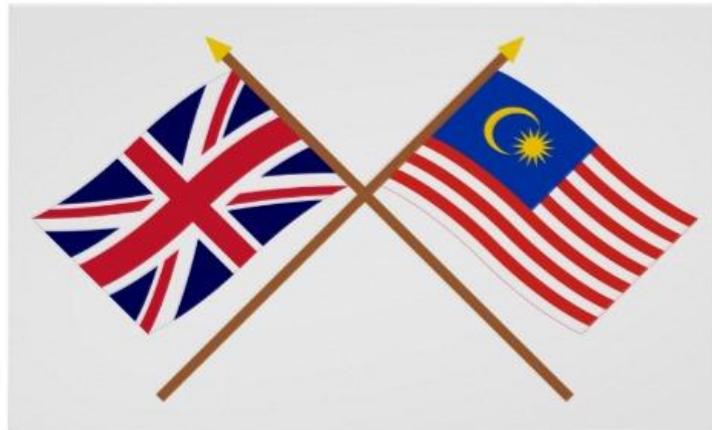


VISITING DELEGATION FROM THE WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS OF MALAYSIA

14-16 SEPTEMBER 2015, HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT



REPORT



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.01. CPA UK has an ongoing relationship with the Malaysian Parliament, however this programme represented the first engagement with the Women's Parliamentary Caucus from the Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives). Working in consultation with the British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, CPA UK's programme provided participants with a broad introduction to the Westminster System. In addition, the programme allowed for Members from Malaysia and the United Kingdom to discuss issues of mutual interest, including; women's representation in politics and the interaction between parliamentarians and civil society.

1.02. This programme ties in with CPA UK's International Outreach Team's strategy to engage and support women's participation in politics through work with Women's Parliamentary Caucuses in the Asia Pacific Region.

2. DELEGATION

Delegation Leader: Hon. Dato' Sri Azalina Othman Said MP (BN - UMNO), *Minister in the Prime Minister's Department*

Delegation: Hon. Fuziah Salleh MP (*People's Justice Party*)
Hon. Teresa Kok Suh Sim MP (*Democratic Action Party*)
Hon. Datuk Mas Ermeyati binti Samsudin MP (BN - UMNO), *Deputy Minister for Tourism and Culture*
Mr. Mohamed Khairul Azman Abdul Azeez, *Youth MP*
Mr. Asyraf Adlan, *Youth MP*

Officials: Ms. Nashua Fauzun, *Principal Private Secretary to Hon. Dato' Sri Azalina*



Ms. Saraleana Nattaya Azmi, *Private Secretary to Hon. Dato' Sri Azalina*
Mr. Danesh Chandran, *Special Functions Officer to Hon. Dato' Sri Azalina*
Mr. Ahmad Hezry bin Hashim, *Special Officer to Hon. Dato' Sri Azalina*
Ms. Natassia binti Md Roslan, *Officer to Hon. Datuk Mas Ermieyati*

3. AIM & OBJECTIVES

3.01. **Aim:** To introduce Members of the Malaysian Women's Parliamentary Caucus to the UK Parliamentary System and explore issues of mutual interest, including women's participation in public life.

3.02. **Objectives:** Through meetings, discussions and briefings with their parliamentary colleagues in the UK the delegation will:

Objective 1. Explore the workings of the Westminster System, including:

- The Legislative Process
- Parliamentary Questions and Debates
- The Committee System
- Scrutinising legislation
- The Role of the Opposition
- Prime Minister's Questions

Objective 2. Understand the role of an MP, including:

- Representing constituents
- Backbench Business

Objective 3. Explore how parliamentarians work in partnership with:

- Civil Society
- The Media

Objective 4. Discuss gender and politics, including:

- The creation of the Women and Equalities Select Committee
- Increasing women's representation
- Support for women in parliament
- Women's contribution to the political process

The delegation will also:

View proceedings in the House of Commons and House of Lords

Shadow a UK parliamentarian



4. PROGRAMME COMMENTS

4.01. Business in the House of Commons

4.01.1. Dr Thérèse Coffey MP, Deputy Leader of the House of Commons, provided a thorough overview of how the Government schedules business in the House of Commons. Members discussed the similarity between the UK and Malaysian parliamentary systems. In both Parliaments, Bills can be introduced in either the Lower or Upper Houses. Dr Coffey emphasised the importance of working with both Government and Opposition Whips to ensure the House runs smoothly. The delegation acknowledged that the Malaysian Parliament does not always work as closely across party lines, but is working to improve this. In response, Dr Coffey noted that the Commons can still be extremely partisan despite the tradition of working together across parties.

