



THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

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PRESS RELEASE

V.I. Delegation Participates in 48th CPA Regional Conference in Jamaica

Tuesday, 15 September - The House of Assembly of the Virgin Islands reaffirmed its commitment to regional collaboration and institutional innovation through its active participation in the 48th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Regional Conference.

Deputy Speaker for the House of Assembly of the Virgin Islands, Honourable Dr Karl Dawson, led a Virgin Islands delegation comprising Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Marlon A. Penn; Honourable Ronnie W. Skelton; Honourable Melvin M. Turnbull; Deputy Clerk, Linton V. Leonard; and Secretary, House of Assembly, Shakiara B. Cupid, to the 48th Regional Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic (CAA) Region, held at the Moon Palace Hotel in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, from 31 August to 4 September 2026.

Deputy Speaker Dawson said, "Attending this year's CPA Regional Conference was timely and transformative. It highlighted the shared challenges facing parliaments across the region and provided a valuable forum to develop solutions collectively. As we modernise for the digital age, we must uphold accountability, inclusivity, and public trust while strengthening parliamentary democracy for future generations."

Under the theme "Strengthening Parliaments in the Digital Age," the conference convened parliamentarians, presiding officers, clerks, and parliamentary officials from across the region to examine the evolving role of parliaments in an era of rapid technological change, digital transformation, and shifting democratic expectations.



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Over five days, delegates participated in high-level discussions on parliamentary modernisation, artificial intelligence governance, inclusivity and accessibility for persons with disabilities, youth participation through the Virtual Regional Youth Parliament, and the empowerment of women in political life through the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) Conference.

A standout moment was the keynote address by Jamaica's Prime Minister, Dr the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, who underscored the vital role of parliaments in fostering regional cooperation, democratic resilience, and good governance.

Deputy Clerk, Linton V. Leonard attended the 19th Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference, where sessions focused on capacity building, institutional oversight, budgeting and financing, and inter-parliamentary networking. The insights gained will inform ongoing efforts to strengthen the administrative and operational effectiveness of the House of Assembly of the Virgin Islands.

The conference closed with a renewed commitment to collaboration among CPA CAA member jurisdictions, drawing on shared experiences and best practices to build parliamentary institutions that are more resilient, inclusive, and equipped for the demands of the digital era.

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Note to Editors:

About the CPA CAA Region

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region, supports parliamentary democracy, good governance, and the rule of law across its member jurisdictions through capacity-building programmes, knowledge exchange, and regional cooperation.

Images: 1) Flyer 2) Group photo with delegates 3) LtoR His Majesty's Royal (HMR) Opposition Leader Hon. Marlon A. Penn, Deputy Speaker Hon. Dr Karl Dawson, Territorial At Large Representative Hon. Ronnie W. Skelton 4) LtoR Deputy Speaker Hon. Dr Karl Dawson, Territorial At Large Representative Hon. Ronnie W. Skelton, Hon. Melvin M. Turnbull 5) Deputy Speaker Hon. Dr Karl Dawson 6) Hon. Melvin M. Turnbull