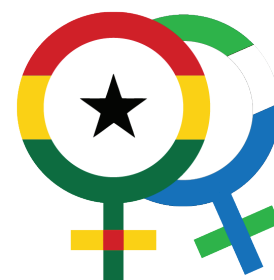




SUMMARY REPORT

CPA UK CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM GHANA & SIERRA LEONE



OVERVIEW

Capacity Building Programme for Women Parliamentarians from Ghana and Sierra Leone

MANAGING TEAM

Kirsty Jackson, CPA UK
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TIME-FRAME

Stage 1 & 2 - Apr 13-Mar 14
Stage 3 - Mar 14-Aug 14
Stage 4 - Mar 15 (tbc)

QUICK FACTS - GHANA

Out of **275** MPs only **30** are women. This accounts for **10.9%**. This is an increase from **19** MPs at the previous election

The most senior parliamentary positions held by women are the Deputy Chief Whip and the Shadow Deputy Chief Whip

There are **7** women who hold senior positions in the political and official aspects of Parliament

There are **8** women in Government positions

Parliament has a Committee on Gender and Children. It has a membership of **24** MPs, **10** of which are women

1. BACKGROUND

Between 2000 and 2013, progress in women's representation in national parliaments showed improvement. Some highlights were in Northern Africa (from 3% to 18%) and Western Asia and Southern Asia (from 4% to 12% and from 7% to 19%, respectively). However, globally women continue to be underrepresented in decision-making.¹ Ghana and Sierra Leone in particular continue to fall behind their East African counterparts such as Rwanda, Tanzania and Mozambique in the level of women parliamentarians elected and appointed.

With women making up the majority of the 1.4 billion people living in extreme poverty, it is vital they are positioned and empowered to combat the poverty related challenges that permeate all levels of society, from the family unit to national leadership.

Studies have shown there is a clear correlation between empowered female political leaders and countries experiencing improved levels of living-standards, education, infrastructure, healthcare and peace.² As such, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK (CPA UK) continues to engage proactively in building the capacity of women parliamentarians in and around the Commonwealth to ensure that women play a key role in good governance and democratic participation.

2. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

CPA UK's current engagement in women parliamentary capacity building for Ghana and Sierra Leone has consisted and will consist of the following:

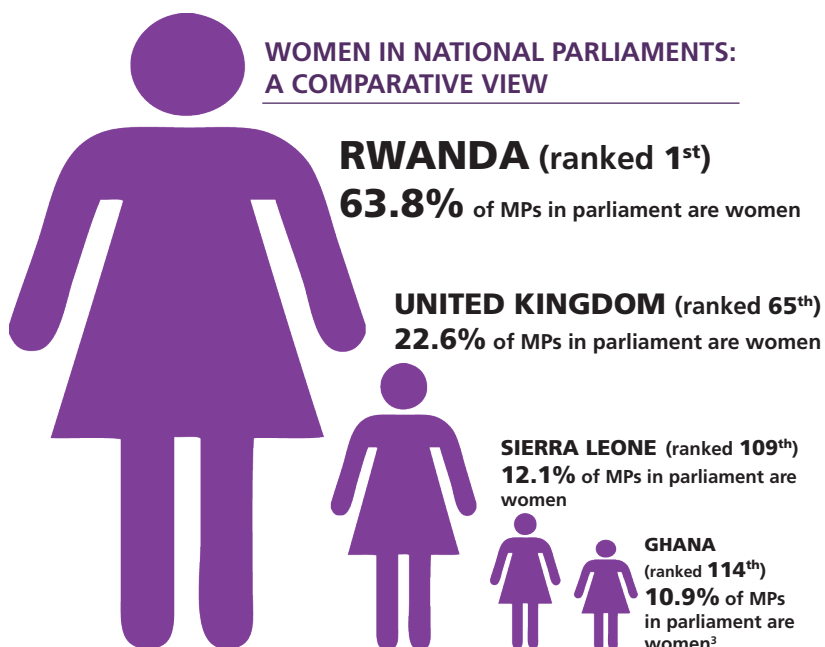
Stage 1. Eighteen women parliamentarians from Ghana (eight), Sierra Leone (eight) and Zambia (two) participated in a CPA UK capacity building programme. The programme took place in the Houses of Parliament, Westminster from 15-19 April

