

Canadian Group
Inter-Parliamentary Union



Groupe canadien
Union interparlementaire

Report of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

146th IPU Assembly and related meetings

Manama, Bahrain

March 11 to 15, 2023

REPORT

A delegation of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (UIPU) attended the [146th IPU Assembly](#) and Related Meetings in Manama, Bahrain, from 11 to 15 March 2023. The Canadian delegation comprised the following members:

- The Honourable David McGuinty, P.C., M.P., President of the Canadian Group and Head of Delegation;
- The Honourable Salma Atallahjan, Senator, Vice-President of the Canadian Group;
- The Honourable Raymonde Saint-Germain, Senator;
- The Honourable Michelle Rempel Garner, P.C., M.P.;
- Mr. Peter Julian, M.P.; and
- Ms. Andréanne Larouche, M.P.

The delegation was assisted during the 146th Assembly by the association secretary, Ms. Shannon Petry, as well as its advisors from the Library of Parliament, Ms. Natalie Mychajlyszyn and Mr. Olivier Leblanc-Laurendeau.

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assemblies are important fora for Canadian parliamentary diplomacy. Multilateral engagement occurs through the meetings of various committees and other IPU bodies, while bilateral engagement occurs through meetings that are held on the margins of an Assembly.

The 146th Assembly was the second attended in-person by a Canadian delegation since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. Joined by 683 parliamentarians from 136 IPU member parliaments and seven associate members, the Canadian delegation debated the overall theme, “Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance.” Canadian delegates also contributed to the amendment and adoption of a resolution on cybercrimes proposed by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and a resolution on forests as carbon sinks proposed by the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development.

Moreover, Canadian delegates played leadership roles in the drafting and adoption of an emergency resolution on the serious humanitarian crises affecting the peoples of Afghanistan, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries. They also actively participated in meetings of various subsidiary bodies focusing on women parliamentarians, young parliamentarians, democracy and human rights, and health. In addition, they attended numerous side events on topics such as humanitarian demining, sexual reproductive health, climate action and the protection of biodiversity.

THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Established in 1889, the IPU is the international organization of national parliaments. The IPU is the focal point for global parliamentary dialogue, working for peace and co-operation as well as for the 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.¹

At present, the IPU's activities are pursued according to its [Strategy 2022–2026](#), which was adopted in November 2021 during the 143rd Assembly in Madrid, Spain.

At the close of the 146th Assembly, 179 national parliaments were members of the IPU. The organization also has 14 associate members, including the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of *La Francophonie* and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.²

THE 146TH ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION³

The Assembly is the principal statutory body that expresses the views of the IPU on political issues⁴. Two statutory assemblies are normally held each year, bringing together parliamentarians from around the world to study international issues and make recommendations for action.

Delegations from 136 member parliaments and seven associate members took part in the 146th Assembly. They comprised 683 parliamentarians, including 58 Presiding Officers and 43 Deputy Presiding Officers. Of this number, 233 were women parliamentarians (34.1% of all parliamentarians participating) and 150 were parliamentarians under the age of 45 (22% of all parliamentarians participating).

A. AGENDA AND OUTCOMES

The agenda for the 146th Assembly included various items and led to the following outcomes:

- the adoption of the Manama Declaration on the overall theme of the general debate, “Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance;”
- a debate on the selected emergency item, “Raising awareness and calling for action on the serious humanitarian crises affecting the peoples of Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries, and on the particular vulnerability of women and children,” and adoption of a resolution on said emergency item;

¹ See: IPU, “[About us](#)”; and IPU, [Statutes and Rules](#).

² IPU, [Members](#).

³ Detailed reports and information on the 146th IPU Assembly and Related Meetings are available on the IPU website. See IPU, “Outcomes”, *146th IPU Assembly*.

⁴ IPU, [Statutes and Rules](#).

- the adoption of a resolution proposed by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security entitled, “Cybercrimes: The new risks to global security;”
- the adoption of a resolution proposed by the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development entitled, “Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon emission balances of forests;” and
- a special accountability segment on the implementation of IPU resolution and other decisions.

