

*A workshop in the
'Deepening Democracy' series*

Commonwealth Workshop on

GENDER & DEMOCRACY

Windhoek, Namibia 9–11 February 2000



COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

Commonwealth Workshop on

GENDER & DEMOCRACY

Windhoek, Namibia, 9-11 February 2000

Report, Agenda and List of Participants



COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

The Commonwealth Secretariat gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Department of Women's Affairs, Office of the President, Namibia, in the organisation of this workshop and the generous financial support of United Kingdom's Department for International Development.

This workshop is the third in a series on the theme *Deepening Democracy*: further details of the series are provided on page 23.

© Commonwealth Secretariat, March 2000
All rights reserved

Photography by Ms Vera Botha (group photograph), Sports Photo (page 3), Michael Manni Photographic (page 4), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (pages 7 and 8), Format (Lisa Woollett page 9, Joanne O'Brien page 11) and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Designed by KC Gan
Printed in the United Kingdom by Newnorth Print Limited

Copies of this publication can be obtained from:

Political Affairs Division
Commonwealth Secretariat
Marlborough House
Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5HX

Tel: +44 (0)20 7747 6401
Fax: +44 (0)20 7930 2189
E-mail: info@commonwealth.int (please quote reference PAD)

This report, the workshop papers and information about the Commonwealth are available on the Commonwealth Secretariat website at <http://www.thecommonwealth.org>

Cover: a South African voter smiles as she casts her ballot, 1994

CONTENTS

Report	1
Agenda	16
Participants	17
Papers	21



Participants and Observers

From top left to bottom right: Dr Nandi Nghifindaka, Mr Mark Robinson, Mr Joseph Were, Mr Manuel Jorge Tomé, Mr Jon Sheppard, Senator Khairat Abdul-Razaq Gwadabe, Mrs Inge Murangi, Dr Athaliah Molokomme, Hon NC Madlala-Routledge MP, Professor Margaret Reynolds, Mr Steve Godfrey, Mr Dick Chamberlain, Hon Irene Chisala MP, Dr Rhoda Reddock, Professor Dilara Choudhury, Ms Zainah Anwar, Hon Oppah Muchinguri MP, Hon Anna Bayer MP, Mr Anthony Staddon, Hon Tabitha Seii MP, Hon Mrs Dolores Balderamos Garcia MP, Dr Elizabeth Amukugo, Mrs Lakshmi Krishnamurty, Mr Sam Goreseb, Dr Jenny Tonge MP, Ms Gwen Lister, Ms Marianne Erastus, Ms Laurie Cooper, Dr Jennifer Lee MP, Mr K Srinivasan, Hon Sarah-Lucy Flood-Beaubrun MP, Ms Natasha Borges Sugiyama, Hon Carol Kidu MP, Mr George Liveras, Rev Akuila Yabaki.

REPORT

Session One – Opening Session

The participants were welcomed by the Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General (Political) Mr K Srinivasan and the Speaker of the Namibian National Assembly, Dr Mose Tjitendero MP, speaking before an invited audience and the media.

Mr Srinivasan set the workshop in the context of the Commonwealth's work to promote both gender equality and democracy, thanked the Government of Namibia for its assistance in the organisation of the workshop and expressed appreciation for the financial support provided by the United Kingdom Government. He also brought a message from Commonwealth Secretary-General Chief Emeka Anyaoku, which read:

“The matter before you goes to the very heart of our Commonwealth concern for human dignity. I wish you well as you set out on this further effort to ensure that our democratic arrangements are characterised by gender equality, full and equal participation of both women and men and a genuine and effective partnership between them”.

Dr Tjitendero stressed the importance of partnership between women and men in developing democracy and gender equality. Namibia itself had made progress on both, but in common with all Commonwealth countries needed to look at how much more could be done.

Responding on behalf of the participants Hon Sarah-Lucy Flood-Beaubrun MP, Minister for Health, Human Services, Family Affairs and Gender Relations in the Government of St Lucia, stressed the importance of substance rather than form in Commonwealth democratic arrangements and rejected an approach of “looking good rather than achieving good”.

