business session on Thursday, July 24, delegates turned their attention to Canadian-American relations, emphasizing the role of provincial and territorial leadership in navigating cross-border collaboration, trade, and diplomacy. These discussions took on added significance in the context of shifting global alliances and the need for strategic cooperation.

The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia looks forward to hosting the 62<sup>nd</sup> CPA Canadian Regional Conference in Victoria in July 2026.

## EXPENSE

The following combined expenses are for all participants.

Travel Expenses	\$18,045.96
Conference Fees	\$1,600.00
Subsidy	Nil
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19,645.96</b>