

Headline **Cwealth group sets up programme for developing Pments**  
Date **18. Apr 2009** Language **ENGLISH**  
Media Title **Daily Express** Page No **9**  
Section **Nation** Article Size **137** cm2  
Circulation **29826** Frequency **Daily (EM)**  
Readership **97836** Color **Black/White**  
AdValue **282.59**



## C'wealth group sets up programme for developing P'ments

KUALA LUMPUR: A new support programme to assist developing Parliaments has been established by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) to provide more than 100,000 pound sterling in seed funding to improve services and train Parliamentarians and staff to strengthen democracy.

CPA executive committee chairman Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal said, the CPA was helping Parliaments, especially those in developing countries, to continue strengthening their democracies in the face of economic stresses and uncertainties due to the global financial crisis.

Among others, he said, the programme would provide technical assistance to the Bougainville House of Representatives, financing a staff organisation review for the Parliament of Namibia and supporting the Parliament of Saint Lucia, Zanzibar and Nigeria's Kwara state in making improvements to their research services.

Support would also be given to a Parliament and the Media Workshop for Seychelles, an Asia/India Financial Scrutiny Workshop, a workshop for women Parliamentarians on HIV/AIDS and a programme to develop Pacific Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures, he added.

In a statement faxed to Bernama, Mohd Shafie said the committee, comprising 35 members representing more than 175 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures, set up the programme at its meeting from April 13 to 18 held in Hamilton, Bermuda.

"The CPA will support projects to bring tangible benefits on the ground to emerging Parliaments.

"Parliamentary democracy is the best way to achieve development and ensure long-term peace and security for all Commonwealth people," he said.

Shafie, who is also the Minister of Rural and Regional Development, said the current economic crisis would put great pressure on all the Parliaments and on the gains they had made in development and in advancing democratic governance.

Therefore, he said, the Commonwealth community would rally round to help all their assemblies. — Bernama