



**36th CPA Small Branches Conference
2 to 3 November 2017**

Small Branches Session 1 - 2 November 2017

CRITICAL MASS: SMALL JURISDICTIONS AND BIG PROBLEMS – LOGISTICS AND INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES TO MEET SMALL JURISDICTIONS EXPECTATIONS TO ACHIEVE THE SAME LEVELS AS LARGER PARLIAMENTS



Moderator:
Hon. Angelo Farrugia, MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives and CPA Small Branches Chairperson (Malta)

Discussion Leaders:

- Hon. Byron Camilleri, MP (Malta)
- Hon. Edmund Hinkson, MP (Barbados)
- Mrs Robyn Lambley, MLA (Northern Territory)
- Mr Dyfan Jones (United Nations Development Programme Pacific)

Rapporteur:
CPA Headquarters Secretariat

Discussion leaders briefed delegates on the challenges of becoming self-sufficient for the Small Branches in terms of funding and legislating for infrastructure growth. The discussion leaders also spoke about the necessity to identify and focus upon niche areas for engaging others in development regardless of the size of the jurisdiction.

The session heard a diverse range of views on how individual jurisdictions could engage citizens and partners in infrastructure development as well as creating a legislative framework for good governance and transparency. It was commonly accepted by the majority of delegates that although each Branch has differing challenges, there were common areas of focus and opportunities to maximize on their own localities. There are unique issues in the Small Branches in terms of infrastructure and many innovations in the manner in how they could meet the challenges of big problems in small jurisdictions were discussed.

Hon. Byron Camilleri, MP (Malta) explained that Malta was a small, densely populated country but highly recognized for its economy and it also faced a

lot of environmental challenges and climate change problems. He explained that Malta had undertaken many initiatives to address climate change issues however a lack of monitoring was one of the reasons why they are unable to better record improvements in their efforts. Smaller jurisdictions were far more vulnerable to the impact of climatic events affecting their economies, more than four times of their GDP than larger populations, with the average cost to a smaller branch nearly 2% of their overall GDP.

Hon. Byron Camilleri, MP also expressed that Small Branches needed a range of approaches, from administrative support to risk reductions, in dealing with climatic events. Infrastructure remained an important area as Small Branches also faced a negative impact on their economy due to the high cost of infrastructure projects. He explained that Malta had found a way to focus on how it wishes to build human expertise and manage its resources better. Malta will continue to look to be competitive and invest in technological development to reduce reliance on the human expertise costs and to increase technical accessibility. He

concluded by expressing that CPA Small Branches should collaborate in sharing best practice, expertise and success stories in risk reduction of climatic impact.

Hon. Edmund Hinkson, MP (Barbados) felt that although the topic under consideration was broad, he had to address it from the point of best governance practices and accountability, and transparency in terms of the governance of small island jurisdiction. He was clear that these practices ought to be in place in terms of the legislation that the parliament passes and the size of the nation had nothing to do with the ability or capacity of Parliament to pass rules, regulations and laws which lead to best government practices and accountability and transparency. He also explained that was an absolute necessity that, Parliaments in all nations, no matter their territorial size or demographics to strictly enforce legislation providing for accountability and transparency in the governance system in their respective countries/Parliaments.

Hon. Edmund Hinkson, MP felt that those persons in positions of responsibilities, whether from the political class or the commercial

sectors should equally held be liable and accountable. For the Parliaments' fiscal responsibilities, legislation ought to exist so that these jurisdictions could ensure their best practices in terms of fiscal management for government. He concluded by expressing that small jurisdictions, while they may not have the resources available in comparison to developed countries, must still enact and enforce legislation establishing accountability and transparency.

Hon. Robyn Lambley, MLA (Northern Territory) explained as background the geographical size of the Northern Territory and that they were currently experiencing a period of zero population growth. She also explained that 30% of the population were aboriginal people. She went onto explain that when we talk about expectations, the people of the Northern Territory have high expectations about what infrastructure will be provided to them and that legislature's budget was quite small, of which, a third was allocated to territorial development.

The Northern Territory is dependent upon the Australian Federal Government for 80% of their funding, which remained as a matter of tension for all of the states in Australia. In 2000, the Australian Federal Government introduced the redistribution of taxes through Horizontal Fiscal Equalization. The objective of Horizontal Fiscal Equalization is that each of six states would have the capacity to provide service and associated infrastructure at the same standard and calculated upon a range of factors, including population growth. Future Federal funding for the Northern Territory is uncertain and there is a need to be more competitive and for the territory to pull its weight in its approach to funding infrastructure projects.

Hon. Robyn Lambley, MLA concluded by explaining that CPA



Small Branches need to look creatively as to how infrastructure projects can be developed, such as public-private (funding) partnerships (PPP). Being a small jurisdiction, the Northern Territory has to be creative, to be mindful and has to ensure that they have enough resources. They also have to generate their own source of additional revenue and, whilst they also need funding, not to be fully dependent on the Federal government for all requirements.

Mr Dyfan Jones (United Nations Development Programme Pacific) wished to focus on two aspects relating to the topic - service delivery expectations and the role of Parliament in meeting those expectations. Often in the categorization and measure of human development, the UN look at the wealth of a country and their GDP. He suggested that rather than looking at just the wealth of country, the UNDP also looks at a range of factors such as the education system, mortality and many other indicators to measure how a country is developing.

The size of a country is not necessarily the issue. The issue is the level of human development and then its impact on service delivery. The UNDP is and has been working with small islands facing disasters and they

recognize the possible challenges that Small Branches may face, such as: building and space; equipment and connectivity; knowledge and time to innovate; absorption capacity; budgets; staffing and resources.

Mr Dyfan Jones pointed out that small jurisdictions/Parliaments could actually reach out to people more easily than the larger ones, with smaller jurisdictions really holding an advantage over larger jurisdictions. Smaller Parliaments could also respond to the needs of its citizens more personally than the larger ones. He cited the example of Turkey's Parliament which had ten thousand staff and over twelve thousand registered NGOs many of whom wanted to be a part of their Committees, something that remains practically impossible. In comparison, there are parts of the Cook Islands in the Pacific Ocean that have less than a hundred voters so it's very easy for them to reach citizens.

Mr Dyfan Jones concluded by expressing that whilst Small Branches may not always necessarily face disproportionately different service delivery challenges to larger Branches, co-operation in the process across jurisdictions and geography can assist in

improving and innovating in meeting the expectations on service delivery.

The Small Branches delegates endorsed the following recommendations:

- Small Branches should collaborate in sharing best practices, expertise and success stories in order to learn and assist one another. This forum should unite us in becoming more effective.
- Small jurisdictions, while not having the resources available to developed countries, must enact and enforce legislation establishing accountability and transparency in their governance systems.
- Small jurisdictions with limited funding and resources must be strategic, creative and competitive in addressing their unique logistic and infrastructure challenges.
- Whilst Small Branches may not necessarily always face disproportionately different service delivery challenges to larger branches, cooperation between jurisdictions can assist in improving service delivery.