

Canadian Group
Inter-Parliamentary Union



Groupe canadien
Union interparlementaire

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

147th IPU Assembly and Related Meetings

Luanda, Angola

October 23 to 27, 2023

Report

A delegation of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (UIPU) attended the [147th IPU Assembly and Related Meetings](#) in Luanda, Angola, from 23 to 27 October 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 Michelle Rempel Garner, P.C., M.P.; and
- Mr. Matthew Green, M.P.

The delegation was assisted during the 147th Assembly by the association secretary of the UIPU, Ms. Catherine Cuerrier, 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 Canadian delegation joined nearly 622 parliamentarians from 128 IPU member parliaments as well as eight associate members at the 147th Assembly to debate the overall theme, “Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions ([Sustainable Development Goal] 16).” Canadian delegates also contributed to the Assembly’s adoption of a resolution on orphanage trafficking proposed by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights.

Moreover, Canadian delegates led a group of like-minded delegations in proposing an emergency resolution on the situation in Israel and Gaza following the attacks by Hamas on 7 October 2023. They also actively participated in meetings of various subsidiary bodies focusing on women parliamentarians, young parliamentarians, peace and security, sustainable development, and United Nations (UN) affairs. Among other activities, Canadian delegates attended panels on such topics as terrorism, children affected by war and gender equality in caring responsibilities. Finally, the 147th Assembly elected a new president of the IPU, Dr. Tulia Ackson, Speaker of the National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania, for a three-year term. Dr. Ackson is the third woman to lead the IPU in its over 130-year history.

THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Established in 1889, the [IPU](#) is the international organization of national 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 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 in line with its [Strategy 2022–2026](#), which was adopted in November 2021 at the 143rd Assembly in Madrid, Spain.

At the close of the 147th Assembly, 180 national parliaments were members of the IPU. The organization also has 15 associate members, including the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of *La Francophonie* and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.²

THE 147th 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 128 member parliaments and eight associate members took part in the 147th Assembly. They comprised 622 parliamentarians, including 51 Presiding Officers and 42 Deputy Presiding Officers. Of this number, 227 were women (36.5% of participating parliamentarians) and 188 were parliamentarians under the age of 45 (31.3% of participating parliamentarians).

A. AGENDA AND OUTCOMES

The agenda for the 147th Assembly included various items and its outcomes included:

- the adoption of the Luanda Declaration on the overall theme of the general debate, “Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16);”
- the adoption of a resolution entitled, “Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm,” submitted by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights;
- the adoption, by the Standing Committee on United Nations (UN) Affairs, of a motion entitled, “Bringing gender equality to the UN General Assembly;” and
- a Special Accountability Segment.

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

² IPU, [Members](#).

³ Detailed reports and information on the 147th IPU Assembly and Related Meetings are available on the IPU website. See IPU, “[Outcomes](#),” *147th IPU Assembly*.

⁴ IPU, [Statutes and Rules of the IPU](#).

Canadian delegates played prominent roles in advancing these agenda items. In addition, **Senator Ataullahjan** presided over one of the Assembly's sittings, the General Debate on the theme 'Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)' on 26 October 2023.

1. GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. McGuinty, Senator Ataullahjan and Mr. Green joined 146 parliamentarians from 111 member parliaments in deliberating the overall theme of the Assembly and contributing to the Luanda Declaration.

Mr. McGuinty focused on trust as the essence of SDG 16, and shared his concerns about how low levels of trust in public institutions might affect the realization of the 17 SDGs by 2030. He also expressed concerns about such challenges as increased war and conflict, the prevalence of competing truths, a lack of community and growing polarization. In underscoring that parliamentarians have a role to play in restoring hope in such a context, he called on his counterparts from around the world to work towards strengthening parliamentary institutions and making them more representative and inclusive. Mr. McGuinty closed his remarks by noting that, while the world is confronted with some of the most significant challenges it has ever faced, it is also better equipped than ever to address them.

Senator Ataullahjan, who also chaired a sitting during the General Debate, underscored that SDG 16 is closely linked to the theme of the previous Assembly held in Manama, Bahrain: promoting peaceful coexistence, building inclusive societies, and fighting intolerance. She noted that to establish peaceful, inclusive and tolerant societies, we need to build trust in public institutions. Specifically, Senator Ataullahjan stressed the importance of transparency, responsiveness and representation in public institutions, and the role of parliamentarians in fighting against discrimination. She encouraged her colleagues to have challenging discussions in their respective parliaments as a way of maintaining transparency, accountability and trust.