4.01.2. Ian Mearns MP also provided a perspective on the scheduling of Business in the House; Mr Mearns is Chair of the Backbench Business Committee in the House of Commons. Mr Mearns explained that his Committee is given 35 days of parliamentary time to allocate to backbench debate each year. He emphasised that the Committee looks for topics that are pertinent, provide a lively debate and have a motion that can be voted on. The delegation enquired how Members submit bids to the Committee and if Members work with other parties. Mr Mearns highlighted the importance of cross-party support for a bid as this indicates that the subject has broad interest and is non-partisan.

4.01.3. The delegation was also interested in how these recent reforms to the House of Commons has affected business in the House. Dr Coffey felt that the reforms have made the House more topical and created more work for Ministers. Mr Mearns broadly agreed and added that it created more opportunities for Members to raise issues of concern for their constituents.

4.02. The Committee System

4.02.1. The delegation had a thorough discussion with the Clerk of the Justice Committee, Nick Walker. Both Hon. Fuziah Salleh MP and Hon. Teresa Kok Suh Sim MP questioned the process for selecting topics for inquiry. Malaysia and the UK both outsource projects to the private sector; Teresa Kok MP asked whether UK Select Committees have the capacity to scrutinise the outsourced spending. Mr Walker confirmed that committees can look into government contracts held by private companies, but no other parts of their business. Also in response to questions, Mr Walker confirmed that Committees do not have to notify the House formally on their chosen inquiries.

4.02.2. Fuziah Salleh MP queried what type of issues any given committee will investigate, for instance, if they have to be national issues. Select Committees are not limited in their choice of inquiry but they will not investigate individual cases, which is the remit of constituency MPs or statutory bodies.



4.02.3. Discussion also focused on the Membership of Committees: how Chairs and Members are chosen, when Committees sit and the Committee of Selection. Nick Walker explained the reforms in the previous parliament that saw the introduction of elections for Committee Chairs. The remaining Members on each Committee are allocated proportionally to each party. Malaysia retains a Committee of Selection that appoints the other Committees. While the UK used to have the same system, now that Chairs and Members are elected the Committee of Selection no longer appoints people to Select Committees.

4.02.4. The delegation were also interested in the differences between the format of committee hearings in Malaysia and the UK as well as rules on media engagement. In the UK, Members are advised not to use social media during a hearing but are free to comment in public after the session has finished. Committees do meet in private for small amounts of time but hearings are public to improve transparency. In Malaysia the Standing Orders state that inquiries must be held in private. There has been debate in Malaysia over whether Public Accounts Committee Members should be allowed to discuss sessions and inquiries in public.

4.02.5. Questions were also asked about the power of Select Committees to summon witnesses. Mr Walker outlined that Committees have the formal power to summon people, papers and records. However, it is rare to require a formal summons as witnesses will usually respond to an invitation from the Committee. Two-thousand people gave evidence to Committees in the last UK Parliament and only two were summoned.

4.03. The work of an MP

4.03.1. The balance between work in Westminster and constituencies was addressed in the session with Helen Jones MP. Ms Jones acknowledged that MPs are expected to be very active in their constituency and email has increased the workload, especially from online campaigning organisations. Discussion followed on the resources MPs are given to perform their duties in the constituency. Ms Jones splits staff between the constituency and Westminster but warned that it is easy to be drawn into constituency work and almost assume the role of social worker. Ms Jones made a rule not to accept engagements on Sundays.

