



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting  
its participation at the 140<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union  
Assembly and related meetings**

**Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**

**Doha, Qatar**

**April 4 to 10, 2019**

# Report

## Overview

A delegation from the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) attended the [140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly](#) and related meetings in Doha (Qatar) from 4 to 10 April 2019. The Canadian delegation was comprised of the following members:

- Honourable Salma Atallahjan, Senator, Vice-President of the Canadian Group of the IPU and Head of Delegation
- Honourable Dennis Dawson, Senator
- Ms. Irene Mathyssen, M.P.
- Honourable Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia, Senator
- Honourable Raymonde Saint-Germain, Senator

The delegation was accompanied by Ms. Céline Ethier, the Executive Secretary of the Canadian Group of the IPU, Ms. Karine Azoulay, Analyst, Legal and Social Affairs Division, Library of Parliament and Mr. Scott McTaggart, Analyst, Economics, Resources and International Affairs Division, Library of Parliament.

Meetings of the IPU provide an important opportunity for Canadian parliamentary diplomacy. Multilateral engagement occurs through the meetings of various committees and other bodies that take place during an IPU assembly. Bilateral engagement occurs through side meetings that arise during IPU assemblies.

Throughout the 140th Assembly, members of the Canadian delegation engaged with their counterparts and participated in various debates to promote Canadian values in relation to important topics of international concern, including democracy, human rights, international peace and security, gender equality, and sustainable development.

## The IPU: Background

Established in 1889, the IPU is the international organization of parliaments of sovereign states. The IPU is the focal point for global parliamentary dialogue, working for peace and co-operation as well as for the firm establishment of representative democracy. To this end, it:

- Fosters contacts, co-ordination, and the exchange of experiences among parliamentarians of all member parliaments;
- Considers questions of international interest and concern, and expresses its views on relevant issues in order to bring about action by parliaments and parliamentarians;
- Contributes to the defence and promotion of human rights, which are essential aspects of parliamentary democracy and development; and

- Contributes to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions, and to the strengthening and development of their means of action.<sup>1</sup>

At present, the IPU's activities are pursued according to its Strategy 2017–2021: *Strong democratic parliaments, serving the people*, which was adopted in October 2016 during the 135th Assembly.<sup>2</sup>

At the close of the 140th Assembly, 179 national parliaments were members of the IPU and 12 regional parliamentary assemblies were associate members.

## The 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly

### A. The Agenda<sup>3</sup>

The IPU Assembly is the principal statutory body that expresses the views of the IPU on political issues. Two statutory assemblies are held each year, bringing together parliamentarians from around the world to study international issues and make recommendations for action.

The agenda for the 140th Assembly included the following items:

- Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 140th Assembly;
- Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda;
- General debate on parliaments as platforms to enhance education for peace, security and the rule of law;
- Resolution on the non-admissibility of using mercenaries as a means of undermining peace and violating human rights (Standing Committee on Peace and International Security);
- Resolution on the role of fair and free trade and investment in achieving the SDGs, especially regarding economic equality, sustainable infrastructure, industrialization and innovation (Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade);
- Reports of the Standing Committees on Democracy and Human Rights and United Nations Affairs;
- Approval of the subject item to be considered by the Standing Committees on Peace and International Security and Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade at the 142nd IPU Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs; and
- Debate of an emergency item on the call for urgent international action to support Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe hit by Cyclone Idai.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See: IPU, "[About us](#)"; and IPU, [Statutes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union](#).

<sup>2</sup> IPU, [Strategy 2017-2021 | Inter-Parliamentary Union](#)

<sup>3</sup> Detailed reports and information on the 140th IPU Assembly and related meetings are available on the IPU website. See: IPU, [140th IPU Assembly and related Meetings](#), Doha, Qatar, April 6-10, 2019; and IPU, [Results of the 140th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2019.

<sup>4</sup> IPU, [140th IPU Assembly and related Meetings](#), Doha, Qatar, April 6-10, 2019. See also: IPU, [Agenda of the 140th Assembly](#), A/140/A.1.rev, 24 January 2019.