Canadian delegates played prominent roles in advancing these agenda items.

1. GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. McGuinty, Senator Ataullahjan and Ms. Larouche joined some 151 parliamentarians in deliberating the overall theme of the Assembly and contributing to the Manama Declaration.

Mr. McGuinty emphasized Canada’s diversity, while noting that the country is not perfect and that work remains to be done in that regard. He encouraged his fellow parliamentarians to lead by example, to hold their governments accountable and to change their countries’ laws to combat intolerance and exclusion. He also stressed the need for useful, baseline data, such as that provided by population censuses. Mr. McGuinty also highlighted some recent developments in Canada: the appointments of representatives to combat antisemitism and Islamophobia, investments in a new national anti-racism strategy, and the efforts made towards reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. He closed his remarks by explaining that we should not strive to “tolerate” diversity, but rather celebrate it and harness its full potential.

Senator Ataullahjan spoke about anti-Muslim racism. As Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights, she had proposed a study of Islamophobia, which the Committee had been undertaking for nearly one year at the time. She explained that more Muslims have been killed in targeted attacks in Canada than in any other G7 country and that hate crimes targeting Muslims disproportionately target women compared to men. She referred to the 2017 attack at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City and provided other examples of hate crimes targeting Muslims in Canada. Senator Ataullahjan also noted that it is parliamentarians’ responsibility to ensure that people feel safe in their community.

Ms. Larouche delivered her remarks during the segment devoted to young parliamentarians. She noted that injustices that have occurred across generations exacerbate the consequences of discrimination and exclusion. She explained that young people, however, have taken initiatives to promote peace and inclusion, and that they are on the frontline of the fight against intolerance. Ms. Larouche called on her fellow parliamentarians of all ages to show solidarity with youth.

Accordingly, the Manama Declaration warns about the global rise in social and economic inequalities which feed the social malaise being expressed through various forms of hate and intolerance. The Declaration calls on parliamentarians to “fight inequality through rights-based economic and social policies that put people before profit and the weak

before the strong, and that uphold the equality and dignity of every person.” Through the Declaration, member Parliaments committed to the following objectives, among others:

- criminalizing hate-motivated acts and forms of violence;
- investing in education;
- ensuring that parliamentary proceedings are open to the input of all;
- ensuring that national statistical institutes and research bodies produce up to date disaggregated data; and,
- assessing the inclusivity of parliaments and take measures to ensure a diverse representation.

2. EMERGENCY ITEM

According to the [IPU Statutes](#), an emergency item, or resolution, that pertains to “a recent major situation of international concern on which urgent action by the international community is required” may be included on the Assembly’s agenda.⁵

At the 146th Assembly, the emergency item proposed by Argentina, Chile, Germany, the Netherlands and Ukraine, with the support of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean and the Twelve Plus Group,⁶ “Raising awareness and calling for action on the serious humanitarian crises affecting the peoples of Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries, and on the particular vulnerability of women and children,” was selected and added to the agenda. Canada cast its 15 votes in favour of this proposal and voted against other proposals to ensure its selection.

Once an item is selected, a debate is held in the Assembly on the topic. A drafting committee is formed to negotiate the text of a resolution on the emergency item, the first draft of which is provided by the sponsor. **Ms. Rempel Garner** represented Canada as one of two Twelve Plus Group members appointed to the drafting committee by the 146th Assembly, the other being from the Netherlands. The two were joined by representatives from Belarus, Iran, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Senegal and Seychelles. Ms. Rempel Garner was selected as chair of the drafting committee. In that role, she guided its members through challenging negotiations and consideration of proposed amendments to finalize the emergency item’s text. She had played the same role at the 145th Assembly in Kigali, Rwanda.