Report

Session Two – Gender and Democracy: Overview



The first working session began with agreement on the agenda and that the co-chairs would be Hon Mrs Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah (Director-General, Department of Women's Affairs, Office of the President) and Mr J P Sheppard (Director, Political Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat).

This session featured a preliminary discussion of some of the general issues involved. It was a wide-ranging discussion: reference was made to the importance of appropriate clauses in national Constitutions, means of changing male attitudes, the progress made in local government, selection procedures for candidates and why, despite the progress that has been made, women are still under-represented in decision-making positions. The impact of the party system and the role of female leaders were also touched on and it was suggested that the Commonwealth might consider establishing a monitoring body to assess progress made across the association in promoting gender equality.

Several participants highlighted the importance of closing the gap between the content and ambition of statements and resolutions and actual conditions on



TARGET – the 1997 Edinburgh Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (above) agreed that member countries should endeavour to achieve a target of no less than 30% of women in decision-making by the year 2005

the ground. Women at the grass-roots level were still often unaware of their rights and the translation of materials into local languages was commended. Above all it was emphasised that proposals for ‘closing the gap’ needed to be practical.

A number of participants also referred to the way in which the case for gender equality might best be argued: three themes emerged - gender equality was a basic matter of justice and democracy, in its absence huge resources of talent and creativity are being wasted and women and men can each contribute different but complementary skills and styles that enrich democratic politics. But, it was warned, what was required was not simply a ‘sharing’ between men and women in the existing context, but a transformation of relationships and institutions.

Report

Session Three - The Electoral Process: Managers, Parties and Civil Society

This session began with consideration of the role of the election management body and, in particular, gender representation in Election Commissions and amongst their senior staff, where it was acknowledged that achievement of the Commonwealth's 30% target remains a major challenge. It was argued that while there might be a legal right to equal opportunities, in order to ensure equal participation specific and positive measures had to be adopted as part of a determination to invest in balanced representation at all levels. Reference was also made to the role of the media in highlighting gender imbalance in the election management body itself, the integration of gender discussion into election management training workshops and the overall need to create a 'woman friendly' electoral process.

Part of the discussion of the role of the political parties focused on the use of quotas, which it was agreed were a useful short-term aid to increasing the representation of women (although there were also warnings that quota arrangements too can be manipulated to entrench existing imbalances). A debate on whether women are prepared to vote for other women led to another on



Gender Balanced Management – Commonwealth Chief Election Officers meet in 1998: workshop participants urged positive measures to ensure gender balance in the composition of election management bodies and the appointment of senior staff



Quotas for Political Parties – a party rally in Papua New Guinea, 1997: the workshop welcomed the use of quotas by political parties to ensure greater female representation amongst their candidates

whether women candidates promote a less aggressive style than male politicians, emphasising their ability to listen and to persuade.

There was also discussion of the difficulties encountered by women in getting selected as candidates and then in working as politicians - the impact of their family and other roles, the media portrayal of women, the problem of isolation from local networks once elected - and the pressure on women leaders to conform to a 'male' agenda. The 'shadowing' of male politicians as a means of highlighting their gender sensitivity, and the usefulness of national registers of women with skills in securing the appointment of women to decision-making positions were both commended.



Woman Friendly Process – women voters in Bangladesh 1996 and election workers in Antigua 1999: the workshop recommended that the electoral process should be 'woman friendly'



Report



Civil Society – a domestic election observer in Mozambique, 1999: participants emphasised the need for government and non-governmental organisations to work together

Much of the discussion, however, concerned the electoral system itself and whether proportional representation promoted gender equality more effectively than other systems. Information was provided both on this and on various methods of candidate selection in use in the Commonwealth. Participants welcomed the prospect of further research, especially on the relationship between electoral systems and the selection of women candidates.