4.03.2. Hon. Teresa Kok Suh Sim MP asked Ms Jones about the induction programme given to MPs in the UK. New Members in Malaysia do not receive a formal induction to parliament. Ms Jones explained how new Members' induction has improved and is organised by both the House authorities and partly by existing MPs.

4.03.3. The delegation was interested in the relationship between UK Members and the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA), which is responsible for Members' expenses. Helen Jones MP acknowledged that MPs were not always happy with the relationship with IPSA, where claiming expenses can be a difficult and bureaucratic process. Members in Malaysia do not receive funds to run their offices and enquired how Members in the UK retain experienced staff given the strict pay bands for MPs staff. MPs



in the UK have some flexibility over who they hire but pay grades are fixed so it is difficult to reward proficient and experienced staff.

4.04. Women in Politics

4.04.1. The delegation met with the Chair of the Women in Parliament All-Party Parliamentary Group, Mims Davies MP, to discuss in detail the difficulties facing women candidates and parliamentarians. Tasmina-Ahmed Sheikh OBE MP and Baroness Jenkin of Kennington also joined this session and contributed with their experiences.

4.04.2. The Conservative Party and the Scottish National Party adopted differing approaches to promoting women candidates and parliamentarians. Mims Davies MP outlined that the Conservatives did not adopt quotas or all-women shortlists and focused on support and training for candidates. While the Scottish National Party also provide training to candidates, they have adopted other tactics to improve the proportion of women elected. This includes all-women shortlists in constituencies where women MSPs are retiring in order to maintain the number of women Members.

4.04.3. The delegation continued their conversation on this topic with the Chair of the Women and Equalities Select Committee, Rt Hon. Maria Miller MP. The Committee was created at the beginning of the current Parliament and the delegation were keen to understand how the Committee was formed. The Women and Equalities Committee was included in the Standing Orders of the House of Commons from June 2015 following a recommendation in a report from the Women in Parliament All-Party Parliamentary Group. While all Committees are organs of Parliament the resolution was technically put to the House by the Leader of the House, a Government Minister. The Committee has broad cross-party support.

4.04.4. The delegation also raised the important issue of engagement from male Members with the Committee and gender equality in general. There is one male Member on the Committee and Maria Miller MP acknowledged how important it is to involve more men in its work and the broader issues.

4.04.5. Hon. Teresa Kok Suh Sim MP explained that Malaysia is struggling to get women involved in politics and less than 11% of MPs are female. Teresa Kok MP also explained that Malaysia and the United Kingdom share the first-past-the-post electoral system that can restrict opportunities for women, especially compared to proportional representation systems. Furthermore, other delegates highlighted the difficulties in women candidates putting themselves forward for selection. Maria Miller MP agreed that there are difficulties in increasing the number of female candidates but women have been disproportionately successful in elections.

4.04.6. Conversation also covered the remit of the Committee and its work plan for the current Parliament. The Committee's first inquiry is on transgender rights and will cover a broad range of topics throughout the



Parliament. This will include scrutiny of the Government Equalities Office as well as cross-departmental inquiries. Ms Miller asked what scope there was for having a similar Committee in Malaysia. The delegation all agreed that this visit will help inform proposals for more Select Committees in Malaysia, including for cross-cutting issues such as gender.

4.04.7. The Women and Equalities Committee will conduct post-legislative scrutiny of the UK Equalities Act (2010) to evaluate its impact. Ms Miller enquired if Malaysia has similar legislation guaranteeing equality. The Malaysian Constitution contains a line that entitles equality before the law to all persons but there is no separate legislation. Hon. Teresa Kok Suh Sim MP explained that the Malaysian Government has a target of 30% women's representation in decision-making bodies. While there are many women in the civil service and judiciary there are very few in elected roles.

