



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting  
its participation at the 138th Inter-Parliamentary Union  
Assembly and related meetings**

**Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)**

**Geneva, Switzerland  
March 24 to 28, 2018**

# Report

## OVERVIEW

A delegation from the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) attended the [138th IPU Assembly](#) and related meetings in Geneva (Switzerland) from 24 to 28 March 2018. The Canadian delegation was comprised of the following members:

- Honourable David McGuinty, P.C., M.P., President of the Canadian IPU Group and head of the delegation
- Honourable Salma Atallahjan, Senator, Vice-President of the Canadian IPU Group
- Honourable Dennis Dawson, Senator
- Mr. Sven Spengemann, M.P.
- Honourable Michelle Rempel, P.C., M.P.
- Mrs. Cheryl Hardcastle, M.P.
- Mr. Blake Richards, M.P.

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

Throughout the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly, members of the Canadian delegation engaged in exchanges with their counterparts and participated in various debates in an attempt to promote Canadian values in relation to important topics of international concern, including migration, sustainable development, international peace and security, gender equality and human rights.

## 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* adopted in October 2016 during the 135<sup>th</sup> Assembly.<sup>2</sup>

At the close of the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly, 178 national parliaments were members of the IPU and 12 regional parliamentary assemblies were associate members.

## THE 138TH IPU ASSEMBLY

### A. The 138th Assembly 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 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly included the following items:

- Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly;
- Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda;
- General debate on *Strengthening the global regime for migrants and refugees: the need for evidence-based policy solutions*;
- Resolution on *Sustaining peace as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development* (Standing Committee on Peace and International Security);
- Resolution on *Engaging the private sector in implementing the SDGs, especially on renewable energy* (Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade);
- Reports of the Standing Committees on Democracy and Human Rights; and United Nations Affairs;

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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 138<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly and related Meetings are available on the IPU website. See: IPU, [138<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly and related Meetings](#), Geneva, Switzerland, March 24-28 2018; and IPU, [Results of the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly and related meetings](#), 2018.

- 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 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs;
- Debate of an emergency item on *The consequences of the US declaration on Jerusalem and the rights of the Palestinian people in Jerusalem in light of the UN Charter and resolutions*;<sup>4</sup>
- Amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules.

Overall, delegations from 148 member parliaments participated in the activities of the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Of the 1,526 delegates in attendance, 744 were members of national parliaments; they included 59 Presiding Officers and 39 Deputy Presiding Officers, as well as 227 women parliamentarians (30.5% of all parliamentarians participating).

## B. The General Debate

At the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly, a general debate was held on the topic of “Strengthening the global regime for migrants and refugees: The need for evidence-based policy solutions.” The debate was lead off by speeches from the heads of three UN agencies dealing with migration issues, the Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In total, representatives of 111 Member Parliaments, and 5 partner organizations took the floor during the debate, which was held over three days.<sup>5</sup> **All members of the Canadian delegation** attended at least one of the sessions.

As head of the delegation and on behalf of the Canadian IPU Group, **David McGuinty, M.P.** delivered a [speech](#) during the General Debate. In his remarks, Mr. McGuinty stressed that migration is a reality of the modern world which must be embraced and addressed through a cooperative approach that is beneficial for all. He noted the important contributions that migrants make in their new communities, including the community in Canada that he represents, and the critical role played by the private sector in the integration of migrants. He concluded by highlighting some of Canada’s recent achievements in the area of migration.

On 28 March 2018, **David McGuinty, M.P.** delivered a speech to the Assembly in support of the final Declaration on the debate topic.<sup>6</sup> Mr. McGuinty reiterated comments made during his debate speech and highlighted the need for a cooperative approach that counters the narrative of “us versus them” when dealing with migration. The Assembly then adopted the Declaration at its concluding sitting.

## C. The Emergency Item

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<sup>4</sup> IPU, [Results of the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly and related meetings](#), 2018, p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> IPU, [Results of the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly and related meetings](#), 2018, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> IPU, [Declaration on Strengthening the global regime for migrants and refugees: The need for evidence-based policy solutions](#), endorsed by the 138th IPU Assembly (Geneva, 28 March 2018).