This item concluded with an examination of the role of civil society. It was argued that NGOs could have an important role in training and empowering women and they could act as watchdogs and advocates: examples were given of the monitoring of political parties and NGO pressure on them to take more effective action to

promote gender equality. University and research bodies could provide reliable information on gender to MPs and others. Participants suggested that the effectiveness of civil society in these and other roles – several referred to its efficacy as a channel for community feeling – can only be enhanced if government helps to provide an enabling environment in which civil society and government work together. They agreed that, as with government itself, transparency and accountability on the part of civil society is essential in principle and can only enhance effectiveness in practice. Two points were made on the media: that too few women hold positions of control or influence in major media organisations and that in the interests of promoting a wider and deeper public understanding supporters of gender equality need to develop more effective ways of working with the press and broadcasters.

Session Four - Making an Impact in the Legislature

Participants itemised constraints on the effectiveness of women in the legislature and ways in which these could be tackled. Reference was made to training in procedures and other aspects of parliamentary life and the useful role of women's caucuses in providing for mentoring, mutual support and improved organisation.

However, much of the discussion concerned ways of promoting a more gender-sensitive environment and ensuring that the legislature is more 'woman friendly'. Facilities, rules of procedure, institutional practices and arrangements, language, dress codes, hours of business, parliamentary facilities and overall style needed to be assessed from a gender point of view and amended accordingly. Particular attention needed to be given to the adequacy of provision for child care, even when there was the necessary commitment on the part of the partners of women legislators to an appropriate sharing of domestic tasks and parental responsibilities.



Gender Sensitive Environment – a Commonwealth parliament in session: participants emphasised that all aspects of the legislature – from the language used to the rules of procedure and the hours of business – should be assessed from a gender point of view

Report

A number of participants focused on the difficulties that could arise for women MPs through the competing claims on their loyalty. On the one hand there was the commitment to action on issues of special concern to women and, on the other, the need for party solidarity. Often the latter was given priority so that women could not always vote freely on gender-sensitive issues; there was discussion in this context of arrangements for 'conscience voting'.



Gender Caucus – a meeting of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, New Zealand 1998: the workshop acknowledged that women's caucuses can be useful in providing for mentoring, mutual support and improved organisation

The use of the committee system was also discussed: there was a consensus that efforts should be made to ensure that women are not only appointed as members of

legislative and scrutiny committees but also as their chairs - and that they are not confined to committees dealing with issues of particular or traditional concern to women. It was suggested that one way in which women could enhance their impact in the legislature was to publicise and hold governments to commitments made under international agreements on gender equality and women's rights.

Several issues which had featured earlier in the workshop returned during the course of this session. The debate about the aggressive and confrontational style of 'male' politics and the different approach that women can bring was

touched on once more. It was argued that the choice for women was not between taking part in old-style 'dirty' or 'tough' politics and staying out altogether: they could instead promote a new, and more honest, approach. Women had already had considerable success in changing the policy agenda and, for instance, had ensured that issues previously categorised as 'domestic' in nature - such as violence against women - are now seen as legitimate matters of public concern and appropriate for legislative action.



Child Care – the workshop recommended action to improve child care arrangements for MPs, so that women can participate fully

The role of the media was again emphasised: women parliamentarians needed to understand how the media works and make it work for them - one women's caucus leader provided the example of inviting the press to caucus meetings, which had led to improved coverage and public understanding. The importance of the contribution made by civil society - for instance, in helping with legislative drafting, research and mobilising support outside the legislature for changes promoted by women within it - was further underlined.

Amongst recommendations made were that the Commonwealth and other international bodies should consider what more they can do to assist women not only in their efforts to get into parliament but also to make an impact once they have gained access. Assistance was needed with 'practical familiarisation' and the holding of workshops such as this and there might be Commonwealth guidelines on conscience voting and 'best practice' in general.

Report

Session Five - The Gender Agenda: Policies and Institutions

The purpose of this session - for which the workshop sub-divided into three smaller discussion groups - was to draw out the main themes of the modern 'gender agenda', both to promote gender equality in the democratic system and more widely, and then to identify the government policies, mechanisms and institutions which are required to take that agenda forward.