2013. This four day programme introduced participants to the Westminster-System, provided communication training, networking and shadowing opportunities and gave participants the opportunity to discuss with their fellow delegates numerous gender related issues impacting on their respective countries.

Stage 2. From 21 – 22 March 2014 CPA UK, supported by the British High Commission, Accra and UNDP Sierra Leone ran a follow-up capacity building programme for women parliamentarians for Ghana and Sierra Leone. The purpose of this programme was to focus-in on the Ghana and Sierra Leone Women's Parliamentary Caucus and to explore ways to strengthen and develop the Caucus over the coming year. Three parliamentarians from the United Kingdom went to Accra to act as speakers and session facilitators. They were Dame Angela Watkinson MP, Sarah Teather MP and Alison McGovern MP. The Members were supported by a training consultant, Kate Faragher and a CPA UK member of staff.

Stage 3. CPA UK will coordinate a remote add-on programme over a six month period embedding training techniques with the purpose of empowering individual women parliamentarians to be more effective role-models, public speakers, and more influential in the political arena. This will culminate in a final assessment in August 2014.

WOMEN IN NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS: A COMPARATIVE VIEW



THESE PROGRAMMES
WERE SUPPORTED BY THE
FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:



Empowered live.
Resilient nation:



Parliament of Ghana



Parliament of Sierra Leone



3. OVERALL PROGRAMME AIM & OBJECTIVES

To enhance the professional development of women parliamentarians from Ghana and Sierra Leone

Explore how women's participation in politics may be developed by:

1. Increasing public recognition of, and buy-in for an increase in the number of elected women parliamentarians.
2. Political parties supporting and implementing direct action in the selection of women prospective parliamentary candidates (PPC).

religious and traditional values. Women are perceived as having a lower status in the community. Current gender parity indices indicate that the proportion of women attending primary and secondary education is continuing to drop.⁴ This is due to a number of factors, for example the number of early pregnancies which force young girls out of education.⁵

Limited access to education and cultural barriers limit the number of women in employment, especially in non-agricultural based employment.⁶ Studies have shown that fewer women as economic actors has a knock-on effect in promoting women's involvement in politics.⁷



Women parliamentarians participating in the Chamber Debate at the Houses of Parliament, London. April 2013

3. Providing formal training and development programmes – with special focus on public speaking skills and media awareness, mentoring and financial assistance for PPC.

MDG 5 - Improve Maternal Health, continues to be a major challenge. This is in part due to poor sanitation especially in the rural northern region of Ghana, the scarcity of midwives and prevalence of pregnancy complications such as postpartum haemorrhage.⁸

Enhance the work and effectiveness of woman parliamentarians within and without Parliament by:

1. Building an effective women's parliamentary caucus
2. Providing development programmes to empower women parliamentarians and to enhance their understanding of the roles of an MP.

Furthermore, violence against women is a prevailing issue of concern in Ghana and Sierra Leone especially domestic violence which remains a persistent problem. Such violence traverses all levels of social class and across urban and rural communities. Female Genital Cutting is also a concern especially in Sierra Leone due to religious and cultural factors.⁸

Enhance the understanding and knowledge of women parliamentarians on poverty reduction issues of particular concern for women including:

1. Violence against women and girls
2. Pre and post-maternal health matters, including female genital cutting
3. Political and economic empowerment of women – barriers and enabling factors.