The IPU Statutes provide that an IPU assembly may include one emergency item in its agenda.<sup>7</sup> The IPU Rules further provide that: “Should several requests obtain the requisite majority, the one having received the largest number of positive votes shall be accepted.”<sup>8</sup> The 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly received 7 requests for the inclusion of an emergency item on its agenda. Five of those original proposals were merged with others or subsequently withdrawn. Following the consolidation process, three items remained, one on the consequences of the recognition of Jerusalem by the United States, one on violence against women in the workplace and one on the actions of Iran in the Middle East. Following a roll-call vote, the proposed emergency item entitled “The consequences of the US declaration on Jerusalem and the rights of the Palestinian people in Jerusalem in the light of the UN Charter and resolutions” put forward jointly by Palestine, Kuwait, Bahrain and Turkey was added to the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly’s agenda.<sup>9</sup> The Canadian delegation voted against this item and in favour of the item on violence against women proposed by Sweden and the item on Iran proposed by Israel.

On 27 March 2018, the Assembly adopted the resulting resolution by consensus. The Canadian delegation was one of 30 delegations to express reservations concerning the emergency item resolution, in part or in whole.<sup>10</sup> In expressing the Delegation’s reservations on the resolution as a whole, **David McGuinty, M.P.** stated that the resolution did not foster the dialogue necessary to achieve peace.

#### **D. IPU Standing Committees**

Each 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>11</sup> At the 129<sup>th</sup> Assembly in October 2013, the Governing Council adopted significant amendments to the rules of the standing committees: in addition to the topic of a draft resolution, a committee’s work plan can now include other activities, such as hearings, reports and missions.

During the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly, the Standing Committees on Peace and International Security; and Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade debated a draft resolution.

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

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security addressed the topic: “Sustaining peace as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development.” The committee met on 25, 26, and 27 March 2018.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> IPU, [Statutes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union](#), article 14(2).

<sup>8</sup> IPU, [“Rules of the Assembly”](#), Rule 11.

<sup>9</sup> IPU, [Results of the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly and related meetings](#), 2018, p. 44. 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>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> IPU, [Statutes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union](#), article 13; and, IPU, [“Rules of the Standing Committees.”](#)

<sup>12</sup> For the text of the resolution, see: IPU, [Results of the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly and related meetings](#), 2018, pp. 37-40.

The Standing Committee finalized the draft resolution prepared by the co-Rapporteurs, Ms. M. Vargas Barcena (Mexico) and Mr. A. Caroni (Switzerland) during a plenary session. It had 136 amendments to consider,<sup>13</sup> including 4 that had been submitted by the Canadian delegation.

During the plenary debate on the proposed amendments, **Sven Spengemann, M.P.** and **Senator Dawson** presented and explained Canada's proposed amendments, which complemented and were intended to build on the existing draft resolution. All Canadian amendments were incorporated into the resolution. **Blake Richards, M.P.** also attended the sessions of the Committee. On 27 March, the Committee adopted the resolution as amended.

The Committee decided that its next resolution will be on the topic of “non-admissibility of using mercenaries as a means of undermining peace and violating human rights” as proposed by the delegation from Ukraine. This topic will be the subject of an expert hearing and panel discussion at the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly along with the topic “combatting sexual violence in UN Peacekeeping operations and beyond.”<sup>14</sup>

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

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade addressed the topic: “Engaging the private sector in implementing the SDGs, especially on renewable energy.” The Committee met on 25, 26, and 27 March 2018.<sup>15</sup>

The Standing Committee finalized the draft resolution prepared by the co-Rapporteurs, Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium) and Mr. Duong Quoc Anh (Viet Nam) during a plenary session. It had 115 amendments to consider,<sup>16</sup> including 6 that had been submitted by the Canadian delegation.

During the plenary debate on the proposed amendments, **Cheryl Hardcastle, M.P.** presented and explained Canada's proposed amendments, which complemented and were intended to build on the existing draft resolution. 5 of the 6 Canadian amendments were incorporated into the resolution. On 27 March, the committee adopted the resolution as amended.

The Committee decided that its next resolution will be on the topic of “the role of fair and free trade and investment in achieving the SDGs, especially regarding economic equality, sustainable infrastructure, industrialization and innovation” and named co-rapporteurs from Serbia, Australia and Ghana. This topic will be the subject of a debate at the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly along with a panel discussion on implementation of resolution approved at the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly.<sup>17</sup>

## 3. Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

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<sup>13</sup> The [full list](#) of proposed amendments is available.

<sup>14</sup> IPU, [Results of the 138th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2018, p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> For the text of the resolution, see: IPU, [Results of the 138th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2018, pp. 32-36.

<sup>16</sup> The [full list](#) of proposed amendments is available.

<sup>17</sup> IPU, [Results of the 138th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2018, p. 8.

The Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights held sessions on 26 and 27 March 2018.<sup>18</sup> A preparatory debate was held on the topic “Strengthening inter-parliamentary cooperation on migration and migration governance in view of the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration”, which will be the subject of a resolution at the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly. **Sven Spengemann, M.P.** attended this session.