Mr. Green delivered his remarks during the segment devoted to young parliamentarians. He noted that good governance is being challenged by the erosion of trust in public institutions, decreasing respect for human rights and weakening efforts to improve social inclusion. He highlighted the crucial role that young parliamentarians can play in reversing these trends by ensuring responsible, participatory and representative decision-making.

Drawing on the debate, the Luanda Declaration – endorsed at the end of the Assembly – emphasizes that good governance is both critical for society and an important means of achieving the SDGs. The Declaration stresses that, to ensure good governance, trust in public institutions and active citizen participation must be fostered. The Declaration notes, among other things, that:

- good governance is critical for society and an important means of achieving the SDGs;
- inclusion and representation are essential to building legitimacy and transparency, and key to more effective accountability;
- the rule of law and the universal right to be protected by the law must be at the core of parliamentary action to strengthen governance;

- the root causes of conflict, particularly those that are found in economic inequality and discrimination against entire groups must be addressed to create a sustainable path towards peace and development; and
- women and youth need to be more actively involved in peace processes.

2. EMERGENCY ITEM

According to the [IPU Statutes](#), one 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 147th Assembly, **Canada** proposed (on behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Austria, Croatia, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) the inclusion of an emergency item on the situation in Israel and Gaza following the attack on Israel by Hamas on 7 October 2023. The proposed emergency item sought to achieve common ground for peace and dialogue. The draft text affirmed the goal of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting negotiated peace which:

- is based on equal measures of justice and freedom for Israelis and Palestinians, and respect for human rights and dignity;
- is grounded in a two-State solution;
- is consistent with United Nations Security Council resolutions, and upholds international law and internationally recognized commitments to human rights;
- respects Israel’s right to security within its own borders;
- upholds the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for the establishment of their own State; and
- enables Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side in equality, peace and security.

Proposals for an emergency item on the same theme were also put forward jointly by Algeria (subsequently withdrawn) on behalf of the Arab Group, by Indonesia on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group and by South Africa (subsequently withdrawn) on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. McGuinty addressed the Assembly in presenting Canada’s draft text. In his remarks, he emphasized that it offered a respectful starting point for building common ground and facilitating discussions towards lasting peace. He continued that parliamentarians had a responsibility to those they represented and those in need of help to promote solidarity and end the cycle of violence and hate.

⁵ IPU, [Statutes and Rules of the IPU](#). 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.

Delegations were then asked to vote on the proposals submitted by Canada and by Indonesia. Neither proposal obtained the required two-thirds majority of the votes cast, meaning that no emergency item was added to the Assembly's agenda.

That said, the aforementioned Luanda Declaration noted that the Assembly was taking place "against the backdrop of a rapidly escalating crisis in the Middle East" and "express[ed] grave concern about the humanitarian consequences of the crisis." It called for all parties to cease hostilities and resume negotiations "towards a sustainable two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security."

3. STANDING COMMITTEES

a. STANDING COMMITTEE ON PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

The agenda of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security included an expert hearing on the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon system (AWS) and artificial intelligence (AI), as well as panel discussions on tools for parliamentarians in the pursuit of peace and the role of parliaments in promoting transparency, anti-corruption and citizen engagement. **Mr. Green** attended these sessions.

b. STANDING COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development met to debate the topic of its next resolution, "Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity." The Standing Committee also held preparations for the Parliamentary Meeting at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in the United Arab Emirates as well as an expert hearing on the theme, "Ensuring global food security". **Senator Ataullahjan, Ms. Rempel Garner and Mr. Green** attended these sessions.

Mr. Green participated in the Standing Committee's discussion on food security. He noted the role that corporations and their profit motive play in allowing the cost of food to rise when vulnerable populations are facing difficult choices between paying for rent, heat or food. He shared the situation in his own constituency which has some of the highest levels of child poverty in Canada and where 80% of the population on social assistance and welfare programmes have to use food banks. He called for improved statistical reporting mechanisms on global food insecurity to better reflect the situation of minority communities, including Indigenous populations. He noted in particular the high number of First Nations communities in Canada that have boil water advisories.

c. STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights considered a draft resolution entitled "Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm." The Standing Committee considered 194 amendments submitted by 26 member parliaments as well as two amendments from the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. **Senator Ataullahjan** presented the four amendments proposed by the Canadian Group, three of which were adopted. The Canadian amendments that were adopted sought to introduce or strengthen references to the following themes:

- the effects of armed conflicts and political instability on poverty, a key driver of orphanage trafficking;
- the unique needs of Indigenous children and children belonging to minority groups; and
- the importance of identity factors such as race, religion, culture, language and disability status in taking into account the differentiated needs and experiences of children.