Forced child marriage also has an impact on women. Ghana has one of the highest child marriage rates in the world. One out of four girls are married before their eighteenth birthday. Such marriages will also impact upon high maternal death rates.⁹

The rights of spouses and female partners is also an important issue for women, especially in Ghana at present. The Spousal Property Bill has resulted in political divisions due to its protection of property rights of female non-married cohabitantes.

4. PROGRAMME SUMMARY

At the initial stage of each programme, participants offered an insight into current political, economic and cultural challenges facing women and young girls in their respective countries.

Setting the Scene

Both Ghana and Sierra Leone are considered as highly patriarchal societies in social, cultural,

Issues of Particular Concern for Women Parliamentarians

Whilst examining the current situation for women parliamentarians in Ghana and Sierra Leone the most significant challenge identified by the programme participants was the manner in which they are treated by the public, media and male parliamentarians. Women parliamentarians in these

“...Women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women...”¹⁰

“...States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

(a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;

(b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;

(c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country...”¹¹

countries face a significant amount of abuse both verbal and in some cases physical. A number of cases were given of constituents attacking women candidates and parliamentarians. Frequently in the media, women parliamentarians and ministers are portrayed as “prostitutes”. Encouraging a perception that they could only reach their political positions through sexual favours. Such attitudes undermine the integrity of women parliamentarians. In addition, women parliamentarians are reluctant to utilise formal and informal media channels to promote themselves and communicate with their constituents and party-base through fear of inciting additional harassment.

Male parliamentarians are also accused of insulting their female counterparts, and in some instances through sexual harassment, such as commenting on their dress. Official language in the parliamentary chamber can compound negative attitudes, such as the use of “Sister” instead of “Honourable Member” or “Honourable Friend”. The parliamentary setting is in general a difficult place for women parliamentarians. Although there is support for the Women’s Caucus in the Parliament of Ghana in the form of financial and staffing assistance, there are still barriers to decision-making. One example given was the struggle for a women parliamentarian to simply second a motion on the floor of the Chamber, a practice which is common in most parliaments.



Women parliamentarians also face financial pressures. In Ghana and Sierra Leone, parliamentarians are expected to provide for their constituents needs, this can take the form of funding for funerals, travel expenses, healthcare. Although such pressures exist for male parliamentarians, women or “Social Mothers” are often seen as more approachable than men, thus more pressure is placed on them by their constituents.

Additionally, by financially supporting their constituents often with personal resources, there is less money for the family. Like their male colleagues, women parliamentarians will be expected to support family members as well. Although women parliamentarians may be viewed as having a higher status than an average women in the community, they will still be expected to

take a traditional woman’s role in the household. As such, women parliamentarians will have to balance childcare and domestic chores with their parliamentary responsibilities. Resulting in considerable work-life challenges.

Effective Political Leadership

In group discussions with the women parliamentarians, a number of attributes were identified which characterised effective political leadership. The clearest skill highlighted was the ability to lobby and influence. Many within the group felt this skill stood out amongst others in part due to the ongoing struggle for women parliamentarians to participate in decision-making such as influencing legislation and government policy. Alongside influencing, assertiveness was also considered as an attribute of effective leadership. Making their voices heard over boisterous and aggressive male counterparts was an issue which presented itself frequently in the parliament chamber.

Other examples mentioned were the importance of collaboration and being a team player. One participant gave the example where she fought an election against a female opponent and despite the numerous opportunities chose not to make personal attacks. This ethos was in part a proactive attempt to mitigate negative public opinion regarding women candidates. Other participants emphasised the importance of working with

male parliamentarians to forward their aims. By encouraging male parliamentarians to promote a gender related cause, greater traction could be made and a number of amendments to legislation had been achieved using this strategy. With a small number of women parliamentarians, collaboration can extend the strength of the Caucus in achieving its aims.

The group also agreed that being bold, courageous, creative, proactive, trustworthy and innovative can lead to being a good role model. Innovation in particular was an essential approach. A number of participants used examples of approaches taken at the constituency level like sourcing micro-financing to support small businesses in the community.