There was consensus that the priority remains fundamental change in the way women and men relate to each other. In that context, one of the sub-groups put the emphasis on education (affirmative action and support mechanisms for girls and women, free and compulsory education for girls, training and awareness raising for educators), legal action (clear commitment in Constitutions to equality of rights and opportunity, reinforced by enforcement, legal assistance and monitoring by an independent body) and co-operation between government and civil society (the former creating an enabling environment, the latter contributing to policy formulation, lobbying and monitoring). It also highlighted the significance of local government's role and urged central government to compile national registers of the sort referred to earlier in the workshop.

Another sub-group underlined the need for governments to give practical effect to their support for international declarations and therefore the importance of high-level political commitment. It stressed in particular the importance of action against poverty and urged collaboration between bodies such as the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, to avoid duplication of effort.

The third sub-group emphasised the importance of a comprehensive national gender policy on the part of government, enforced by affirmative action, guidelines for action by officials, close collaboration with parliamentarians and NGOs and use of the media to change attitudes. It put three requests to the Commonwealth Secretariat: that it should undertake the study of electoral systems referred to earlier in the workshop, with particular reference to proportional representation; survey "affirmative action" and other national



Transformation – participants focused on proposals for government action – concerning, for instance, educational, economic and social policy and the upholding of legal rights – and, on institutions and mechanisms, agreed that there is a need both for ‘mainstreaming’ and the creation of specialist units.

from country to country but that both ‘mainstreaming’ and the creation of specialist units would be required.

One consistent theme throughout the discussion was the importance of mechanisms to ensure implementation, enforcement and monitoring. Attention was drawn to the individual complaints mechanism established following the adoption of the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and to measures that can be taken to ‘engender’ the national budget. The workshop also commended training in gender sensitivity for particular professions.

To promote the cross-fertilisation of ideas within the Commonwealth, the Secretariat was asked to find ways to support short-term visits by experts -

policies to promote gender equality to see whether any approach works especially well; and review models being followed in different regions of the Commonwealth to identify and promote best practice. Governments were urged to promote action for gender equality through education (in which context they highlighted the importance of transforming current ideas of masculinity and femininity).

So far as institutions and mechanisms are concerned, there was general recognition that the situation would differ

Report

perhaps of only a few days duration - to assist other Commonwealth countries in achieving best practice. The role of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's women's caucus, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, was commended.

Participants noted that a great deal of work has already been done in the areas discussed, but that it is often not as widely available as it could or should be. Material prepared for and sent to governments, for instance, might not be passed on to those in civil society working on the same issues. Some time was spent on ways in which materials can be given the widest possible circulation. So far as this workshop was concerned it was agreed that the papers would be made public and put on the Commonwealth website. There was also a proposal for a book, expanding on the information prepared for the workshop.

Session Six - Taking it from here: Conclusions and Proposals

In earlier sessions participants had highlighted some key elements in best practice, arrived at certain broad conclusions and produced a number of ideas, recommendations and practical proposals for 'follow-up' after the workshop.

- Session Two's "overview" highlighted the importance of closing the gap between statements and resolutions and actual conditions on the ground; it had been proposed that the Commonwealth might consider establishing a monitoring body to assess progress made across the association in promoting gender equality.
- Session Three, on the electoral process, urged positive measures to ensure gender balance in the composition of election management bodies and the appointment of senior staff, welcomed the use of quotas by political parties to ensure greater female representation amongst their candidates and overall urged the establishment of 'woman friendly' electoral processes; participants had welcomed the idea of Commonwealth research on the relationship between electoral systems and the selection of women candidates.
- Session Four's discussion of "making an impact in the legislature" acknowledged the importance of training and the useful role of women's caucuses, but put the emphasis on the creation of a gender sensitive environment: all aspects of the legislature needed to be assessed from a gender point of view. The Commonwealth and other international bodies were urged to consider ways of helping women MPs in their efforts to make an impact in Parliament, especially through assistance with 'practical familiarisation', the holding of workshops and Commonwealth guidelines including on conscience voting - to enable women to vote freely on gender sensitive issues - and on parliamentary gender 'best practice' in general.
- Session Five, on the modern 'gender agenda', produced a wide range of points regarding national government action: the need for national gender policies, affirmative action, guidelines and gender training for officials, and a policy focus on education, the legal framework and action against poverty. The importance of mechanisms to ensure implementation, enforcement and

Report

monitoring was underlined. The proposal for Commonwealth research on election systems was reinforced and the Commonwealth Secretariat was asked to undertake studies on “affirmative action” and other national policies to promote gender equality and comparative studies of how progress had been made in different regions of the Commonwealth. It was further proposed that Commonwealth technical assistance might embrace visits of a week’s duration, or even less.