Overall, delegations from 147 member parliaments participated in the activities of the 140th Assembly. Of the 1,521 participants in attendance, 757 were members of national parliaments, including 74 Presiding Officers and 50 Deputy Presiding Officers. A total of 227 women parliamentarians (30% of all parliamentarians participating) attended the 140th Assembly, as did 132 parliamentarians under the age of 45 (17.4% of all parliamentarians participating).<sup>5</sup>

## **B. The General Debate**

During the 140th Assembly, a general debate was held on the topic of parliaments as platforms to enhance education for peace, security and the rule of law. Over the course of three days, 145 delegates from 115 member Parliaments, including 52 presiding officers, took the floor during the debate.<sup>6</sup>

On behalf of the Canadian IPU Group, Senator Dawson delivered a speech during the general debate. In his remarks, Senator Dawson spoke about how much he has learned during his decades of participation at the IPU and pointed to the organization's proud history of advancing important causes, particularly human rights and women's political empowerment. He remarked how far the IPU and its members have come since he started attending IPU events and hoped that it would continue to make progress, including in respect to the rights of LGBTQ2 people.

The results of the debate are reflected in an outcome document entitled the "Doha Declaration on Parliaments as platforms to enhance education for peace, security and the rule of law."<sup>7</sup>

## **C. The Emergency Item**

The IPU Statutes provide that an IPU Assembly may include one emergency item in its agenda.<sup>8</sup> The Rules of the Assembly provide that the Assembly may only place an emergency item on its agenda if two thirds of the votes cast are in support. Furthermore, the rules state: "Should several requests obtain the requisite majority, the one having received the largest number of positive votes shall be accepted."<sup>9</sup>

The 140th Assembly considered two requests for the inclusion of an emergency item on its agenda. The first, proposed by the delegation from the Netherlands, was entitled *Call for urgent action to support Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe hit by Cyclone Idai*. The second proposal was entitled *Ensuring international protection for Palestinian people, rejecting Israeli authority over the occupied Golan Heights, promoting the values of peaceful coexistence among people and religions and combatting all forms of racism and intolerance*. It was put forward jointly by Indonesia, Kuwait, Morocco and Turkey. In a roll-call vote, the Canadian delegation had the right to cast 15 votes for each proposed emergency item. It cast 15 votes in favour of the Dutch proposal, and 15 votes against

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<sup>5</sup> IPU, [Results of the 140th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2019, p.5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>8</sup> IPU, [Statutes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union](#), article 14(2).

<sup>9</sup> IPU, [Rules of the Assembly](#), Rule 11.

the joint proposal from Indonesia, Kuwait, Morocco and Turkey. Following the vote, the proposal from the Netherlands was added to the 140th Assembly's Agenda.<sup>10</sup>

On 9 April 2019, the Assembly adopted the resulting resolution by consensus. The resolution expresses concern about the humanitarian catastrophe caused by Cyclone Idai, recalls international frameworks on climate change and disaster risk reduction, and calls on parliaments to support emergency responses.<sup>11</sup>

## **D. IPU Standing Committees**

The IPU Assembly is assisted in its work by standing committees. Each delegation is represented on standing committees by one member and one substitute member.<sup>12</sup> Committee workplans can include the debate and finalization of a draft resolution, as well as hearings, reports and missions.

### **1. Standing Committee on Peace and International Security**

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security met on 7 and 9 April 2019. On 7 April 2019, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary General for the UN Office of Counter-terrorism gave a brief presentation.