STAGE 1: PROGRAMME SUMMARY

1. Welcome to Westminster
2. Setting the Context
3. Overview of Westminster
4. Committee System
5. Taking Parliament to the People
6. APPG Women in Parliament
7. Shadowing with UK women parliamentarians
8. Communication Workshop
9. Forum with the Deputy Speaker
10. Panel Session - UK Political Parties and the Representation of Women
11. Strategies for Increasing the Participation of Women
12. Gender Mainstreaming and Budgeting
13. Public-Speaking Training
14. Mock Debate & Feedback
15. Forum with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
16. Roundtable on Faith, Poverty Reduction and Peacebuilding
17. Meeting with the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party
18. Violence Against Women and Girls
19. Roundtable Discussion on the Post-2015 MDGs
20. Economic Empowerment: Social Protection as an Empowerment Tool for Women
21. Importance of Women Parliamentarians - A View from the Media
22. Regional Support/Mentoring
23. Feedback

“Be inspired to have an impact”

Hon. Gifty Eugenia Kusi MP,
Ghanaian Parliamentarian

“Be assertive not aggressive”

Hon. Esther Obeng Dappah MP,
Ghanaian Parliamentarian

Strategies for Increasing the Participation of Women in Politics

Participants in the programme indicated a clear desire, and more importantly a need for some form of quota system to be introduced within the Ghanaian and Sierra Leonean Parliament. Whether it be instituted at a party political or constitutional level. In 2013, quotas were employed in 39 legislative chambers across the globe. Where quotas were legislated, women took an average of 25% of seats. In legislative chambers where it was voluntarily used by political parties, there was an average of 28% of seats.¹² Although there is some disagreement over the effectiveness of quotas, they are considered as a practical first step. The Affirmative Action Bill, being led by the Gender Ministry in Ghana, is an agenda the Caucus wish to support. Quotas are not a new phenomenon in Ghana. In 1960 and 1965 ten women were allocated seats in the National Assembly by the governing party. In Sierra Leone however, the attempt to introduce legislation guaranteeing seats fell-through in 2013. Nevertheless there is still a desire to pursue a 30% parliamentary quota system. Either approach however will need the support of male parliamentarians if it is to ensure success. This may be too big a burden to overcome in the coming years as those male parliamentarians risk losing their seats if there is no expansion in overall seats available.

5. FEEDBACK, ACTION PLAN AND OUTCOMES

As an outcome of the programmes undertaken, a number of recommendations were identified by participants as a road-map to strengthen the capacity of the Ghanaian and Sierra Leonean Women Parliamentary Caucuses.

**Although some of these approaches are already undertaken, they are included as a template for other caucuses who wish to utilise this report.*