The emergency item resolution was presented to the Assembly for adoption at its closing session. In its preamble, the resolution highlights challenges surrounding population

⁵ IPU, [Statutes and Rules](#). Proposed emergency items together with explanatory memoranda are circulated by the IPU Secretariat in advance of the Assembly if available, or at the time of the Assembly. They are also typically discussed within the geopolitical groups and among parliamentarians more generally to coordinate support. The Assembly votes to select an emergency item from among those proposed, with the one garnering two-thirds of the favourable votes cast as being selected. Should several requests obtain the requisite majority, the one having received the largest number of positive votes shall be accepted. Canada has 15 votes and may split its votes to allocate any number of ways for and against, or to abstain, so as to express the diverse views of its members on the proposed emergency items.

⁶ The Group of Latin America and the Caribbean is a geopolitical group comprising IPU members from that region. The Twelve Plus Group is a geopolitical group composed of IPU members from European countries, as well as Canada, Israel, Turkey, Australia and New Zealand.

displacements and humanitarian assistance. It specifically expresses concerns about the situation of Afghan women and girls (including the assassination of Ms. Mursal Nabizada), the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine caused by a war of aggression, the civil wars in Yemen and South Sudan, the earthquakes which affected Syria and Türkiye, and the sociopolitical crisis in Venezuela. The preamble also emphasizes that humanitarian crises are taking place in many other countries.

In its operative paragraphs, the resolution notably:

- considers that humanitarian crises are the leading cause of human rights violations;
- calls upon parliaments to speak out against, and exert pressure on, those responsible for such crises;
- strongly condemns attacks on the lives, integrity and well-being of civilians, and calls upon parliaments and governments to take action against impunity for international crimes that cause humanitarian crises and persecution (for instance, through support for the International Criminal Court);
- calls for increased international support and assistance for refugees and internally displaced persons;
- highlights the gendered aspects of humanitarian crises, armed conflicts and forced displacements; and
- deplores the practice of forced deportation, especially the forced deportation of children.

The resolution was adopted by consensus, following which delegations could take the floor to express their support or to abstain. The delegation of Yemen expressed reservations on the entire resolution and the delegation of India abstained from supporting it.

3. STANDING COMMITTEES

a. STANDING COMMITTEE ON PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security considered two items of business: a draft resolution entitled, “Cybercrimes: The new risks to global security,” and approval of the subject for the next resolution. **Senator Saint-Germain, Ms. Rempel Garner** and **Ms. Larouche** represented the Canadian delegation at the Committee.

Regarding the draft resolution on cybercrimes, the Committee reviewed 317 amendments proposed by 27 member parliaments. To respect the on-going state-to-state negotiations for an international convention on the topic (to which the draft resolution referred), many of the proposed amendments, including Canada’s, sought to emphasize the parliamentary perspective.

Senator Saint-Germain presented the 23 amendments proposed by the Canadian delegation. These amendments generally called for global efforts addressing cybercrime to: remain focused on implementing existing measures and respecting the rules-based international system; respect human rights as part of these efforts; and include racialized communities in the list of vulnerable populations negatively affected by cybercrimes. The Canadian Group also proposed new paragraphs or amended existing paragraphs to

reflect the challenges of establishing common definitions of cybercrime and to support cooperation between individual cyber security centres. The majority of these amendments were adopted or aligned closely with amendments proposed by other delegations, which were themselves adopted.

The resolution was adopted by consensus by the Committee and later by the Assembly. The delegation of Russia expressed reservations on one preambular paragraph and one operative paragraph, both related to the Budapest Convention on cybercrime. The delegation of India expressed reservations on operative paragraph 25 regarding the establishment of an IPU working group on cybercrime.

Ms. Larouche participated in the Committee's endorsement of the subject item for the next resolution, entitled "Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence." She endorsed it alongside Ms. Stolbizer (Argentina) and Mr. C. Lacroix (Belgium) who are the co-rapporteurs for this next resolution. In her intervention, Ms. Larouche suggested that the topic on child soldiers that was not selected for the next resolution instead be considered for a panel organized by the Committee at the next Assembly.

b. STANDING COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development considered a draft resolution entitled, "Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon balances of forests." The Committee reviewed over 100 amendments proposed by 23 member parliaments. **Mr. Julian** presented the ten amendments proposed by the Canadian delegation, all of which, except one, were adopted. The Canadian amendments focused on the following themes:

- ecological fiscal reforms;
- the phase down of unabated coal power and phase out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies; and
- indigenous rights.

