

## Consular Corps/Association of Northern Ireland Commonwealth Gala

14 December 2011

**Belfast, NORTHERN IRELAND:** H.E. Kamalesh Sharma – Commonwealth Secretary General was the guest of honour at an afternoon tea and informal discussion on Commonwealth and International Affairs arranged by the Consular Corps/Association of Northern Ireland's Secretariat.

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 the Ulster University, Grand Orange Lodge and Societies, with students and faculty from various Commonwealth countries, primarily Caribbean, African and the Pacific in Northern Ireland.



L-R: Milan Mladek – CA-NI, Vice-President; Dr Christopher Stange – CA-NI, Secretariat; H.E. Kamalesh Sharma – Commonwealth Secretary General; Lord Diljit Rana – CA-NI, President

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 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 – 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 – CA-NI, Secretariat.

**ENDS**

**NOTES FOR EDITOR:**

For more information on the Consular Association of Northern Ireland please visit: [www.ca-ni.org](http://www.ca-ni.org)

For more information on the Commonwealth please visit: [www.thecommonwealth.org](http://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).