The Committee considered a draft resolution entitled *Non-admissibility of using mercenaries as a means of undermining peace and violating human rights*. The topic had been proposed by the Ukrainian delegation at the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly and was the subject of a preparatory debate at the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The Co-rapporteurs were Mr. K. Al Bakkar (Jordan) and Mr. B. Tarasyuk (Ukraine). Senator Dawson and Senator Ravalia attended these meetings. The Standing Committee considered 131 amendments submitted by 20 member parliaments and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. The Canadian delegation chose not to submit amendments. Some 25% of the proposed amendments and sub-amendments were approved. The amended text was adopted by the Committee after a vote, at which time the representatives from the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, Romania and Sweden expressed reservations to the resolution as a whole. The text was adopted by consensus of the plenary Assembly on 10 April 2019, at which point the delegations from Armenia and Iceland also expressed reservations on the entire resolution.<sup>13</sup>

### **2. Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade**

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade met on 7,8 and 9 April 2019, The Committee considered a draft resolution entitled *The role of fair and free trade and investment in achieving the SDGs, especially regarding economic equality, sustainable infrastructure, industrialization and innovation*, jointly prepared by

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<sup>10</sup> IPU, [Results of the 140th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2019, pp. 6, 47 and 48. The number of votes to which each IPU member parliament is entitled is calculated according to the provisions of Article 15 of the IPU [Statutes](#).

<sup>11</sup> 140th IPU Assembly, [Call for urgent international action to support Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe hit by Cyclone Idai](#), 9 April 2019.

<sup>12</sup> IPU, [Statutes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union](#), article 13; and, IPU, "[Rules of the Standing Committees](#)."

<sup>13</sup> IPU, [Results of the 140th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2019, pp. 7-8. For the full text of the resolution, see p. 39.

the Co-rapporteurs, Mr. J. Wilson (Australia), Ms. S. Raskovic Ivic (Serbia) and Mr. H. Iddrisu (Ghana). The Committee considered 96 amendments submitted by 21 member parliaments as well as amendments from the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. The resolution was adopted by acclamation on 9 April 2019 and adopted unanimously by the plenary Assembly on 10 April 2019.<sup>14</sup> Irene Mathyssen, M.P., attended these sessions and spoke in favour of the four amendments proposed by the Canadian delegation. All four of the amendments passed, three with unanimous support, and were incorporated in the final text of the resolution.

### **3. Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights**

The Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights held sessions on 8 and 9 April 2019.

At its first sitting, the Committee examined how IPU members had followed up on three resolutions adopted at previous IPU assemblies related to media, technology and human rights, namely:

- 2015: Democracy in the digital era and the threat to privacy and individual freedoms
- 2013: The use of media, including social media, to enhance citizen engagement and democracy
- 2009: Freedom of expression and the right to information.

Following this discussion, Mr. T. Venturini (Centre for Internet and Society, Centre national de la recherche scientifique—CNRS, France), Ms. S. Joshi (Verification specialist at Proto and co-founder of Khabar Lahariya, India's only digital rural news network), and Mr. P. Nakov (Principal Scientist, Qatar Computing Research Institute) took part in a question-and-answer session on disinformation and “fake news.”<sup>15</sup> Senator Saint-Germain attended this session.

On 9 April 2019, the Committee held a preparatory debate on the theme *Achieving Universal Health Coverage by 2030: the role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health*, which is the topic of a resolution to be considered by the 141st Assembly.<sup>16</sup> Senator Atallahjan, Senator Saint-Germain and Senator Ravalia attended. Senator Atallahjan made a statement requesting that the draft resolution place an emphasis on primary healthcare and that it specifically mention the needs of women, children and adolescents.

Senator Saint-Germain participated in the meeting of this committee's Bureau on 9 April 2019. The Bureau considered the outcome of the debate on *Achieving Universal Health Coverage by 2030*. The Bureau also received an update from IPU staff about IPU activities to further engage parliaments in realizing Sustainable Development Target 16.6, (developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions), and Target 16.7 (ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels). Members of the Bureau also exchanged ideas on pressing issues concerning democracy and human rights.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 8. For the full text of the resolution, see p. 43.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 9 and p. 51.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

## **4. Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs**

The Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs held two sittings on 9 April 2019. The first sitting took stock of parliamentary action on the Sustainable Development Goals. The second sitting helped prepare parliamentarians for the debate that will be held at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, to be held in New York in July 2019. IPU staff updated the Standing Committee on its programming related to the Sustainable Development Goals. Delegates from Jordan, Argentina and Sri Lanka made presentations, as did officials from the UN Development Programme and Oxfam International. Senator Dawson attended one of these sessions.

