



Joint Interparliamentary Council

Conseil interparlementaire mixte

Minutes

Meeting No. 120

April 25, 2012

The Joint Interparliamentary Council met this day at 3:32 p.m., *in camera*, in room 356-S of the Centre Block, Ms. Denise Savoie, M.P., presiding.

Representing the Senate: Hon. Carolyn Stewart Olsen, and Hon. Marie-P. Charette-Poulin, Senators.

Representing the House of Commons: Denise Savoie, Harold Albrecht, Hon. Rob Merrifield, Jamie Nicholls for Philip Toone, Massimo Pacetti, and Gordon Brown, MPs.

In attendance:

From the International and Interparliamentary Affairs Directorate: Gérald Lafrenière, Deputy Principal Clerk, Parliamentary Exchanges; and Marie-Andrée Rainville, Manager, Resource planning and administration.

From the Senate: Julie Pilon, Manager, Financial Policy, Planning and Corporate Reporting, Finance and Procurement Directorate.

From the House of Commons: Gilles Larocque, Senior Financial Advisor, Policy and Financial Planning.

1. Approval of Minutes:

On motion of Mr. Pacetti, the minutes of the meeting of March 28, 2012 were approved.

2. Service Standards for Incoming Delegations:

Further to the recommendation of the Subcommittee on Restructuring Parliamentary Associations adopted on March 14, 2012, the Clerk provided an explanation of the proposed service standards for associations hosting incoming delegations. After discussion, it was agreed to postpone this matter until a financial analysis of the potential savings is provided to the Council.

3. Consideration of the report from the Subcommittee on Restructuring Parliamentary Associations:

Mr. Merrifield provided an overview of the work of the Subcommittee in relation to the structure of parliamentary associations and the potential for efficiencies through a coordination of efforts between associations. After discussion, on the motion of Harold Albrecht it was agreed:

That four regional coordinating bodies be created to encompass the following regional and bilateral associations:
Asian Region: Canada-China and Canada-Japan
European Region: Canada-Europe (+OSCE), Canada-United Kingdom and Canada-France
American Region: ParlAmericas
African Region: Canada-Africa;

That, for the Asian Region and the European Region, an executive structure be developed with Chairs or Co-Chairs elected by the executives of the associations active in those regions;

That the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group continue to operate independently of the American Region;

That, for 2013-2014, the JIC determine whether budget submissions should be made on a regional basis, rather than an association basis and that a similar determination be made for membership fees.

Mr. Merrifield provided an overview of the work of the Subcommittee in relation to the potential for efficiencies through a coordination of efforts with other groups such as the Speakers and unrecognized friendship groups. After discussion, it was agreed:

That the JIC establish mechanisms by which the regional coordinating groups may regularly meet with other groups who are active in the same geographic area and that the JIC require associations to demonstrate that consultations have occurred at a regional level prior to making budget submissions;

That the JIC Co-Chairs request to meet annually with the Speakers to explore their plans for upcoming visits and opportunities for collaboration and report back to the JIC.

Mr. Merrifield provided an overview of the work of the Subcommittee in relation to the recognition of new associations. After discussion, it was agreed:

That, given the current economic climate, no new bilateral associations be recognized in this Parliament;

That the JIC Co-Chairs communicate this decision to the groups that have applied; and

That the JIC re-examine the criteria for recognizing new associations to determine if they should be made more restrictive, notably with regard to potential overlaps with existing associations.

Mr. Merrifield provided an overview of the work of the Subcommittee in relation to cooperation and consultation between the newly formed regional coordinating groups and unfunded groups. After discussion, it was agreed:

That the regional coordinating groups be encouraged to regularly consult with unfunded groups who are active in their geographic area.

Mr. Merrifield provided an overview of the work of the Subcommittee with regard to interparliamentary groups and friendship groups. After discussion, it was agreed:

That the restriction on receiving outside funding be lifted for interparliamentary groups, with the proviso that, where applicable, sponsored travel above the limit prescribed in the appropriate conflict of interest code be reported to the relevant ethics commissioner by each of the parliamentarians who participates;

That no new interparliamentary groups be recognized in this Parliament;

That no administrative support be provided to friendship groups;

That the JIC continue its arms length relationship with friendship groups, but encourage them to consult regularly with the appropriate regional coordinating group; and

That unfunded groups wishing to undertake major activities apply to the appropriate regional coordinating group and that the JIC be copied on any such applications.

4. Requests from APF and Canada-United Kingdom:

The Chair and the Clerk provided an overview of two requests received during the Easter recess and dealt with by the Co-Chairs. The Chair of the Canadian Section of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF) requested and was granted permission to have a single parliamentarian accompanied by a staff member on a trip to Toronto, since the staff member's non-refundable ticket had been purchased prior to the adoption of new rules in this regard.

The Chair of the Canada-United Kingdom Inter-Parliamentary Association wrote to the Co-Chairs noting that the final budget granted to the Association for 2012-2013 was lower than the initial allocation granted by the JIC on March 7, 2012. Given the impact this reduction in funding had on the planning of the Association's main activity scheduled for late April, pursuant to Section 2.2 of the *Financial Management and Policy Guide for Parliamentary Associations* which authorizes the Co-Chairs to advance up to \$20,000 in funding to a parliamentary association in exceptional cases when the JIC is unable to meet, the Co-Chairs agreed to restore \$9,522 to the Association's budget.

It was agreed to ratify the Co-Chairs decisions.

At 4:37 p.m., the Council adjourned to the call of the Co-Chairs.

Eric Janse

Clerk