The resolution was adopted by consensus by the Standing Committee and later by the Assembly. Following its adoption, the delegations of India and Iran expressed reservations on certain paragraphs.

The Standing Committee also selected the topic of its next resolution. **Ms. Rempel Garner** and Ms. Neema Lugangira (Tanzania) jointly submitted for consideration the theme, “The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law.” In proposing this theme, Ms. Rempel Garner highlighted that AI is a rapidly emerging issue, the implications of which must be fully understood by parliamentarians so that they can contribute knowledgeably to public policy discussions. She stressed that AI is being used to facilitate the exploitation of women and children, and has the potential to cause huge disruption to elections and other democratic processes. She underscored that, given its mandate, the IPU is best placed to initiate a debate on AI from a parliamentary perspective and to set out in the form of a resolution the role of parliamentarians in addressing the issue for future benefit. The Standing Committee subsequently approved the proposal and Ms. Rempel Garner and Ms. Lugangira were confirmed as co-rapporteurs for the draft resolution. A preparatory debate will be held in March 2024 at the 148th Assembly and a resolution will be finalized in October 2024 at the 149th Assembly.

Mr. McGuinty and **Mr. Green** also attended sittings of this Standing Committee.

d. STANDING COMMITTEE ON UNITED NATIONS AFFAIRS

Mr. McGuinty and **Mr. Green** attended the sittings of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs. Its agenda included a panel featuring Ms. Zahira Virani (Canada), the UN Resident Coordinator in Angola, who discussed the UN’s field presence in the country in support of national development.

Mr. McGuinty participated in the discussion that followed. He emphasized the importance of the UN’s work in implementing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, but argued that the UN should not overlook the role that parliamentarians can play as agents of change. By better integrating parliamentarians into the implementation process, he argued, the gap between the promise of sustainable development and the performance of initiatives such as the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be bridged.

The Standing Committee also held a debate on the topic of UN Security Council reform. Members approved the proposal submitted by the Ukrainian delegation that called on the Committee’s Bureau to prepare a draft motion on the subject for consideration at the 148th Assembly.

The Standing Committee also reviewed and adopted a motion entitled “Bringing gender equality to the UN General Assembly.” The motion calls on parliaments and parliamentarians to:

- review the recruitment process for their national foreign service to ensure equal opportunity for men and women;
- urge their governments to set a deadline by which to achieve gender parity in their national foreign service;
- use parliamentary processes to review the appointments of UN permanent representatives and senior diplomats from a gender perspective;
- meet yearly with their UN permanent representative, notably to discuss advances towards gender equality at the UN General Assembly; and
- mark the International Day of Women in Diplomacy (24 June).

Mr. McGuinty also attended the meeting of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, having been elected to the body at the March 2023 Assembly in Manama, Bahrain. During the Bureau’s meeting, he provided an update on Canadian parliamentary engagement with the UN, noting his participation at the Parliamentary Forum at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and briefings with Canada’s Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Bob Rae, in New York in July 2023.

Mr. Green replaced Mr. McGuinty during the Bureau’s visit to one of three agroprocessing training centres supported by Angola’s Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP), the National Institute for Support to Small and Medium Enterprises (INAPEM) and the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization. Mr. Green heard that the training centre showcased the importance of Canadian contributions to UN development efforts in Angola and contributed to strengthening bilateral relations between Canada and Angola.

Finally, Members of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs agreed with the Bureau’s recommendation and elected **Mr. McGuinty** as its president for a two-year term ending March 2025.⁶

4. SPECIAL ACCOUNTABILITY SEGMENT

The Special Accountability Segment allows delegates to share good practices and concrete actions taken towards the implementation of any IPU resolution or decision. **Senator Ataullahjan** participated in the segment on behalf of the Canadian delegation. She spoke about the *Kigali Declaration*, unanimously endorsed by the IPU at the 145th Assembly which took place in October 2022, and its focus on the importance of gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments. She also highlighted progress towards gender equality in the Senate of Canada, noting that today women senators outnumber their male counterparts and highlighting that Senator Gagné’s appointment as Speaker of the Senate in May 2023 made her the third woman in history to hold that office. Lastly, the Senator emphasized the work done by parliamentary committees to draw attention to gender equality issues and the recent passage of legislation requiring the federal budgetary process to incorporate gender mainstreaming.