The resolution was adopted by consensus by the Committee and later by the Assembly. The delegation of India expressed reservations to several preambular and operative paragraphs, and Russia expressed reservations on preambular paragraph 19, which highlighted the ecological consequences of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.

Mr. Julian also stood for Senator Marilou McPhedran as a representative of the Twelve Plus Group at the meeting of the Committee's Bureau.⁷ The Bureau reviewed proposals for the subject item of its next resolution. During the meeting, Mr. Julian expressed support for Ukraine's proposal for a resolution on ecocide. When it appeared clear that a consensus would not be reached, Mr. Julian suggested merging proposals. The Bureau agreed and proposed the following subject item to the Committee: "Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity." The Bureau also proposed that the Committee hold a panel

⁷ According to the [IPU's Statutes and Rules](#), in the absence of an officer at a Bureau meeting of a Standing Committee, another member from the country's delegation can substitute.

discussion on food security at the next Assembly. Both proposals were approved by the Committee.

c. STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights held a preparatory debate on the theme of its next resolution, “Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm.” It also debated the role of parliamentarians in the fight against disinformation and hateful and discriminatory content in the cyberspace. **Senator Ataullahjan** participated in the Committee’s discussions.

d. STANDING COMMITTEE ON UNITED NATIONS AFFAIRS

The Standing Committee on United Nations (UN) Affairs endorsed the establishment of a new, more focused mandate and modalities in order to make its work more effective and to contribute to stronger collaboration between the IPU and the UN. Accordingly, the Committee will mobilize parliamentarians around select UN reform issues of greatest impact to global governance, such as: improving the gender balance of the General Assembly, supporting the reform of the Security Council to be more representative of the international community, and making the UN budget more transparent and effective. Its new working methods include promoting parliamentary campaigns on selected UN issues and directing parliamentarians to take certain actions and to report on results as needed. Moreover, during Assemblies, the Bureau of the Committee can now propose motions related to its mandate for discussion by the Committee in plenary. The final amended text was adopted by a majority vote of those present at the Committee session.

In this context, the Committee held a discussion at the 146th Assembly on improving gender equality at the UN General Assembly and the ways in which parliaments can help the General Assembly and other UN bodies become more gender equal. The discussion was informed by data collected in part from a pre-Assembly survey of IPU members (in which the Canadian Group participated) regarding the current number of male and female Permanent Representatives of UN members.

The Committee also discussed parliamentary engagement in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development which is held annually in July. The VNR provides an opportunity for UN members to report on their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is noteworthy that the Government of Canada is submitting its second VNR in July 2023.

During this discussion, **Mr. McGuinty** highlighted the challenges facing parliaments in order to engage in the VNR process, including demanding parliamentary calendars, limited capacity and knowledge of the SDGs among parliamentarians, and the magnitude of actions required to implement the 2030 Agenda (such as retooling the global economy). In particular, he underscored that the current approach to sustainable development promotes ambitious promises that do not reflect the realities faced by parliaments and the people they represent.

At the 146th Assembly, Mr. McGuinty was elected for a two-year mandate on the Committee's Bureau as a representative of the Twelve Plus Group.

4. SPECIAL ACCOUNTABILITY SEGMENT

The Special Accountability Segment allows delegates to share good practices and any concrete actions undertaken towards the implementation of a previously established set of IPU resolutions or decisions identified for follow-up in this manner. The focus of the segment at the 146th Assembly was on the implementation of IPU decisions to tackle climate change.

Senator Saint-Germain participated in the segment on behalf of the Canadian delegation. The Senator highlighted that significant environmental and sustainable development challenges that face Canada, one of the world's largest exporters of fossil fuels. She noted that Canada has the obligation to act to reduce carbon emissions in all sectors, from transportation to agriculture, and to find innovative ways to capture and store carbon. Senator Saint-Germain said that economies need to be fundamentally changed, while ensuring that no one is left behind. She also spoke about the *Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act*, explaining that, in the face of significant challenges, Canada has set itself ambitious targets: reducing carbon emissions by between 40% to 45% by 2030 (compared to 2005) and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

B. GOVERNING BODIES OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

During assemblies, the IPU's Governing Council and its subsidiary bodies also hold various meetings.