Next Steps - Strengthening the Caucus

- **Regular meetings of the Caucus** - Although both Caucuses meet, these meetings should be frequent and at regular intervals to ensure continuity and momentum in the pursuit of its aims and objectives. Weekly or fortnightly meetings are advised.
- **Good attendance** - Although parliamentarians have numerous obligations and time commitments. Attendance is important to ensure good communication and inclusivity. A quorum should be ensured for each meeting.
- **Structured meetings** - Every meeting could be chaired, minuted and follow a clear and simple agenda. Papers should be disseminated in a timely fashion. This will ensure all members of the Caucus are kept informed of decisions and outcomes. It will also ensure the workings of the Caucus are open and transparent (important if utilising public funding).
- **Measuring success and failure** - Each Caucus should have a clear set of aims and objectives which may be linked to parliamentary business, government policy, issues of national importance or for the advancement of the Caucus and its members. A Business/Strategic Plan could be produced to measure its success and failures, but also to keep the Caucus focused and motivated.
- **Creation of sub-committees** - As seen in this report, there are many issues that the Caucus may wish to tackle. By splitting the Caucus into subject specialist sub-committees attended by interested parliamentarians, less pressure is placed on the Caucus as a whole and more focused work can be achieved. These same sub-committees can form part of wider bipartisan parliamentary groups, like All Party Parliamentary Groups in the UK, or Friendship Groups which can include male parliamentarians. Such subject groups which may be non-female focused may widen the circle of influence of the Caucus and its members' aims. These groups could cover topics such as family planning, sickle-cell, sanitation or domestic violence.
- **Open discourse** - The Caucus could encourage an open and non-party political approach. Members could share ideas and experiences to learn from one another. For example a successful approach taken in one constituency may have value if replicated in another. Time could be allocated at each meeting to give updates on work undertaken.
- **Caucus collective responsibility** - Both Caucuses could take a cabinet collective responsibility approach to their work. Should the Caucus wish to pursue an agenda, if there are disagreements in meetings which determine that agenda, these disagreements should not be publically vocalised once a majority agreement is reached. This will ensure a united and coordinated approach “a One Voice” which will carry more weight than divisive opinions. Block voting on issues is a strategy employed by many caucuses around the world.
- **Access to information** - Both Caucuses should ensure that they have access to adequate information. They could work closely with experts, NGOs, CSOs, ministries and parliamentary sources to obtain a wide variety of information to pursue its aims. Information is key to ensure they are in a position to question existing policies and propose realistic alternatives of its own.
- **Funding** - Both Caucuses could work to increase their funding sources beyond those received through parliamentary channels. Sources are available through grants from INGOs, the business community, benefactors, etc. Funding can increase the influence and output of the Caucus if spent in an appropriate way. It can also be available to support its parliamentarians. Many women caucuses pool

STAGE 2: PROGRAMME SUMMARY

1. Setting the Scene & Identifying Programme Objectives
2. Combined Session - Strategies for Increasing the Participation of Women in Politics, Issues of Particular Concern for Women & Effective Leadership
3. Influencing and Communicating
4. Strategies for Maintaining an Effective Women's Caucus
5. Feedback, Action Plan and Outcomes

"I will share with others the rich experiences gained"

Hon. Georgina Nkrumah Aboah MP,
Ghanaian Parliamentarian

"I recommend more of this kind of training for female parliamentarians"

Hon. Regina Tianga Marah MP,
Sierra Leonean Parliamentarian

"The seminar has helped hone my public speaking skills, built up my confidence and made me realise that I am making a difference. Thank you!"

Hon. Ursula G. Owusu MP,
Ghanaian Parliamentarian

"Look out for a women of substance, not women of circumstance"

Hon. Veronica Sesay MP,
Sierra Leonean Parliamentarian

their resources and use the funding they receive to undertake outreach work aimed at involving young girls in politics.

- **Training** - Members of the Caucus might consider training on regular basis in communication, leadership and other skills to enhance their abilities as parliamentarians.
- **Public presence** - Each Caucus could consider wider public engagement. It could host events to promote its activities, educate the community and to attract potential supporters. It could publish communiques, press releases, hold lectures and public debates on subjects like public health and job creation.

Next Steps - Increase engagement with key stakeholders:

