



**CPA Climate Change Workshop for Small
Branches**

10th - 13th October 2018

**Hon. Dr. Angelo Farrugia,
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
(CPA) Small Branches Chairperson**

Opening Remarks

Distinguished Representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme

Honourable Members of the CPA Small Branches Network

Mr Michael Sialai, Clerk of the Parliament of Kenya and CPA Kenya Branch Secretary

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning and a very warm welcome,

It is a great pleasure to join you in the beautiful city of Nairobi for this important CPA Small Branches Climate Change workshop in collaboration with UNEP. As Chairperson of the CPA Small Branches Network, it is always a privilege to meet fellow Members from small jurisdictions to discuss shared challenges and see this dynamic Network in action.

May I begin by thanking you, Honourable Members, for taking time out of your busy schedule to be here. Your presence in this room is testament to your commitment both to your role as a Parliamentarian, and to the values of the Commonwealth that we all share.

I cannot proceed, of course, without also thanking our esteemed and generous hosts, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). We are very fortunate and grateful to meet here at UNEP's headquarters. The support and input we have received from our UNEP colleagues has been instrumental to the development of the programme we have before us today.

This collaboration between our two prestigious organisations, the CPA and UNEP – both respected organisations in their respective fields - demonstrates our joint-commitment to global partnership working, and to the goal of assisting Parliaments and Governments to address the grave threat posed by Climate Change.

Honourable Members

The genesis for this workshop lies within our small branches Strategic plan. In August this year, the CPA was proud to launch the inaugural CPA Small Branches Strategic Plan 2018-20, and mitigating the impact of climate change on small jurisdictions is a key focus of this ambitious new vision. Building capacity to counter the threat of climate change forms a key strategic pillar of the Plan, and alongside our international partners such as UNEP, we shall be working with our small Parliaments to strengthen their resilience to the threat of climate change.

Honourable Members,

Climate change is considered the greatest existential threat facing our planet today. It is non-discriminating in its reach and impacts every nation in the world.

However, given that 31 of the 53 countries of the Commonwealth are deemed small states, which include many island states too, the impact of climate change is acutely felt within the Commonwealth group of nations. It is therefore imperative that the Commonwealth remains at the forefront of global leadership to address climate change.

Campaigns such as the Blue Charter are a great example of this fight. Launched following the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting held in London earlier this year, the Blue

Charter seeks to protect the health of the world's oceans and promote the growth of blue economies.

The Blue Charter serves as a platform of co-operation, connection and exchange to guide nations in sustainable ocean development.

Workshops such as this are a true example of the collaborative spirit of the Blue Charter in action.

This multi-faceted approach championed by Commonwealth member states provides a fresh and renewed method of combatting climate change tailored to Commonwealth countries.

As the heads of government of the world's largest countries gather to try to mitigate the earth's rise in temperature with intergovernmental agreements such as the Paris Climate Accords and the recent Commonwealth Blue Charter, it is often forgotten that the world's smallest nations who are the least polluters are often the first victims of climate change.

Climate change is already acutely impacting states many of our Commonwealth Small Island Developing States (SIDS). According to the United Nations Development Programme, despite contributing less than 1 per cent to the world's greenhouse gas emissions, SIDS are among the first to experience the worst impacts of climate change.

Climate change affects the development of all nations, regardless of location or size of economy. Yet, no other group of nations is more vulnerable to its devastating effects than the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), with one-third of the populations of these states residing on land that is less than five meters below sea level.

A stark example is the Island Nation of Tuvalu, with a highest point of 4.5 metres above sea level. Annual sea level rise beside Funfati, the capital, has been recorded at 0.8mm. The existential threat posed to Islands like Tuvalu is not a problem for the next generation. It is a problem for today. Its reality is tangible and severe. It is indeed a fundamental human rights issue that is increasingly gaining attention and importance.

I will take a minute to explain what the European Union is doing on climate change. As a Union, the Commission proposes a number of Climate Change proposals in collaboration with the Paris Agreement, creating the required conditions to continue work in the framework of the reducing CO2 emissions within a stipulated timeframe, was adopted. The EU has pledged that it "*will work together and take joint actions*" to contribute towards the objectives of the Paris Agreement and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In March of this year, the European Council asked for a long-term strategy for reducing emissions and a consultation was launched in July. The EU is also working closely with other countries such as Canada and the US. "According to our preliminary analysis, this raising of ambition would enable the EU to reduce its emissions by at least 45% by 2030", Anna-Kaisa Itkonen - Spokesperson for climate action and energy stated. An Environment Council which should convene in October shall discuss these issues on an EU-wide level, with a view to the COP24 scheduled to be held in Katowice in December. Similarly, one should take the example of the EU, of which Malta is a member, to work jointly, as having a structure of principles and goals makes achievements more reachable as a group rather than to each his own. The CPA should take the opportunity to learn from the initiatives organised by the EU so that we can achieve tangible results as an Association and work together with the Commonwealth as a whole.

This Workshop presents an invaluable opportunity to understand our role in this fight and enhance our capacity to do our duty as Parliamentarians.

Honourable Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am confident that the next few days will generate fresh ideas and fresh perspectives on this issue and stimulate healthy and lively debate between us all.

Most importantly however, I hope that this workshop fosters the spirit of solidarity and a mutuality of learning that is the heartbeat of the Commonwealth, the CPA and the CPA Small Branches Network.

I thank you once again for being here, and in advance for your participation and contributions. I hope that you all enjoy all this workshop has to offer.
Thank you.