### **Participation by Canadian delegates in related meetings and activities**

#### **A. IPU Governing Institutions**

##### **1. Governing Council<sup>17</sup>**

The Governing Council is the plenary policy-making body of the IPU.<sup>18</sup> Several specialized bodies fall under the Governing Council's responsibility and report to it on their work.<sup>19</sup> The Council is composed of three representatives from each IPU member parliament, provided that its representation includes both men and women parliamentarians.<sup>20</sup>

Meetings of the 204th Session of the Governing Council were held on 7 and 10 April 2019. All Canadian delegates attended at least one of these meetings.

The Governing Council had a number of items on its agenda, including the following:<sup>21</sup>

- Adoption of the agenda
- Approval of the summary records of the 203rd session of the Governing Council
- Proposals for the election of the President of the 140th Assembly
- Questions relating to IPU membership and the situation of certain parliaments
- Report of the President
- Annual report of the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU in 2018
- Report on recent IPU specialized meetings
- Financial results for 2018
- Activities of committees and other bodies

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<sup>17</sup> This section reflects highlights of the 204th Session of the IPU Governing Council. For further details, see: IPU, [140th IPU Assembly and related Meetings](#), Doha, Qatar, April 6-10, 2019, pp. 11-14.

<sup>18</sup> The functions of the Governing Council are outlined in Article 21 of the IPU [Statutes](#).

<sup>19</sup> These bodies include: the Forum of Women Parliamentarians; the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians; the Committee on Middle East Questions; the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus; the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law; the Advisory Group on Health; the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism and, the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU.

<sup>20</sup> IPU, "[Rules of the Governing Council](#)."

<sup>21</sup> IPU, [Provisional agenda of the 204th session of the Governing Council](#), CL/204/A.1, 6 December 2018.

- 141st IPU Assembly (October 2019)
- Future Inter-Parliamentary meetings
- Amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules
- Elections to the Executive Committee

The Governing Council considered the 2018 Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements. The organization posted an operational deficit of CHF 607,000 in 2018 due to the poor performance of the IPU's investments and additional costs related to the Assemblies held in Geneva and the two extraordinary Executive Committee meetings held during the year. The report noted that the 2018 investment losses had already been recovered in the first quarter of 2019. Three IPU members faced the suspension of their rights due to unpaid contributions (Honduras, Mauritania and Papua New Guinea).<sup>22</sup> The Governing Council welcomed the Parliament of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as the 179<sup>th</sup> member of the IPU.

## 2. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee advises the Governing Council on matters relating to affiliation and reaffiliation to the IPU, fixes the date and place of Governing Council sessions and establishes their provisional agenda. It also proposes to the Governing Council the annual work program and budget of the IPU. Furthermore, the Executive Committee controls the administration of the Secretariat as well its activities in the implementation of the decisions taken by the Assembly and the Governing Council.<sup>23</sup>

The IPU Executive Committee held its 281<sup>st</sup> session on 4, 5 and 9 April 2019.<sup>24</sup> Senator Atallahjan replaced the Honourable David McGuinty, P.C., M.P., who was elected to the Executive Committee at the 137<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Mr. McGuinty was elected to the position of IPU Vice-President for the Twelve Plus geopolitical group at the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly, representing 47 countries. The Senator was an active participant in all of the Executive Committee's in camera meetings.

The Executive Committee considered proposals and an activity report from the IPU President, Ms. G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico), who was elected to a three-year term at the 137<sup>th</sup> Assembly.<sup>25</sup> The Executive Committee also considered the IPU's Annual Report for 2018, the financial situation of the IPU, and matters related to the functioning of the Secretariat. Furthermore, it discussed past and future specialized meetings as well as potential hosts for future IPU statutory assemblies. The Executive Committee agreed to submit a draft memorandum of understanding between the IPU, the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime to the Governing Council for endorsement.