During its final sitting, the Committee agreed to hold a panel discussion during the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly entitled “The role of parliaments in ending discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and ensuring respect for the human rights of LGBTI.” The topic had been previously approved by the Committee at the 137<sup>th</sup> Assembly but was referred back to the Committee by the Assembly for reconsideration. The proposed discussion was approved by a roll call vote, and will not lead to a resolution.

**Senator Dawson** attended the final sitting and spoke in favour of the proposed discussion on ending discrimination based on sexual orientation. He stated that Canada had a long history of standing up against discrimination and that it was unacceptable that in 2018, LGBTI persons continued to face discrimination and persecution because of their sexual orientation. The Canadian Delegation voted in favour of the proposed discussion.

During the closing session of the Assembly, objections were raised by certain Members regarding the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights planned panel discussion on ending discrimination based on sexual orientation. Similar objections were raised during the 137<sup>th</sup> Assembly, which resulted in the matter being referred back to the committee.<sup>19</sup> **David McGuinty, M.P.**, addressed the Assembly, stating the committee should be allowed to continue its work and asked for a procedural decision on whether the Assembly had the authority to alter the committee’s approved agenda, while also raising the issue of quorum.

**Sven Spengemann, M.P.** also participated in the meeting of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on 25 March. The Bureau considered proposals for the future work of the Committee.

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

The Standing Committee held sessions on 25 and 27 March 2018.<sup>20</sup> Both sessions focused on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including panel discussions on parliamentary follow-up to SDGs and 2018 High-level Political Forum topic “transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.”

**Senator Dawson** attended the Committee’s sessions. **Senator Dawson** also participated in the meeting of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on 25 March 2018.

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<sup>18</sup> For the report of the Standing Committee’s session, see: IPU, [Results of the 138th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2018, p. 46

<sup>19</sup> See below, subheading **Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights**, for more information.

<sup>20</sup> For the report of the Standing Committee’s session, see: IPU, [Results of the 138th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2018, p. 47.

Members reviewed recent activities of the IPU at the United Nations or in cooperation with the United Nations and its various entities.

## **E. Amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules**

During 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly, Members approved amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules. The amendments aimed at enhancing the participation of young parliamentarians in future IPU assemblies.<sup>21</sup> Amendments proposed by the IPU President and the Russian Federation were withdrawn prior to being voted by the Assembly.

## **PARTICIPATION BY CANADIAN DELEGATES IN RELATED MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES**

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

#### **1. Governing Council<sup>22</sup>**

The Governing Council is the plenary policy-making body of the IPU.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, several committees fall under the Governing Council's responsibility and report to it on their work.<sup>24</sup> The Council is composed of three representatives from each IPU member parliament, provided that its representation includes both men and women parliamentarians.<sup>25</sup>

Meetings of the 202<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Governing Council were held on 25 and 28 March 2018. **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>26</sup>

- Adoption of the agenda
- Approval of the summary records of the 201<sup>st</sup> session of the Governing Council
- Proposals for the election of the President of the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly
- Report of the President
- Annual report of the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU in 2017
- Financial results for 2017 and financial situation

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<sup>21</sup> IPU, "[Draft amendments on the participation of young MPs](#)"

<sup>22</sup> This section reflects highlights of the 202<sup>nd</sup> Session of the IPU Governing Council. For further details, see also: IPU, [Results of the 138th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2018, pp. 10-12.

<sup>23</sup> The functions of the Governing Council are outlined in Article 21 of the IPU [Statutes](#).

<sup>24</sup> These committees 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; and, the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU.

<sup>25</sup> IPU, "[Rules of the Governing Council](#)."

<sup>26</sup> IPU, "[202nd session of the Governing Council Geneva, 25 and 28 March 2018: Revised provisional agenda](#)," CL/202/A.1, 23 March 2018.



- Reports on recent IPU specialized meetings
- Implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2017-2021
- Cooperation with the United Nations system
- Questions relating to IPU membership and the situation of certain parliaments
- Activities of committees and other bodies
- 139th IPU Assembly (October 2018)
- Future Inter-Parliamentary meetings
- Amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules
- Elections to the Executive Committee<sup>27</sup>

The Governing Council considered the IPU Financial Report for 2017. The organization's net assets increased by CHF 559,617 during the year, which was the product of healthy returns on investments, additional revenue from increased membership and properly controlled expenditure. Concern was raised regarding arrears in the payment of assessed contributions by Member Parliaments. 37 Members had overdue accounts, amounting to a combined total of CHF 619,000.