Throughout these discussions there had been agreement on the need for government and civil society to work together and that more effective use needed to be made of the media by supporters of gender equality.

In this session several participants expressed support for the idea of holding similar workshops on a regional basis and for the proposal made during the previous session regarding new forms of technical assistance. It was suggested that the Commonwealth Women’s Affairs Ministerial Meeting should receive the report of this workshop and that the Commonwealth Secretariat and other inter-governmental bodies should collaborate more closely in designing training packages.

Much of the discussion again concerned ways of ensuring that governments take effective action. There were two schools of thought - that there should be tougher action against those with the worst records and, alternatively, that the emphasis should be on publicising progress where it has taken place, as a way of encouraging more.

In line with the first approach it was proposed that there might be more rigorous reporting requirements and some form of focusing attention on governments which did not take their commitments seriously. It was proposed that there might be regional Commonwealth ‘best practice awards’. There was also concern that the approach of partnership between civil society and government needed to be more enthusiastically and prominently reflected at intergovernmental meetings, and that attention had to be given to greater female representation at conferences and on delegations.



Follow-Up – participants from Namibia, Australia, Cyprus and Zimbabwe during one of the sessions: the workshop agreed that there must be action at all levels to ensure that politics in Commonwealth democracies are conducted on the basis of gender equality; amongst its proposals was that there should be surveys of ‘affirmative action’ and ‘best practice’ and a Commonwealth study on the relationship between particular electoral systems and the selection of women candidates

In responding to the points that had been raised over the previous three days Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General (Political) Mr K Srinivasan said that the Commonwealth Secretariat would follow up a number of the specific suggestions that had been made during the course of the workshop. The report would be widely circulated, including to the Commonwealth Women’s Affairs Ministerial Meeting, and he hoped that governments, civil society and others would pursue the points made by the participants.

The session ended with thanks to the participants for taking part, to Hon Mrs Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah for co-chairing the meeting, to the Department of Women’s Affairs in the Office of the President for their assistance in the organisation of the event and to the United Kingdom Government for their financial support. It was agreed that a press release summarising the outcome of the workshop should be circulated the following morning. The workshop concluded.

AGENDA

Wednesday 9 February

Session One Opening Session

Hon Dr Mose Tjitendero MP

Speaker, National Assembly, Namibia

Hon Sarah-Lucy Flood-Beaubrun MP

Minister for Health, Human Services, Family Affairs and Gender Relations, St Lucia

Mr K Srinivasan

Commonwealth Deputy, Secretary-General (Political)

Session Two Gender and Democracy: Overview Discussion

Introduced by Professor Margaret Reynolds

Session Three The Electoral Process: Managers, Parties and Civil Society

Introduced by Mrs Inge Murangi, Mr George Liveras, Mr Manuel Jorge Tomé, Mrs Lakshmi Krishnamurty and Professor Dilara Choudhury

Thursday 10 February

Session Four Making an Impact in the Legislature

Introduced by Hon Tabitha Seii MP

Friday 11 February

Session Five The Gender Agenda: Policies and Institutions

Introduced by Dr Rhoda Reddock and Hon Oppah Muchinguri MP

Session Six Taking It From Here: Conclusions & Proposals

The workshop was co-chaired by Hon Mrs Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah MP and Mr J P Sheppard