The Executive Committee considered a communications strategy for the IPU, as well as a plan for celebrating the IPU's 130th Anniversary between 30 June 2019 and 30 June

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<sup>22</sup> IPU, [Results of the 140th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2019, pp. 11-14.

<sup>23</sup> IPU, "[Rules of the Executive Committee](#)."

<sup>24</sup> For more details regarding these meetings, see: IPU, [Results of the 140th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2019, pp. 15-17.

<sup>25</sup> The IPU President reports the activities and decisions of the Executive Committee to the Governing Council, see Article 26(2) of the IPU [Statutes](#).

2020. The occasion will be celebrated with the publication of a book, a branded campaign including online content, and the endorsement of a Charter on Parliamentarism.

The IPU Secretariat reported to the Executive Committee on the situation facing the parliaments of Burundi, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, the Maldives, Nicaragua, Palestine, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen. The Executive Committee made recommendations to the Governing Council concerning each case.

## **B. The Forum of Women Parliamentarians**

In accordance with the IPU Statutes, a meeting of women parliamentarians is held during the Assemblies; it reports on its work to the Governing Council. In general, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians aims to:

- encourage contact among women parliamentarians;
- foster democracy by promoting partnership between men and women in all fields;
- promote the participation of women parliamentarians in the work of the IPU and the equitable representation of women at all institutional levels within the IPU; and
- pre-study certain issues considered by the IPU Assembly and/or the Governing Council.<sup>26</sup>

The 29<sup>th</sup> session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians took place on 6 April 2019. The Forum's agenda included:

- Presentation of reports regarding activities to advance gender equality at the IPU;
- Consideration of the draft resolutions proposed in the Standing Committees on Peace and International Security and the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade;
- A panel discussion on the topic of Equality at work; and
- Election of new members to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians.<sup>27</sup>

A total of 181 parliamentarians from 71 countries participated in the Forum.<sup>28</sup>

Senator Ataullahjan, Senator Saint-Germain and Irene Mathyssen, M.P. attended the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. During the Forum, participants were divided into two working groups to discuss the draft resolutions on the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly's agenda. The discussions led to suggested amendments to both the draft resolutions, which were later incorporated into the draft resolutions by the relevant standing committees. Senator Ataullahjan chaired the working group preparing contributions to the draft resolution entitled *Non-admissibility of using mercenaries as a means of undermining peace and violating human rights*.

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<sup>26</sup> IPU, [Rules of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians](#).

<sup>27</sup> IPU, [Forum of Women Parliamentarians 29<sup>th</sup> Session Agenda Doha, 6 April 2019](#), FEM/29/A.1, 15 January 2019. For further details see: IPU, [Results of the 140th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2019, pp.17-18.

<sup>28</sup> IPU, [Results of the 140th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2019, p.18.

Senator Ataullahjan also participated in the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, of which she is a member, on 6 and 9 April 2019. The Bureau considered the items on the agenda for the 29th session of the Forum on Women Parliamentarians and prepared for the 30th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.<sup>29</sup> Senator Saint-Germain also participated in a meeting of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians on 9 April 2019.

On 10 April 2019, the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians held a joint meeting with the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians on the topic of combatting sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians. Participants considered how to combat sexism at the individual level and from an institutional perspective. Senator Ataullahjan was an active participant in the discussion.<sup>30</sup>

### **C. Committee on Middle East Questions**

The Committee on Middle East Questions held two meetings on 6 and 9 April 2019.<sup>31</sup> The Committee's activities included:

- An update on the latest developments in the Middle East, in particular regarding the situations in Israel and Palestine, Libya, Syria and Yemen;
- A presentation by the delegation from Libya on the current situation in their country;
- A presentation by French M.P. Michel Larive on a proposal to create a science-focused committee at the IPU; and
- A presentation from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), including speeches from two 15-year-old student parliamentarians from UNRWA schools.

