



HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
Ministry for Housing, Tourism, Equality & Social Services
14 Governor's Parade
Gibraltar

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British Islands and Mediterranean Region Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Conference on the Role of Parliamentarians in Ending Violence against Women and Girls

The second British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Conference will be hosted in Gibraltar from the 6th to the 8th of February 2015.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) consists of female Members of legislatures of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). CWP was founded by women delegates in 1989 in order that women could discuss ways to increase female representation in Parliament and work towards the mainstreaming of gender considerations in all CPA activities and programmes.

Samantha Sacramento, Minister for Tourism, Equality, Social Services and Housing represents the Gibraltar Branch on the BIMR's CWP Steering Committee.

This year's conference will explore the role of Parliamentarians in ending violence against women and girls. It will be attended by female Parliamentarians from the BIMR as well as observers from other regions of the CPA. Speakers at the conference will include academics from UK Universities and representatives from international non-governmental organisations such as Respect, the NSPCC, the Internet Watch Foundation and Women's Aid.

The Right Honourable Baroness Scotland of Asthal QC, former Attorney General of England and Wales, who undertook major reform of the criminal justice system including the introduction of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act, is among the speakers.

Two local speakers are Natalie Tavares, Head of Children's Services at Social Services, and Claire Borrell, founder of Women in Need and manager of the women's refuge.

Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament and newly appointed Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee, will deliver a speech at the reception on Saturday night.

The three-day programme includes a discussion on the costs to the economy of violence against women and girls, which will be chaired by Samantha Sacramento MP. Delegates will also discuss and share effective prevention and protection strategies, and consider the ways in which the CWP can work with other stakeholders and international organisations to advance women's empowerment, gender equality and the representation of women in decision-making roles.

The closing Plenary will focus on the abuse of women and girls on social media and will feature expert speakers from the Safer Internet Centre, Pinder Reaux and the Internet Watch foundation.

The objectives for the Conference are to enable policy discussions and information-sharing among women Parliamentarians from the BIMR region and to feed these learnings into the work plan that will be taken forward after the Conference.