



National Assembly of Belize

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PRESS RELEASE

Speaker Valerie Woods is the Newly Elected CPA Small Branches

Chairperson

--Wednesday, 6th November 2024 – The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Small Branches network has elected the Honourable Valerie Woods, Speaker of the House of Representatives, as its new Chairperson during the 40th CPA Small Branches Conference, held as part of the 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, in Sydney, Australia. The elections took place on the 4th November 2024.

In her acceptance speech, Chairperson Woods emphasized the critical importance of small legislatures within the Commonwealth coming together to share experiences and address common challenges. "Together, we can strengthen our voices and advocate effectively for the unique needs of our parliaments," said Chairperson Woods. "I am honored to have your trust, and I pledge to work diligently to enhance our collective efforts."

As Chairperson, Speaker Woods will serve on the CPA International Executive Committee, bringing vital representation for Small Branches to the governing body of the Association. Her election marks a renewed commitment by the CPA to focus on assisting small parliaments in their development and cooperation efforts.

In addition to her parliamentary responsibilities, Speaker Woods has served on the Steering Committee for the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), representing the Caribbean, Americas, and Atlantic Region. She has been actively involved in the CPA's Administrative Review of the National Assembly of Belize and is pursuing professional development studies in parliamentary service through the CPA Parliamentary Academy.

The outgoing Chairperson, Joy Burch, MLA, Speaker of the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly, expressed her support for Speaker Woods, noting, "Her leadership will undoubtedly empower our Small Branches to overcome shared challenges and enhance parliamentary effectiveness."

The election for the CPA Small Branches Chairperson was held under CPA election rules at the 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, with delegates from Small Branches participating in the vote. The other candidates included Deputy Adrian Gabriel (Guernsey) and Hon. Shane Thompson, MLA, Speaker of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly.

The CPA represents nearly 180 branches, with 49 classified as Small Branches. These branches are the parliaments of the Commonwealth whose country populations are less than 1 million people. The CPA Headquarters Secretariat is committed to addressing the unique needs of these branches to promote parliamentary strengthening and development.

For more information about the CPA and the 40th CPA Small Branches Conference, please visit [Event Hub - 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference](#).

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