At the beginning of the meeting on 6 April 2019, Senator Ataullahjan was re-elected to a second one-year term as president of the committee. As such, Senator Ataullahjan chaired both meetings of the Committee and met with IPU Secretariat staff and Committee members in pursuit of the Committee's agenda.

### **D. Advisory Group on Health**

The IPU Advisory Group on Health held a meeting on 6 April 2019. The group discussed the topic of universal health coverage, which will be the subject of a resolution at the IPU Assembly in October 2019. The group also heard from technical partners from the World Health Organization; the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health; UNAIDS; and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. While not a member of the group, whose meetings are generally restricted to group members, Senator Ravalia was invited to participate in the meeting.

### **E. Workshop on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health**

A workshop was held on 8 April 2019 under the title of "Act now for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health: Lessons on health financing, legislation and partnerships." During the session, parliamentarians shared best practices regarding various aspects of

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<sup>29</sup> IPU, Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Doha, 6 and 9 April 2010, FEM/43/A.1.

<sup>30</sup> IPU, [Results of the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly and related meetings](#), 2019, p. 24.

<sup>31</sup> For the report of the Committee, see: IPU, [Results of the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly and related meetings](#), 2019, p. 19.

the topic, including in the areas of preventing violence and child marriage, and health financing and gender equality. Senator Ataullahjan and Senator Ravalia attended the workshop. Senator Ataullahjan made an intervention in which she highlighted the negative effects child marriage has on the health outcomes of women and children, including mental health.

## **F. Side Event on Venezuela**

On 8 April 2019, Senator Dawson and Senator Saint-Germain attended a side event on the situation in Venezuela organized jointly by the Latin America and Caribbean geopolitical group and the Twelve Plus geopolitical group.<sup>32</sup> The session included video addresses from Venezuela's Interim President Juan Guaidó, Secretary General of the Organization of American States Luis Almagro, and Venezuelan non-governmental organizations. Members of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians also addressed the session.

## **G. Interactive Session on Innovation in Parliament**

An interactive session, jointly organized by the IPU and the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments, was held on 10 April 2019 on the topic of Innovation in parliament: Getting Ready for the Future. Premised on the need for parliaments to respond to the increasing demands of citizens in order to maintain public trust and adapt to evolving communications environments, the session used real-time online polling of the participants to gauge opinions and encourage debate. Senator Saint-Germain moderated the session and participated in discussions, sharing Canadian experiences in the area.

## **H. Meetings of the Geopolitical Groups**

Article 27 of the IPU Statutes permits IPU members to form geopolitical groups; there are six such groups formally recognized by the IPU. The groups play an important role in the functioning and activities of the IPU. Each group determines its own working methods, and informs the IPU Secretariat of its composition, officers and rules of procedure.

Canada belongs to two geopolitical groups:<sup>33</sup>

- the 47 member Twelve Plus Group, which includes nations from Europe, as well as Australia, Israel, New Zealand and Turkey; and
- the 36 member Asia-Pacific Group.

While Canada participates in the activities of both groups, it submits candidatures for vacant positions within the IPU through the Twelve Plus Group.

### **1. Asia-Pacific Group**

A meeting of the Asia-Pacific Group was held on 6 April 2019. Senator Ravalia attended the meeting. Agenda items included the following:

- Address by IPU President, Gabriela Cuevas Barron;
- Briefing by Asia-Pacific members of the IPU Executive Committee;

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<sup>32</sup> IPU, [140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly Journal, Monday, 8 April 2019.](#)

<sup>33</sup> IPU, "[Geopolitical groups.](#)"

- Vacancies to be filled during the Assembly; and
- Consideration of proposed emergency items.