4.05. Engaging with Civil Society

4.05.1. The delegation explored, with Martin Docherty MP, Baroness Barker and Anne Quesney from ActionAid UK, how parliamentarians in the UK have worked with non-governmental organisations and civil society. The issue of forced marriage is an example of successful cooperation between parliamentarians and civil society. Hon. Dato' Sri Azalina Othman Said MP was interested to learn how campaigners managed to achieve majority support to pass Forced Marriage legislation, especially considering the challenges concerning race and religion that surround such issues.

4.05.2. Both Baroness Barker and Ms Quesney emphasised the importance of civil society organisations as they work with local communities, have the experience of the issues and can collect data that will support campaigns. Their insights can inform and support parliamentarians, as it did in the campaign for Forced Marriage legislation.

5. PROGRAMME

MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER		
10.15	Arrive Houses of Parliament, Portcullis House Entrance. Met by Robert Harper and Helen Gardner	
10.30	Welcome and Programme Briefing Helen Haywood, Deputy Chief Executive, CPA UK Hatty Cooper, Head of International Outreach, CPA UK Robert Harper, Asia Pacific Regional Programme Manager, CPA UK	CPA Room
10.55	Tour of the Houses of Parliament	
12.15	Parliamentary Questions and Debates Libby Kurien, Table Office Clerk	CPA Room



13.00	<i>Lunch</i>		CPA Room
14.15	Role of the Opposition Graham Stringer MP (Lab), <i>MP for Blackley and Broughton</i>		CPA Room
15.00	Scrutinising Legislation David Lloyd, <i>Head of the Scrutiny Unit</i>		CPA Room
15.50	<i>Break</i>		
16.15	Roundtable on Women's Participation in Public Life <i>Chaired by:</i> Mims Davies MP (Con), <i>Chair of the Women in Parliament APPG</i> <i>With:</i> Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh OBE MP (SNP), Baroness Jenkin of Kennington (Con)		CPA Room
17.30	<i>End of day</i>		
TUESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER			
08.45	<i>Arrive Houses of Parliament, Portcullis House Entrance</i>		
09.00	Briefing on Shadowing an MP		CPA Room
09.15	Shadowing an MP Michelle Donelan MP (Con) Valerie Vaz MP (Lab) Andrew Percy MP (Con) Diana Johnson MP (Lab)		
11.15	<i>Break</i>		CPA Room
12.00	The Committee System Nick Walker, <i>Clerk of the Justice Select Committee</i>	Parliamentary Outreach and Engagement David Clark, <i>Head of Outreach and Engagement, Public Information Directorate, House of Commons</i>	CPA Room / W2
13.00	Lunch with Malaysia All Party Parliamentary Group <i>With:</i> Sir William Cash MP (Con), <i>Chair of the Malaysia APPG</i> , Baroness Uddin (non-affiliated), Rt Hon. Ann Clwyd MP (Lab)		CPA Room
14.10	Business in the House Dr Thérèse Coffey MP (Con), <i>Deputy Leader of the House of Commons</i> Ian Mearns MP (Lab), <i>Chair of the Backbench Business Committee</i>		CPA Room
15.00	Role of an MP Helen Jones MP (Lab), <i>MP for Warrington North</i>		CPA Room
16.00	<i>Break</i>		



