



****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

WESTMINSTER WELCOMES SPEAKER'S VISIT TO COMMEMORATE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH

GEORGE TOWN, 2nd April 2024

The Speaker of Parliament, Honourable Sir Alden McLaughlin, KCMG, MBE, KC, JP, MP, was in London recently to mark the 75th Anniversary of the modern Commonwealth of Nations, and to meet with Speakers and Presiding Officers from across the Commonwealth to discuss key issues facing its member parliaments.

The three-day celebration of the modern Commonwealth began on 10th March with a reception at the residence of the Speaker of the UK's House of Commons, the Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP, which was followed by dinner at the Palace of Westminster with other Speakers and Presiding Officers from nearly two-dozen countries around the world.

Dignitaries joined members of the Royal Family, including Her Majesty the Queen and HRH the Prince of Wales, along with Commonwealth representatives from across the globe on 11th March for the Commonwealth Day Service of Celebration held at Westminster Abbey. Broadcasted on BBC One, the celebration brought together representatives of faith communities with a significant number of songs and hymns from countries within the Commonwealth.

Presiding Officers and Speakers joined together on 12th March in the spirit of collaboration to mark the significant milestone in global history with a round table discussion hosted by the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), and a formal dinner at the UK Speaker's residence. Amidst dignitaries from other Overseas Territories, the Speaker of the Cayman Islands Parliament emphasized the enduring importance of the Commonwealth in fostering international cooperation and mutual understanding.

"Our relationship with the UK Parliament is that of family," said Hon. McLaughlin, who has known the Speaker of the UK's House of Commons professionally for nearly two decades. "We come from the legacy of the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy, and maintaining exemplary relations is part of my role in representing the Cayman Islands and the good will we hold for parliamentarians in the UK and across the Overseas Territories."

The Speaker further underscored the Commonwealth's legacy of promoting best practices and parliamentary development across its diverse member nations. Reflecting on the journey of the Commonwealth since its inception, Hon. McLaughlin highlighted its evolution into a robust platform for dialogue, cooperation, and shared prosperity.



However, Hon. McLaughlin reinforced the importance of adequate representation of the Overseas Territories in the broader Commonwealth meetings. Notably, the Speaker emphasized the UK's role as a key partner in advocating for the Cayman Islands and the other Overseas Territories at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) that takes place every two years and does not include the Overseas Territories.

"I reminded the CPA Secretary General, Mr. Stephen Twigg, and the Hon. Speaker Hoyle, that the Overseas Territories deserve a seat at the CHOGM meeting," he said. "The House of Commons' Speaker has notoriously championed the Overseas Territories and the CPA, and I am confident he will be a strong campaigner for us and our other regional brothers and sisters."

In a communique shared afterwards, the Speakers and Presiding Officers reaffirmed the central role played by parliaments in democratic life in the countries and territories of the Commonwealth, and thanked the CPA for its role in deepening the Commonwealth's "commitment to the highest standards of democratic governance, parliamentary practice," and "fundamental values across our law-making legislative bodies."

"We reiterate our support and commitment," the communique concluded, "to the unique and modern partnership of the Commonwealth and our roles within it."

END OF MEDIA RELEASE

The modern Commonwealth was born in 1949 at a Commonwealth Prime Ministers meeting, where it was declared that countries independent of the United Kingdom could join the global commonwealth of nations. Visit thecommonwealth.org.

The Cayman Islands Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is administered by an Executive Committee and works closely with other branches across the Commonwealth and the Overseas Territories, providing Members of Parliament and Parliament staff with a rich tapestry of resources and networks to develop their skills and understanding of issues impacting our region and Parliamentary legislatures as a whole. Information can be found on the Parliament's website: <https://parliament.ky/commonwealth-parliamentary-association/>

Image:

- "Speakers McLaughlin and Hoyle.JPG"
 - The Speaker, Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin, left, with the Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP, Speaker of the UK's House of Commons.
- "CPA_Speakers_meeting_DSC_0220_v1.JPG":
 - The Speaker, Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin, second from left, at the Commonwealth Speakers Summit 2024 with Speakers and Presiding Officers from across the Commonwealth.
 - For the full list of attendees, visit: https://www.cpahq.org/news/2024_03-cpa-speakers-meeting/
- "Speaker McLaughlin – Speakers Chamber.JPG"
 - The Speaker, Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin, sits at his desk in the Speaker's Chamber at the House of Parliament.

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