

## **HISTORY OF THE COMMONWEALTH WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS GROUP (CWP)**

The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Group developed from an informal meeting of women Parliamentarians held at the 35th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Barbados in 1989, initiated by Senator Norma Cox Astwood (Bermuda).

For the first year, and for part of the second year, Senator Cox Astwood acted as Coordinator for the "women's caucus", and it is largely due to her efforts that the Group came into existence at all, and that the initial momentum was maintained.

At the 36th CPA Conference in Harare (1990), a lunch time meeting of women Parliamentarians was convened at which it was determined that the Chair of the Group, who would serve for one year, would be chosen by the Branch hosting the Conference. At this meeting, a Steering Committee of three was chosen and the official name was agreed - Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP).

In 1992 CWP gained official recognition, which was confirmed by the General Assembly on 8 October 1992 :  
"... the Executive Committee recognises the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Group and time should be allocated in the conference agenda each year for the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Group to elect their Steering Committee."

Since that time CWP has grown to be included at each Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference and represented more fully in many of the 9 CPA regions through a regional steering committee. Over recent years independent CWP conferences and events have taken place across the African, Australian, Canadian and Caribbean regional and the inaugural BIMR CWP event takes places this weekend.