- **Government Ministers** – By building a strong network, women parliamentarians can widen their influence and have input in decision-making. In some countries where there are barriers to entry, women parliamentarians offer assistance to government ministers. Often taking a formal role like a PPS (Parliamentary Private Secretary) or unofficial role as a parliamentary aid. Such positions can enable access to key meetings and decisions. It can also improve their presence as a "familiar face" and improve perceptions in the long-term. A political alliance with those in positions of power can also build support for the parliamentarian's own agenda, such as amending legislation or campaigning in elections. Ministers can also call upon the services of their ministries to provide information and resources to aid the Caucus and individual parliamentarians.
- **Parliamentary and party political leadership** - Although the Caucuses in Ghana and Sierra Leone are relatively well supported in funding and staffing, it is essential that there is continuous strong interaction with the Speakers and Presiding Officers as well as Leaders and Whips. Such engagement can work towards increasing access to and membership on committees as well as involvement in decision-making at an administrative level. For example working towards more family-friendly sitting hours or the provision of suitable facilities such as a nursery.
- **Male Parliamentarians** - What is key is that there is continuous engagement with male parliamentarians of all parties. Whilst women parliamentarians remain in the minority, working with their male counterparts is essential to ensure that women can have influence on any decisions being made whether it be on government policy or legislation. Support from male parliamentarians could be given in a private or public capacity, whichever will best achieve the aims of the Caucus.
- **Media** - Although small in number, women caucuses can still have a loud voice through the use of the media. There should be engagement with regional, national and international newspaper and broadcast media and proactive use of social media channels, the latter is a more cost effective approach which enables parliamentarians to have greater ownership of content. Ultimately either device can be utilised to campaign, publicise, promote and communicate with the public on a range of issues.
- **Constituents** - In the case of Ghana and Sierra Leone (whereby MPs are elected via First-Past-the-Post), constituencies give parliamentarians their authority. Therefore parliamentarian should engage and utilise their constituencies. This interaction should go beyond the election period. By communicating regularly, parliamentarians can educate and promote issues of importance across the constituency. This can take the form of frequent surgeries, door-to-door contact or hosting townhall meetings. In turn, the constituency can be an amplifier to advance local and national issues, for example a rural constituency will be engaged on issues related to agricultural subsidies or transport infrastructure. Constituents can be motivated to petition, hold rallies or participate in mass lobbies to challenge the executive. Women constituents in particular could be persuaded to support women parliamentarians and lobby on their behalf. Constituents can also offer support in other ways. Those who wish to gain political experience can offer staffing support to parliamentarians through internships and volunteering. There is also the possibility of gaining financial resources from those in the community via fundraising events.
- **Business leaders and industries** - Small or large business owners or executives are in an ideal position to provide women parliamentarians with financial backing. To illustrate, they could support campaigns on local or national economic issues. By engaging with business and industry leaders, parliamentarians can also work to build investment in their communities to boost the local economy.
- **Queen Mothers** - Engaging with these influential women can give additional support particularly on issues which specifically effect women such as domestic violence or female genital cutting. These authority figures can build a support-base beyond the constituency by working with women across regions and by influencing local chieftains.
- **INGOs, NGOs & CSOs** – Of all the stakeholders with which to work with, the most important and useful are international, national and local non-governmental organisations. These can provide rich and varied resources from training, funding and expertise, to lobbying and publicity. They can be utilised to lobby alongside and on behalf of women parliamentarians, especially targeting male

ABOUT CPA UK

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.

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parliamentarians to forward a cause or policy. They can also promote and publicise an issue to a substantial audience of members and stakeholders with an authority of knowledge and expertise.

- **Technical specialists/experts** - Women parliamentarians should seek out experts and advocates to provide independent research, statistics, policy proposals, draft legislation and advocacy. Academics, thinktanks and other organisations can add authority to campaigns.
- **Religious leaders** – These popular authority figures can communicate with a vast audience and are able to provide a non-party political approach to tackling important issues. Additionally, religious leaders whether they are Christian or Muslim can work towards removing religious barriers for women not only in politics but all walks of life.



UK Parliamentarians visiting the Kayaye Project in Jamestown, Accra. The programme which is run by Marie Stopes International is aimed at providing family planning and sexual health advice to the young porters in the market. www.mariestopes.org/where-in-the-world#ghana

- **National, regional and international women caucuses** - There are a vast number of women parliamentary networks which can share knowledge and experiences. National caucuses like KEWOPA and UWOPA as well as regional bodies like the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), IPU Women, ECOWAS and other international forums like CSW can be a source of assistance in training, funding and advice.
- **Women parliamentary candidates** - Many countries have political parties which focus on promoting potential women candidates. Caucuses can work in a similar vein by mentoring, training, campaigning and funding provision. Increasing the number of women parliamentarians should be a major goal of any caucus.
- **Children & young people** - The next generation of voters can be effective long-term supporters. Women parliamentarians should work to alter their perception at a young age. Women parliamentarians have an advantage over male colleagues as they can take on a maternal role when interacting with children. One parliamentarian gave an example of handing out branded footballs to

win popularity amongst young boys.