## **2. Twelve Plus Group**

Meetings of the Twelve Plus Group were held on 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 April 2019. All Canadian delegates participated in these meetings. Agenda items included the following:

- Organization of a side event on the situation in Venezuela;
- Planning for a side event on combatting discrimination against LGBTQ2 persons at the next Assembly;
- Consideration of a French proposal to create a science-focused committee at the IPU;
- Discussion on resolutions to be adopted at the Assembly;
- Elections for vacancies to be filled during the Assembly; and
- Consideration of proposed emergency items.

Canadian delegates were active participants in the group's meetings. Senator Dawson related his experience promoting LGBTQ2 issues at the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie. Senator Ataullahjan commented on a proposal to submit an emergency item on the crisis in Yemen and explained the Canadian delegation's concerns regarding the draft resolution on the agenda of the Committee on Peace and International Security. In subsequent meetings, Senator Ataullahjan provided a summary of the Committee on Middle East Questions' work and asked a question of a candidate for appointment to the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism.

## **I. Bilateral Meetings**

Members of the Canadian delegation held bilateral meetings with other delegations, including the following countries:

- New Zealand and United Kingdom
- Qatar

These exchanges provide a strategic opportunity for the Canadian IPU Group to engage in parliamentary diplomacy, to increase its understanding of other countries and regions, to discuss key bilateral issues and matters pertinent to the international agenda, and to work towards shared multilateral goals, including in the context of the work of the IPU. The matters discussed related to:

- The possibility of further inter-parliamentary discussions and the establishment of inter-parliamentary friendship groups;
- Discussion regarding the support for proposed emergency items and other issues related to the Assembly;
- Matters of Canadian domestic policy, and their applicability as templates for similar legislation in other countries; and
- Opportunities for improving relations between Canada and the other delegation's country, including increasing trade relations.

The delegation also met with a representative of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to discuss Canada's support to the organization's operations around the world.

The delegation visited the Embassy of Canada in Qatar and met with Ambassador Stefanie McCollum. During the meeting, Ambassador McCollum briefed delegates on Canadian relations with Qatar as well as domestic and regional issues.

### **Domestic follow-up on Assembly outcomes**

Article 7 of the IPU Statutes requires that members take appropriate domestic action to inform their parliaments and governments of IPU resolutions in order to "stimulate their implementation."<sup>34</sup> In furtherance of this requirement, and in addition to the presentation of this report in Parliament, correspondence was sent on behalf of the Canadian Group of the IPU to relevant parliamentarians and officials informing them of the resolutions adopted by the IPU and encouraging them to engage with the Canadian Group regarding their domestic implementation. After the 140th Assembly, letters were sent to:

- The Prime Minister and the Clerk of the Privy Council
- Ministers and Deputy Ministers of:
  - Environment and Climate Change
  - Foreign Affairs
  - Health
  - Innovation, Science and Economic Development
  - International Development
  - National Defence
- The Speaker of the Senate
- The Speaker of the House of Commons
- The Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Standing Senate Committees on:
  - Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources
  - Foreign Affairs and International Trade
  - Human Rights
  - National Security and Defence
  - Social Affairs, Science and Technology
- The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of House of Commons Standing Committees on:
  - Environment and Sustainable Development
  - Foreign Affairs and International Development as well as its Subcommittee on International Human Rights

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<sup>34</sup> IPU, [Statutes](#), Article 7

- Health
- Industry, Science and Technology
- National Defence

Respectfully submitted,

The Hon. David McGuinty, P.C., M.P.

President

Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

## **Travel Costs**

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	140th IPU Assembly and related meetings
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Doha, Qatar
<b>DATES</b>	April 4-10, 2019
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
	Hon. Salma Atallahjan, Senator
SENATE	Hon. Dennis Dawson, Senator
	Hon. Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia, Senator
	Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Ms. Irene Mathysen, M.P.
STAFF	[Enter Staff here]
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$51,732.68</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$ 14,673.13</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$ 1,400.33</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$ 10,914.19</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$ 123.25</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	<b>\$ 5.32</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 78,848.90</b>