1. GOVERNING COUNCIL

The Governing Council is the primary policy-making body of the IPU.⁸ It is composed of three representatives from each IPU member parliament, provided that its representation includes both men and women parliamentarians (single-gender delegations are limited to one member).

All members of the Canadian delegation attended sittings of the Governing Council during the 146th Assembly. Among its many decisions, the Governing Council:

- Approved the request of Liberia to rejoin the IPU, bringing the membership to 179 from 178;
- Adopted a new mandate and working methods for the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs;
- Approved the IPU anthem; and
- Approved the amended rules for the IPU Cremer-Passy Prize, which is awarded annually to the parliamentarian or group of parliamentarians who has made an outstanding contribution to the promotion of the IPU's objectives.

⁸ IPU, [Statutes and Rules](#).

The Governing Council also reviewed and took note of the situation of certain parliaments, specifically those with: non-functioning parliaments (Afghanistan, Haiti, Myanmar, Sudan); transitional parliaments (Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Libya, South Sudan); or facing political instability that had the potential to impact the functioning of parliament (Guinea-Bissau, Palestine, Tunisia, Venezuela, Yemen). It reiterated its previous decisions to suspend Sudan and to allow members of the dissolved parliaments of Afghanistan and Myanmar to attend IPU Assemblies as non-voting observers.

It also heard a report by the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution on the war in Ukraine regarding its efforts. In particular, the Task Force has been focusing on separate consultations with the Ukrainian and Russian delegations to encourage them to meet together to find agreement on specific issues, such as nuclear safety, food security, protection of environmentally vulnerable sites, as well as access to and exchange of prisoners of war.

Several specialized bodies fall under the Governing Council's responsibility and report to it on their work. Members of the Canadian delegation attended meetings of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

a. FORUM OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

The [Forum of Women Parliamentarians](#) meets at IPU assemblies and aims to find ways to redress the gender imbalance in national parliaments and within the IPU, and to ensure that gender perspectives are included in decisions adopted by the IPU membership.

The agenda for the 35th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians included the following items:

- Consideration of proposed amendments to the Committee on Peace and International Security's draft resolution, "Cybercrimes: The new risks to global security," from a gender perspective;
- A panel debate on "Parliamentary leadership in addressing insecurity and crises: Putting gender equality at the center of water security, climate resilience and peace sustainability;" and
- Elections to fill vacancies on the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, including the President, First Vice-President and Second Vice-President.

Senator Ataullahjan, Senator Saint-Germain, Ms. Rempel Garner, Ms. Larouche and Mr. Julian attended the meetings of the Forum. During the discussion on proposed amendments to the draft resolution on cybercrime, **Senator Saint-Germain** emphasized the importance of including references to the gendered aspects of cyber spaces and calls to make these spaces more inclusive, particularly where decision-making is concerned, with the goal of making them safer for women. She also highlighted recent initiatives undertaken in Canada, such as research on the intersection of gender and cyber issues, and funding to promote the participation of women in international cybersecurity negotiations.

During the discussion on gender equality and crises, **Senator Ataullahjan** underscored that women's involvement and their perspectives are essential to ensure that crisis responses and resilience building contribute effectively to sustainable peace. This is

particularly important given that, according to United Nations reports, women and girls are disproportionately affected compared to men and boys by environmental and humanitarian crises, including those caused by climate change.

At the 146th Assembly, **Ms. Rempel Garner** was elected to a four-year mandate on the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians as a representative of the Twelve Plus Group.

b. FORUM OF YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS

The [Forum of Young Parliamentarians](#) works to ensure that youth voices are heard in the IPU's decision-making and to promote youth participation and perspectives at its political level.

The agenda for the Forum at the 146th Assembly focused on the following items:

- update on youth participation in parliaments;
- exchange of views on the two draft resolutions from the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and Standing Committee on Sustainable Development;
- exchange of views on the overall theme of the Assembly; and
- discussion from a youth perspective on the forthcoming resolution being prepared by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights.