PARTICIPANTS

Ms Zainah Anwar

Executive Director, Sisters in Islam,
Malaysia

Hon Anna Bayer MP

Member of Parliament, Namibia

Hon Gretchen Mann Brewin MLA

Speaker, Provincial Legislature,
British Columbia, Canada

Hon Irene Chisala MP

Vice-Chairperson, Women's
Parliamentary Caucus, Zambia

Professor Dilara Choudhury

Professor of Political Science,
Jahangirnagar University,
Bangladesh

**Hon Sarah-Lucy Flood-Beaubrun
MP**

Minister for Health, Human
Services, Family Affairs and Gender
Relations, St Lucia

**Hon Mrs Dolores Balderamos
Garcia MP**

Minister of Human Development,
Women and Civil Society, Belize

**Hon Khairat Abdul-Razaq
Gwadabe**

Senator and Chair, Senate
Committee on Women's Affairs and

Youth Development, Federal
Republic of Nigeria

Hon Carol Kidu MP

Chairperson, Special Parliamentary
Committee on Urbanisation and
Social Development, Papua New
Guinea

Mrs Lakshmi Krishnamurty

Activist and researcher with
ALARIPPU non-governmental
organisation, India

Dr Jennifer Lee MP

Nominated Member of Parliament
and Chief Executive, Women's
and Children's Hospital, Singapore

Ms Gwen Lister

Editor, *The Namibian*, Namibia

Mr George Liveras

Director-General, Democratic Rally,
Cyprus

Dr Athaliah Molokomme

Senior Programme Officer (Gender),
Southern African Development
Community

Hon Oppah Muchinguri MP

Minister of State (Gender Issues),
Office of the President, Zimbabwe

Participants

Mrs Inge Murangi

Member, Electoral Commission,
Namibia

Mrs Teopolina Mushelenga

Vice-President, Association of Local
Authorities, Namibia

**Hon Mrs Netumbo Nandi-
Ndaitwah**

Director-General, Department of
Women's Affairs, Office of the
President, Namibia

Dr N A Nghifindaka

Director for International Affairs,
Department of Women's Affairs,
Office of the President, Namibia

Dr Rhoda Reddock

Head and Senior Lecturer, Centre
for Gender and Development
Studies, University of the West
Indies, Trinidad & Tobago

Professor Margaret Reynolds

Professor of International Relations,
University of Queensland, and
former Minister and Gender Policy
Adviser, Australia

Hon N C Madlala-Routledge MP

Deputy Minister for Defence and
formerly Chair of the Parliamentary
Women's Caucus, South Africa

Hon Tabitha Seii MP

Member of Parliament and
Executive Director, Education
Centre for Women in Democracy,
Kenya

Mr Manuel Jorge Tomé MP

General Secretary, FRELIMO,
Mozambique

Dr Jenny Tonge MP

Member of Parliament and Liberal-
Democrat Party spokesperson on
International Development, United
Kingdom

Mr Joseph Were

Features Editor, *The Monitor*,
Uganda

Rev Akuila Yabaki

Executive Director, Citizens
Constitutional Forum, Fiji Islands

OBSERVERS

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
Mr Anthony Staddon

Commonwealth Press Union
Mr Mark Robinson

Commonwealth Trades Union Council
Ms Marianne Erastus

Congress of Democrats
Dr Elizabeth Amukugo

Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
Maria da Conceição Lourence

Department for International Development, United Kingdom
Mr Steve Godfrey

Department of Women's Affairs, Office of the President, Namibia
Mr Sam Goreseb

Ford Foundation
Ms Natasha Borges Sugiyama

International Foundation for Election Systems
Ms Laurie Cooper

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
Ms Maryam Montague

Royal Overseas League
Mr Dick Chamberlain

United Nations Development Programme
Ms Marlene Williams

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
Ms Carrie Marias

Participants

COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

Mr K Srinivasan

Deputy Secretary-General (Political)