⁶ Mr. McGuinty’s election follows the IPU’s schedule of rotation between geopolitical groups and gender.

B. GOVERNING BODIES OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

The IPU's governing bodies, such as the Governing Council, and subsidiary bodies also meet during assemblies.

1. GOVERNING COUNCIL

The Governing Council is the plenary policy-making body of the IPU⁷. 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 had the opportunity to attend sittings of the Governing Council. Among its many actions and decisions, the Governing Council:

- approved the financial results for 2022;
- approved the 2024 consolidated budget;
- accepted Bahamas as the 180th member of the IPU;
- received an update on the establishment of IPU regional offices in Uruguay and Egypt;
- endorsed “peace and security” as the IPU’s priority theme for 2024; and
- adopted decisions of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians related to the situation of 121 parliamentarians from nine countries.

The Governing Council also reviewed and took note of the situation of certain parliaments, specifically those with: non-functioning parliaments (Afghanistan, Haiti, Myanmar, Niger and Sudan); transitional parliaments (Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Guinea, Libya, Mali and South Sudan); or parliaments whose functioning was at risk due to domestic political instability (Guinea-Bissau, Palestine, Tunisia, Venezuela and Yemen). It reiterated its previous decisions to suspend Sudan from the IPU 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 on the work of the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution on the war in Ukraine. In particular, the Task Force has been focusing on separate consultations with the Ukrainian and Russian delegations to finalize a roadmap for collaboration that would consider specific issues, such as nuclear safety, food security and protection of environmentally vulnerable sites, as well as access to and exchange of prisoners of war. In its report to the Council, the Task Force noted that the Ukrainian and Russian delegations expressed some interest in intensifying efforts regarding the situation of children affected by the conflict. The Task Force also announced that it would organize in-depth separate discussions with both delegations at the IPU Headquarters in 2024.

As well, the Governing Council adopted a Code of [Conduct for IPU Governance Officials](#). The Code of Conduct aims to establish behavioural standards to ensure that IPU Governance Officials (its leadership, members of the Executive Committee, and elected

⁷ IPU, [Statutes and Rules of the IPU](#).

members of IPU statutory and specialized bodies) act in the best interests of the IPU and abide by its core values when exercising their duties.

The Governing Council also adopted a [Policy for the prevention of harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other events](#). This policy aims to ensure an inclusive, respectful and safe environment for all who participate at IPU Assemblies and events. It aims to promote a common understanding of zero-tolerance behaviour; to support and assist persons who report incidents of harassment; and to investigate and establish accountability.

Finally, the Governing Council elected Dr. Ackson (Tanzania) as IPU President for a three-year term. **Mr. McGuinty**, **Senator Ataullahjan** and **Mr. Green** held the three votes allocated to the Canadian delegation in this election.

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 following specialized bodies:

a. FORUM OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

The [Forum of Women Parliamentarians](#) meets at IPU assemblies 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 36th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians included the following items:

- activities to advance gender equality;
- an exchange of views on the draft resolution of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights on Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliamentarians in reducing harm; and
- a panel discussion entitled "Women in politics: To stay or not to stay?"

Senator Ataullahjan and **Ms. Rempel Garner** attended sittings of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.

Ms. Rempel Garner addressed the Forum as a panelist during the discussion on women in politics. In her address, she remarked that it is important to ensure that women are not only elected to parliament, but also stay in parliament. This can be facilitated, she argued, by ensuring that they are empowered to make meaningful contributions to public policy rather than being tokenized. Moreover, she contended, women need to have the space to pursue their political passions with equity and dignity so that they can overcome the many barriers that discourage them from entering politics. Indeed, she concluded, women must be given a seat at the table and have their contributions not only heard but also implemented.

Ms. Rempel Garner attended the meetings of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, having been elected to the body at the previous Assembly in March 2023 in Manama, Bahrain. She reminded members that the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights had selected artificial intelligence and its impact on democracy as the theme for its next draft resolution. She explained that members of the Standing Committee had underscored the differentiated impact of artificial intelligence on women,

including as regards their increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation. On behalf of her co-rapporteur, Ms. Lugangira (Tanzania), Ms. Rempel Garner invited Bureau members to actively participate in the drafting process and to provide input during the topic's debate at the next Assembly. She also participated in discussions about setting the Forum's agenda at the next Assembly, notably in supporting an item on women, peace and security.

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 IPU defines young parliamentarians as those under the age of 45 years.