Ms. Larouche attended the Forum. She intervened to emphasize the importance of youth's civic engagement and political participation for the building of inclusive societies and strong democratic institutions, as well as for young people's own development. She explained that Canadian youth participate less actively in electoral politics than older generations, but they nonetheless remain politically engaged and understand the importance of being active members of their community. She provided examples of youth civic engagement in Canada to her international counterparts.

C. 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 and each plays 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 is a member of two geopolitical groups within the IPU:

- the 47-member [Twelve Plus Group](#); and
- the 36-member [Asia-Pacific Group](#).

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

1. TWELVE PLUS GROUP

The meetings of the Twelve Plus Group at the 146th Assembly were chaired by Mr. Andries Gryffroy from Belgium. Its agenda included discussion on various issues pertaining to the Group's priorities at the IPU, such as the promotion of human rights and

the inclusion of 2SLGBTQI+ people, the implementation of IPU resolutions, and universal membership at the IPU. The Group also reviewed its financial situation and heard a briefing from its members on the IPU Executive Committee. The Group was informed of the Steering Committee's decision to appoint Mr. Laurent Wehrli from Switzerland as Vice-President.

The Canadian delegation was represented at the meetings of the Group by **Mr. McGuinty** and **Ms. Rempel Garner**. **Senator Ataullahjan**, **Senator Saint-Germain**, **Mr. Julian** and **Ms. Larouche** also attended meetings of the Group.

The Group also held elections to fill vacancies in various positions across several IPU bodies. Accordingly, **Mr. McGuinty** and **Ms. Rempel Garner** were elected to represent the Group on the Bureau of the Standing Committee on UN Affairs and the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, respectively. As noted above, their nominations were accepted by the two committees.

During the meetings of the Group, **Mr. McGuinty** took the floor during a discussion on the future of the IPU. He explained that he previously served on the Executive Committee, where he witnessed a lot of efforts being made to improve the organization's governance. He noted that the IPU is gaining prominence and becoming more influential, and that the next IPU President will have an impact on the future of the organization in the global sphere. As such, he encouraged his peers to start thinking about potential candidates and the qualifications required of an IPU President to support the organization's objectives and values.

Ms. Rempel Garner spoke about the draft resolution on cyber crime of the Committee on Peace and International Security and explained that there are ways to improve the text and that Canada had proposed several amendments to that effect. She noted that cyber crime is the subject of ongoing international negotiations for a convention on the topic at the UN-level.

Senator Ataullahjan and **Ms. Rempel Garner** also spoke about the work being done to assist former Afghan parliamentarians, especially women.

2. ASIA-PACIFIC GROUP

The meeting of the Asia-Pacific Group (APG) at the 146th Assembly was chaired by Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives Milton Dick. The Group's agenda included a briefing by APG members of the IPU Executive Committee, a briefing by Indonesia on the most recent meeting of the ASEAN+3 Group, a presentation by the IPU President and various elections to vacancies on IPU bodies.

It also conducted elections from among its nominated members to fill vacancies on the various bodies of the IPU. Delegations are allocated only one vote. **Senator Ataullahjan** represented the Canadian delegation as the voting member at the Group's meeting. **Senator Saint-Germain** and **Mr. Julian** were also in attendance.

During the debate on the candidacies to the Board of Young Parliamentarians, **Senator Ataullahjan** took the floor to speak about the state of women's rights in Iran, which had a candidate for the vacancy.