Mr J P Sheppard

Director, Political Affairs Division

Mr Christopher Child

Chief Programme Officer, Political Affairs Division

Ms Zippy Ojago

Administrative Assistant, Political Affairs Division

WORKSHOP CHAIRS

Mr J P Sheppard

Director

Political Affairs Division

Commonwealth Secretariat

Hon Mrs Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah

Director-General

Department of Women's Affairs

Office of the President, Namibia

PAPERS

- The Malaysian Situation
Zainah Anwar
- Women's Political Representation in British Columbia, Canada and the Commonwealth
Hon Gretchen Mann Brewin MLA
- Gender and Democracy in Zambia
Hon Irene Chisala MP
- Gender and Democracy: Bangladesh Perspectives
Professor Dilara Choudhury
- Women in Commonwealth Parliaments
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
- Advancing Gender Equality in the Commonwealth
Commonwealth Secretariat, Gender and Youth Affairs Division
- Government Actions for the Advancement of Women
Department of Women's Affairs, Office of the President, Namibia
- Belize Country Paper
Hon Mrs Dolores Balderamos Garcia MP
- Women and Politics – A Papua New Guinea Perspective
Hon Carol Kidu MP
- Democracy at the Grassroots - A Case Study from India
Lakshmi Krishnamurty
- Gender and Democracy: The Democratic Rally Model
George Liveras
- Gender and Democracy in SADC
Dr Athaliah Molokomme, SADC Secretariat
- Untitled
Hon Oppah Muchinguri MP
- Judicial Colloquium on the Application of International Human Rights Law at the Domestic Level
Professor Margaret Reynolds
- Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Obligations: Comparison of Australian and New Zealand Governments' commitment in reporting to the United Nations 1997/8
Professor Margaret Reynolds
- Towards a Level Playing Field and Gender Parity in the Democratisation of Political and Administrative Institutions at the Level of National Government
Hon Tabitha Seii MP
- Fiji: A Brief Report
Rev Akuila D Yabaki

DEEPENING DEMOCRACY

This was the third in a series of Commonwealth Secretariat workshops on the theme *Deepening Democracy*, whose purpose is to assist member countries in their efforts to make democracy as real and as deep as possible.

The first workshop – on *The Role of the Opposition* – was held in London in June 1998, in co-operation with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and with financial support from the United Kingdom Government. The second – the *Workshop of Commonwealth Domestic Election Observers* – was held in Jamaica in May 1999. The reports of both these workshops are available from the address below.

Future workshops will consider *Broadcasting and Democracy*, *Money and Democratic Politics* and *Accountability, Scrutiny and Oversight*. Four associated workshops are to be held in parallel with this series: *Democracy and Small States*, *Devolution and Decentralisation*, *Voter Registration* and *Electoral Systems*.

For more information on these and other Commonwealth Secretariat activities to promote democracy contact:

Political Affairs Division
Commonwealth Secretariat
Marlborough House
Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5HX

Tel: + 44 (0)20 7747 6401
Fax: + 44 (0)20 7930 2189
E-mail: info@commonwealth.int (please quote reference PAD)

Deepening Democracy

Further information on Commonwealth activities on gender – including regional workshops on gender and the political process – can be obtained by contacting the Secretariat’s Gender and Youth Affairs Division on:

Tel: +44 (0)20 7747 6461

Fax: +44 (0)20 7930 1647

For general information on the Commonwealth contact the Information and Public Affairs Division: the address is as above, the numbers are:

Tel: +44 (0)20 7747 6385

Fax: +44 (0)20 7839 9081

E-mail: info@commonwealth.int

The Commonwealth has a website at
<http://www.thecommonwealth.org>

This is the report of the *Commonwealth Workshop on Gender and Democracy*, which took place in Windhoek over three days in February 2000.

The workshop participants - government ministers, parliamentarians, representatives of political parties, senior figures in civil society and academics from twenty-two Commonwealth countries - considered gender in relation to three key aspects of the democratic process: elections, law-making and government action.

As the Commonwealth Secretary-General said in his message to the participants, it was an effort “to ensure that our democratic arrangements are characterised by gender equality, full and equal participation of both women and men and a genuine and effective partnership between them”.

The workshop was the third in the Commonwealth Secretariat’s *Deepening Democracy* series and was organised in co-operation with the Government of Namibia and with financial support from the United Kingdom Government.



COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT