

Consular Association Commonwealth Gala

14 December 2011

Belfast, NORTHERN IRELAND: Through the invitation of Dr Christopher Stange – Secretariat of the Consular Association of Northern Ireland (CA-NI) & Hon. Consul for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, H.E. Kamalesh Sharma – Commonwealth Secretary General was the guest of honour at an afternoon tea and informal discussion on Commonwealth and International Affairs.



L-R:
Lord Rana MBE, Dr Christopher Stange, H.E. Kamalesh Sharma – Commonwealth Secretary General and Professor Sir Peter Gregson KB

Invited guests included Consular officials, Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Northern Ireland Government Ministers, Members of Parliament, Members of the Legislative Assembly, Members of the House of Lords, Members of the Commonwealth Parliamentarian Association, Heads of Departments, Directors of religious, statutory and voluntary bodies, Vice-Chancellors and Pro Vice-Chancellors of Queen's University and Ulster University, Grand Orange Lodge and Societies, with students and faculty from various Commonwealth countries, primarily Caribbean, African and the Pacific in Northern Ireland.

The event was made possible through the Consular Association of Northern Ireland (CA-NI) and the support of Queen's University Belfast, which provided the venue of the Canada Room, which was deliberately chosen for the Commonwealth occasion.

Lord Diljit Rana MBE, President of the Consular Association & Hon. Consul for India to Northern Ireland provided the opening address and introduction of the Secretary General.

The topics covered were highlights of the recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Australia, commitment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, support for member countries to prevent or resolve conflicts, strengthen democratic practices and the rule of law, achieve greater respect for human rights, women and youth initiatives, with growth and sustainable development of the economy and human capacity.

A question and answer session was held with the Secretary General followed by discussion of how we may best strengthen the partnerships from the various institutions and countries accredited on a Consular basis in Northern Ireland.

The afternoon concluded with a closing address from Milan Mladek – Hon. Consul for the Czech Republic to Northern Ireland & CA-NI Vice-President with a gift presentation to the Secretary General on behalf of the Consular Association of Northern Ireland by Dr Christopher Stange.

ENDS

NOTES FOR EDITOR:

For more information on the Consular Association of Northern Ireland please visit: www.ca-ni.org

President: Lord Diljit Rana – Hon. Consul for India to Northern Ireland

Vice President: Mr Milan Mladek – Hon. Consul for Czech Republic to Northern Ireland

Secretariat: Dr Christopher Stange – Hon. Consul for St. Vincent & the Grenadines to Northern Ireland

Treasurer: Mr Donald Price – Hon. Consul for Denmark to Northern Ireland

Consuls are appointed to further the interests of the country they represent by encouraging commercial, academic and cultural activities. They also endeavour to assist, and protect the interests of their nationals. All their work is done within the terms of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR), an International Agreement which was drafted and agreed by the International Law Commission, and signed by the respective Governments on 24th April 1963.

Consul Generals, Consuls, and other Consular Officials in Northern Ireland, whether they are Career Consuls or Honorary (Hon.) Consuls, are all appointed by the Governments of the Sending States to the Receiving State in the United Kingdom via the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Each official receives a Letter of Commission which is recognised by the Government of the United Kingdom as conferring Consular standing in accordance with the VCCR.

The Consular Association/Corps of Northern Ireland (CA-NI) serves all Foreign Consular Officials (Career and Honorary) in Northern Ireland.

The objectives of CA-NI are to bring its Members together in close and friendly co-operation, for the development and protection of their mutual interests, as well as, representing the Consular Association to Government Departments, other central/local authorities, and internationally within the framework of Consular activities.

For more information on the Commonwealth please visit: www.thecommonwealth.org

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 54 countries that support each other and work together towards shared goals in democracy and development through partnerships across government, business and civic society.

The world's largest and smallest, richest and poorest countries make up the Commonwealth and are home to two billion citizens of all faiths and ethnicities – over half of whom are 25 or under. Member countries span six continents and oceans from Africa (19) to Asia (8), the Americas (3), the Caribbean (10), Europe (3) and the South Pacific (11).