The agenda for the Forum focused on the following items:

- an update on youth participation in politics;
- an exchange of views on the theme of the general debate, *Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)*; and
- an exchange of views on the draft resolution of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, *Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliamentarians in reducing harm*.

Mr. Green attended the meeting of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians. During the update on youth participation in politics, he addressed the lack of opportunities for young people to enter electoral politics, a challenge he attributed to an unwillingness on the part of long-serving parliamentarians to make space for them and to recognize the value that young perspectives and leaders bring to issues, such as climate change, war and migration.

The IPU's work to promote youth participation and perspectives in politics includes its biennial report on youth participation in national parliaments. The [2023 edition](#) of the report was launched at the 147th Assembly. **Mr. Green** addressed delegates as part of the report's launch event at the Governing Council. He called on parliamentarians to use the report's findings as motivation to take urgent action to ensure that political space is created for young people to engage nationally as well as at the IPU.

c. WORKING GROUP ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Working Group on Science and Technology meets in camera during IPU assemblies to, among other things, reflect on social changes brought about by advances in science and technology and to make proposals to parliaments on how to anticipate and prepare for such changes. In light of her work on matters relating to artificial intelligence, **Ms. Rempel Garner** was invited to attend the Working Group's meeting as an observer.

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. 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 is a member of two geopolitical groups within the IPU:

- the 47-member [Twelve Plus Group](#), which includes members 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 has two votes in the Twelve Plus Group, but only one vote in the Asia-Pacific Group. 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 147th Assembly were chaired by Mr. Andries Gryffroy of Belgium. The group's agenda included discussion on various issues pertaining to its priorities, such as the implementation of IPU resolutions, proposals to amend the organization's rules and statutes, the ongoing Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Middle East. Notably, the Group rejected a proposal by the Group of Latin America and Caribbean for the IPU to consider establishing an election observation mechanism given the organization's limited capacity and resources as well as the expertise already developed by others in this field. The Group also reviewed its financial situation and heard a briefing from its members on the IPU Executive Committee. Finally, the Group discussed the various candidates for the IPU presidential election and filled vacancies in various positions across several IPU bodies allocated to its members.

All Canadian delegates attended meetings of the Twelve Plus Group.

- During the discussions on the situation in Israel and Gaza following the 7 October 2023 attack by Hamas, **Mr. McGuinty** and **Ms. Rempel Garner** informed the Group that, following a discussion at the Group's Steering Committee meeting prior to the Assembly, the Canadian delegation was preparing a draft emergency item for submission to the 147th Assembly that would emphasize the humanitarian crisis unfolding, international law and the importance of a common ground for peace and dialogue. They called on members of the Group to support the proposal and to add their names as sponsors to demonstrate their solidarity with the initiative.
- During the discussion on women Afghan parliamentarians in exile, **Senator Ataullahjan** highlighted the work done by Canadian parliamentarians. She noted that although many women Afghan parliamentarians have sought refuge in Canada, many remain in Afghanistan and face high levels of danger. She pressed her colleagues not to forget about them and to keep this issue on the agenda.
- Parliamentarians from Norway called for the release of [Ms. Narges Mohammadi](#), who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize while still imprisoned in Iran in October 2023. They proposed that the Group called on the IPU President to make a statement. **Senator Ataullahjan** supported the proposal and called on her counterparts to hold Iran to account.

- **Ms. Rempel Garner** informed the Group of her intention to propose artificial intelligence and its impact on democracy, human rights and the rule of law as a topic for the next draft resolution of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights. She called on the Group's members on the Standing Committee's Bureau to support the proposal that she would be submitting jointly with Ms. Lugangira (Tanzania).

2. ASIA-PACIFIC GROUP

The meeting of the Asia-Pacific Group (APG) was chaired by the Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives, Milton Dick. Its agenda included a briefing on recent meetings of the IPU Executive Committee by the APG representatives from Thailand and India to that Committee and a briefing of the most recent meeting of the ASEAN+3 Group. Delegates also conducted elections to fill vacancies on the various bodies of the IPU allocated to the Group⁸.

Mr. McGuinty, Senator Ataullahjan and **Mr. Green** attended the meeting. Mr. McGuinty addressed the Group to indicate that the Canadian delegation was submitting a proposal for an emergency item relating to the aftermath of the 7 October 2023 Hamas attack on Israel, with an emphasis on the unfolding humanitarian crisis, international law and the importance of finding a common ground for peace and dialogue. He called on members of the Group to support the proposal and to add their names as sponsors to demonstrate their solidarity with the initiative.