D. OTHER MEETINGS AND SIDE EVENTS

- **Mr. Julian** was a panellist during a discussion entitled, *Parliamentary action on biodiversity: Translating global commitments into national action*. He spoke about the threats to biodiversity globally and explained that biodiversity loss is one component of what United Nations bodies refer to as “the triple planetary crisis,” alongside climate change and air pollution. He also referred to the Convention on Biological Diversity which had been held in Montreal in December 2022. **Ms. Larouche** was also in attendance and took the floor during the subsequent discussion to emphasize that parliamentary action on biodiversity goes beyond party lines and to highlight the disproportionate impact of biodiversity loss on women compared to men.
- **Ms. Larouche** attended a workshop on sexual and reproductive health. She highlighted the study on women in sport being carried out by the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women to emphasize that dimension of the topic.
- **Ms. Rempel Garner** attended a meeting of the Twelve Plus Working Group on Improving the Implementation of IPU Resolutions.
- **Ms. Larouche** attended a panel discussion on climate oversight action.
- Canadian delegates attended the Twelve Plus side event entitled, *Humanitarian demining as a precondition to lasting peace: Challenges and solutions*.
- **Mr. Julian** attended a panel discussion on parliamentary solidarity with MPs at risk.
- **Senator Saint-Germain** recorded a message for the IPU’s newly launched campaign, “Parliaments for the Planet.” She discussed how climate change is affecting Canada and the actions the Parliament of Canada and Canadian parliamentarians are taking to combat climate change. Her message was compiled with those of other parliamentarians into a IPU video for YouTube, entitled [“My parliament, my planet, our future!”](#)

E. BILATERAL MEETINGS

Members of the Canadian delegation held bilateral meetings and informal discussions with other delegates, including from the following countries:

- Afghanistan (**Senator Ataullahjan**);
- Georgia (**Mr. McGuinty and Mr. Julian**);
- India (**Mr. McGuinty, Senator Ataullahjan, Ms. Rempel Garner, Mr. Julian and Ms. Larouche**);
- Israel (**Mr. McGuinty**);
- Japan (**Mr. McGuinty, Mr. Julian and Ms. Larouche**);
- Oman (**Mr. McGuinty, Ms. Rempel Garner, Mr. Julian and Ms. Larouche**);
- Poland (**Senator Saint-Germain and Ms. Rempel Garner**);
- South Africa (**Mr. McGuinty, Ms. Rempel Garner and Mr. Julian**);

- Tanzania, as the chair of the African Group of the IPU (**Mr. McGuinty, Ms. Rempel Garner, Mr. Julian and Ms. Larouche**);
- Ukraine (**Mr. McGuinty, Senator Saint-Germain, Ms. Rempel Garner, Mr. Julian and Ms. Larouche**); and
- Zambia (**Mr. McGuinty, Ms. Rempel Garner, Mr. Julian and Ms. Larouche**).

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 included:

- the importance of preserving biodiversity and fighting climate change;
- the development of green technologies and alternative sources of energy;
- the situation in Afghanistan following the fall of the republic in 2021;
- the representation of women in politics and parliaments;
- the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine;
- Canada's international assistance in Africa;
- the importance of cultural diversity; and
- economic cooperation and development.

Mr. McGuinty also met with representatives from the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), which represents Myanmar's last democratically elected legislative body, dissolved during the 2021 military coup d'état. Representatives from the CRPH can come to IPU assemblies as non-voting observers. Mr. McGuinty and the representatives from the CRPH discussed humanitarian assistance needs in Myanmar and refugee flows, among other things.

F. 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." To uphold this requirement, in addition to the presentation of this report in Parliament, correspondence will be 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 of the IPU regarding their domestic implementation. The complete list of this correspondence will be included in the report of the 147th Assembly to complete the cycle of these activities in 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

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

President, Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
ACTIVITY	146th IPU Assembly and Related Meetings
DESTINATION	Manama, Bahrain
DATES	March 11 to March 15, 2023
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Salma Ataullahjan, Senator Hon. Raymonde Saint-Germain, Senator Hon. David McGuinty, P.C., M.P.
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner, P.C., M.P. Hon. Peter Julian, M.P. Ms. Andréanne Larouche, M.P.
STAFF	Ms. Shannon Petry, Association Secretary Mr. Olivier Leblanc-Laurendeau, Advisor Ms. Natalie Mychajlyszyn, Advisor
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 71,635.57
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 13,408.58
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00
PER DIEMS	\$ 12,980.34
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 521.94
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 0.00
TOTAL	\$ 98,546.43