16.15	Women and Equalities Select Committee Rt Hon. Maria Miller MP (Con), <i>Chair of the Women and Equalities Select Committee</i>	Room P, Portcullis House
17.00	End of day	
18.00	International Day of Democracy Reception	CPA Room
WEDNESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER		
09.00	Government Equalities Office Helene Reardon Bond, <i>Deputy Director, Government Equalities Office</i> Flick Drummond MP (Con) <i>Member, Women and Equalities Select Committee</i> (from 0930)	CPA Room
10.00	View a Committee Inquiry Work and Pensions Committee <i>Subject:</i> Pensions freedom guidance and advice <i>Witness(es):</i> David Geale, Director of Policy, Financial Conduct Authority Chris Woolard, Director of Policy, Risk and Research, Financial Conduct Authority Harriet Baldwin MP, Economic Secretary to the Treasury Gwyneth Nurse, Director Financial Services, HM Treasury	The Wilson Room
	Education Committee <i>Subject:</i> The work of Ofsted <i>Witness(es):</i> Sir Michael Wilshaw, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills Matthew Coffey, Chief Operating Officer, Ofsted	The Thatcher Room
10.30	<i>Break</i>	
11.00	Briefing on Prime Minister's Questions Rt Hon. David Hanson MP (Lab), <i>Shadow Minister for Immigration</i> Joint session with parliamentary delegations from Montserrat and Guernsey	CPA Room
11.45	Observe Prime Minister's Questions Commonwealth Gallery, House of Commons	Commonwealth Gallery
12.45	Lunch Hosted by Eleanor Laing MP (Con), <i>First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means and Deputy Speaker</i>	Churchill Room
14.00	Engaging with Civil Society Martin Docherty MP (SNP), <i>Vice-Chair of the APPG on Civil Society and Volunteering</i> Baroness Barker (Liberal Democrat), <i>Liberal Democrat Principal Spokesperson for Voluntary Sector and Social Enterprise</i> Anne Quesney, <i>Women's Rights Advocacy Adviser, ActionAid UK</i>	CPA Room
15.00	End of programme	



6. MEDIA COVERAGE

6.01. CPA UK used Twitter extensively to promote the programme in real time https://twitter.com/CPA_UK/status/644076221735784448. These Tweets were supplemented by social media activity from the delegates, UK Members such as Tasmina Ahmed Sheikh OBE MP and HE Vicki Treadell, British High Commissioner to Malaysia.

7. OUTCOMES & FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

7.01. The programme achieved its objective to introduce the delegation to the Westminster System. The programme highlighted not only the mechanics of the UK's parliamentary system but also how individual Members represent their constituents and work with others, be it Members from other political parties or civil society organisations, to achieve their objectives.

7.02. The delegation also engaged their UK counterparts on thematic topics such as women's participation in politics and engaging with civil society. Discussions enabled Members from both countries to share experiences and best practice.

7.03. CPA UK's Asia Pacific Programme Manager, Robert Harper, met with Ann Snow, Deputy Head of the Political & Economic Team at the British High Commission (BHC) in Kuala Lumpur, to discuss the outcomes of the programme and follow-up activities.

7.04. Ann Snow subsequently met with the Office of Hon. Azalina Othman Said MP. The Minister's Office is currently developing proposals regarding the functioning of the Malaysian Parliament that will be informed by the information they garnered from this programme.

7.05. Ann Snow will continue to follow-up with the other Members of the delegation and with the Office of Hon. Azalina Othman Said MP regarding proposals they are developing following the delegation to Westminster.

7.06. CPA UK will continue its engagement with the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) of Malaysia by inviting the WPC to send a delegation to a parliamentary workshop for women parliamentarians in the Houses of Parliament from 14-17 December 2015.

7.07. The British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur plans to engage with the Malaysian Youth Parliament. CPA UK will liaise with the BHC to explore how CPA UK can support the BHC's work.



8. FUNDING BREAKDOWN

8.01. CPA UK funded lunch and refreshments as part of the programme. The Parliament of Malaysia covered all other costs.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

9.01. CPA UK would like to thank all the Members and Officials of the Houses of Parliament who met with the delegation and contributed to the insightful and engaging discussion that took place.

9.02. CPA UK would also like to thank the British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur who worked closely with the Women's Parliamentary Caucus in Malaysia to organise the delegation and will continue the close relationship with the WPC during the follow-up to this programme.

10. ABOUT CPA UK

10.01. CPA UK is one of the largest and most active branches in the CPA community and delivers a unique annual international outreach programme in Westminster and overseas. CPA UK works to encourage parliamentary diplomacy and build parliamentary capacity on behalf of the UK Parliament and the wider CPA. Through activities such as conferences, seminars, delegations and parliamentary strengthening teams, CPA UK provides Members with a practical, current and first-hand perspective on international issues facing fellow parliamentarians across the Commonwealth. Working with CPA UK's international outreach programmes also enhances Members' understanding of issues facing diaspora communities in their own constituencies.