- **Family members** - This vital support mechanism can assist in providing emotional, practical and financial support to women parliamentarians.

Next Steps – Strengthening individual women parliamentarians – skills and resources

- **Take ownership of decisions** - Women parliamentarians will often be pressurised by male family members or colleagues to vote on a particular bill or take a certain stance on an issue. It was identified by participants on the programme that women parliamentarians should be strong and decisive, following their own way on important decisions they take.
- **Leadership skills** - As mentioned in this report, an important skill which should be

developed is leadership. Although women can be placed in positions of leadership, it is equally important to possess the necessary related skill-set, for example, assertiveness, decisiveness and strategic thinking.

- **Communication and presentation skills** – One of the more important skills identified by participants. In particular the need to tackle shyness, reluctance to speak in public, dealing with hecklers, controlling vocal tone, volume, speed and language, as well as eye contact and hand gestures. Also the skill to embed messages, formulating soundbites, connecting with the audience and even using humour to defuse situations and engage with an audience.
- **Collaboration and competitiveness** - There is a skill in balancing these two approaches. Knowing when to work with someone and when to challenge them. Building alliances and identifying opponents is a key step when gaining influence and having a decision-making role.
- **Subject specialism** - Parliamentarians who develop and expertise in a specific area are usually more influential in policy

CPA UK'S GENDER- FOCUSED WORK

CPA UK places strong emphasis on its gender focused programmes to enable Commonwealth parliamentarians to share experiences, challenges and best practice in seeking to empower women within both political sphere and society as a whole. CPA UK has run numerous bilateral gender-related programmes with many Commonwealth-based legislatures: **Kenya** in collaboration with KEWOPA, **Tanzania, Uganda** with UWOPA and **Zambia**. Since 2012, CPA UK has worked with **Pakistan and Afghanistan** on empowering women in politics and leadership which will culminate in a South Asian Women Parliamentary Seminar in July 2014 in London. In addition to these bilateral and trilateral programmes and seminars, CPA UK has run a number of international conferences, namely the **International Parliamentary Conference on Gender and Politics** in 2012 and its follow-on one-day conference in November 2013.

Since 2013, CPA UK has been at the forefront of strengthening the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians British Islands and Mediterranean Regional organisation within the CPA (CWP CPA BMIR); acting as its secretariat

CPA UK also works in partnership with the following organisations:

VSO UK
UN Women UK
Womankind Worldwide
Dress for Success
The Guardian Global
Equality Network

and decision-making. Often subject related NGOs and CSOs as well as ministries will target that parliamentarian for patronage. Without that parliamentarian's support, policies can potentially be undermined. With subject specialism also comes an element of authority and respect from colleagues. Subject specialism and expertise on a topic can also have the effect of enhancing the confidence of the speaker to argue in male orientated and intimidating forums like the parliamentary chamber or in committees. Women parliamentarians should also consider specialising in non-women related issues. Uniqueness can be achieved by those women who pursue a speciality in what is traditionally viewed as male orientated topics such as defence, security and the economy. All Women have an interest in these issues yet very few women parliamentarians will pursue them as a speciality.

6. CONCLUSION

Women parliamentarians in Ghana and Sierra Leone are greatly disadvantaged due to cultural, social and economic barriers which make the challenges they face even harder to overcome. Therefore greater effort is required in developing personal skills, increasing resources and broader collaboration with influential stakeholders to further their aims and objectives. CPA UK along with its partner parliamentary strengthening organisations are committed to aiding both caucuses in promoting overall good governance and improving democratic representation.

Endnotes

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www.parliament.uk/cpauk