D. OTHER MEETINGS AND SIDE EVENTS

- **Mr. McGuinty** and **Senator Ataullahjan** attended the Second Global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, *The global response to the Call of the Sahel*. **Senator Ataullahjan** participated in the discussion, noting that the Sahel was a troubled region fraught with chronic food shortages whose challenges were exacerbated by climate change, ethnic violence, corruption, terrorism and coups. She remarked that, despite significant funding and development work, little progress had been made and a willingness to work towards peace was not in evidence. She suggested rethinking the approach to addressing the challenges in the Sahel region to provide a sense of hope in the future for those affected by the challenges.

- **Mr. Green** attended the Parity Debate, *I care to care: Male parliamentarians engage in equal caring responsibilities*. He raised concerns about the challenges faced by male agricultural workers with young and aged dependents, particularly those faced by what he described as underpaid temporary foreign agricultural workers in Canada. He shared his reflections about the impact of migration patterns on the global economy and reflected on modern-day colonialism. Mr. Green also remarked that not only do patriarchal social structures deny men the opportunity to take on more equal caring responsibilities or use parental leave entitlements, but that they also impact parliamentarians' ability to serve.

⁸ The [Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\) +3 Group](#) comprises the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

• **Mr. McGuinty** recorded a [YouTube message](#) for the IPU’s campaign, “Parliaments for the Planet.” He discussed his concern about the planet’s limited carrying capacity and the importance of redesigning and retooling economies away from systems dependent on fossil fuels. He underscored that parliamentarians must play a role in encouraging investment in renewable resources and energy in part by redesigning tax systems. Mr. McGuinty argued that the concept of natural security is intertwined with the concept of national security insofar as failing to take measures, such as carbon pricing, to protect natural security risks undermining national security.

E. BILATERAL MEETINGS

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

- Armenia (**Senator Ataullahjan** and **Ms. Rempel Garner**);
- the People’s Republic of China (**Mr. McGuinty**, **Senator Ataullahjan**, **Ms. Rempel Garner** and **Mr. Green**);
- South Korea (**Mr. McGuinty**, **Senator Ataullahjan** and **Mr. Green**);
- Somalia (**Mr. Green**);
- South Africa (**Mr. Green**); and
- Ukraine (**Ms. Rempel Garner** and **Mr. Green**).

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

- artificial intelligence;
- international migration;
- climate change;
- progress on sustainable development;
- global peace and security; and
- humanitarian assistance.

Senator Ataullahjan had a bilateral meeting with representatives of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH). The PMNCH has permanent observer status at the IPU.

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 implementation⁹.” In furtherance of this requirement, and in addition to the presentation of this report in Parliament, correspondence will be sent on behalf of the Canadian Group to relevant parliamentarians and officials informing them of the resolutions adopted by the IPU at its assemblies in 2023 and encouraging them to engage with the Canadian Group regarding their domestic implementation. Letters will be sent to:

⁹ IPU, [Statutes of the IPU, Article 7](#).

- The Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister;
- Ministers of:
 - Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities;
 - Environment and Climate Change;
 - Energy and Natural Resources;
 - Families, Children and Social Development
 - Foreign Affairs;
 - Indigenous Services;
 - International Development;
 - National Defence;
 - Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs; and
 - Women and Gender Equality and Youth.
- The Speaker of the Senate;
- The Speaker of the House of Commons;
- The Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Standing Senate Committees on:
 - Agriculture and Forestry;
 - Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources;
 - Foreign Affairs and International Trade;
 - Human Rights;
 - Indigenous Peoples;
 - National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs; and
 - 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, and its Sub-Committee on International Human Rights;
 - Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities;
 - Indigenous and Northern Affairs;
 - National Defence;
 - Natural Resources;
 - Public Safety and National Security; and
 - Status of Women.

Respectfully submitted,

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

President of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION

Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

ACTIVITY

147th Assembly of the IPU and Related Meetings

DESTINATION	Luanda, Angola
DATES	October 23 to 27, 2023
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Salma Atallahjan, Senator Hon. David McGuinty, P.C., M.P.
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner, P.C., M.P. Mr. Matthew Green, M.P.
STAFF	Ms. Catherine Cuerrier, Association Secretary Ms. Natalie Mychajlyszyn, Advisor Mr. Olivier Leblanc-Laurendeau, Advisor
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 62,691.43
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 26,818.55
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00
PER DIEMS	\$ 12,053.83
OFFICIAL GIFTS	
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 2,016.23
TOTAL	\$ 103,580.04