Reports regarding recent specialized meetings were received by the Governing Council, including the report on the Fourth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, held in Ottawa on 17 and 18 November 2017. The report highlighted the outcome of activities held around the theme of "young parliamentarians as drivers of inclusion."<sup>28</sup>

The Governing Council did not approve the report of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG). A number of Members raised concerns regarding the establishment of the group and selection of its members. The HLAG's Terms of Reference were referred back to the Executive Committee for further review. The Governing Council voted by a show of hands to allow the HLAG to continue to function while its Terms of Reference are reviewed.

## **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

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<sup>27</sup> IPU, [Results of the 138th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2018, pp. 10-12.

<sup>28</sup> IPU, ["Fourth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians Ottawa \(Canada\), 17 and 18 November 2017"](#)

Committee controls the administration of the Secretariat as well its activities in the execution of the decisions taken by the Assembly and the Governing Council.<sup>29</sup>

The IPU Executive Committee held its 278<sup>th</sup> session on 22, 23 and 27 March 2018.<sup>30</sup> **David McGuinty, M.P.**, who was elected to the Executive Committee at the 137<sup>th</sup> Assembly, was an active participant in all the Executive Committee's *in camera* meetings.

The Executive Committee considered numerous proposals made by the new IPU President, Ms. G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico), who was elected to a three-year term at the 137<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The President presented her vision for the IPU along with priorities for 2018 and 2019. A number of the proposed activities were endorsed by the Committee during its final meeting.

The Executive Committee engaged in a lengthy debate regarding the amendments to the IPU Statutes proposed by the IPU President and the Delegation from the Russian Federation, as well as the accompanying sub-amendments and responses. It was agreed that the amendments would be withdrawn in order to allow for greater consultation with IPU Members. The Vice-President of the Executive Committee was charged with leading consultations and developing a compromise set of amendments prior to the deadline for their submission for the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly.<sup>31</sup>

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The IPU Secretariat reported to the Executive Committee on the situation facing certain parliaments, including Burundi, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Maldives, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen. The Executive Committee made recommendations to the Governing Council concerning each case, including in relation to a recent mission conducted to the Maldives and in regards to unfreezing the participation of Yemen, following the two Yemeni factions agreeing to participate as a single delegation.

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<sup>29</sup> IPU, "[Rules of the Executive Committee](#)"

<sup>30</sup> For more details regarding these meetings, see: IPU, [Results of the 138th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2018, pp. 12-14.

<sup>31</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](#).

<sup>32</sup> For full texts of all related documents, see: IPU, [138th Assembly and related meetings: Amendments](#).

## 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 on the agendas of IPU assemblies and/or the Governing Council.<sup>33</sup>

The 27<sup>th</sup> Forum of Women Parliamentarians took place on 24 and 27 March 2018.<sup>34</sup> 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 Sustainable Development, Trade and Finance;
- A panel discussion on the topic of "why are women still underrepresented in politics? The root causes and how to address them." The panel included Ambassador Rosemary McCarney, Canadian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.
- Election of new members to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

90 delegates from 63 different countries attended the Forum.

**Senator Ataullahjan, Sven Spengemann, M.P., Cheryl Hardcastle, M.P.** and **Michelle Rempel, M.P.**, attended the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. During the Forum, participants were divided into two working groups to provide recommendations for the draft resolutions on the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly's agenda. The discussions led to suggested amendments to both the draft resolutions. **Senator Ataullahjan** also participated in the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, of which she is a member, on March 27. The Bureau elected the Forum's new President, Ms. U. Karlsson of Sweden.

## C. Committee on Middle East Questions

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<sup>33</sup> IPU, [Rules of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians](#).

<sup>34</sup> For more information, see: IPU, [Results of the 138th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2018, pp. 14-15.

The Committee on Middle East Questions held two meetings on 24 and 27 March.<sup>35</sup> The Committee's agenda included:

- A report on the situation in Syria and an update on the IPU's Working Group on Syria;
- A presentation by the delegation from Yemen, which included representatives from the two parliamentary factions in the country;
- A briefing on the work of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy;
- An update on the Science for Peace projects, including the Science for Peace Schools which has been stalled due to political developments in the region;
- An exchange of views between the Israeli and Palestinian delegations.

At the beginning of the first meeting **Senator Ataullahjan** was confirmed as the committee's new President, for a term of one year. **Senator Ataullahjan** chaired both meetings of the committee.

#### **D. Workshop on Refugee Protection**

A joint IPU, UNHCR workshop was held on 24 March 2018 on the topic "refugee protection: implementing the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework – what can parliaments do?"<sup>36</sup> Discussions by experts and participants focused on how the implementation of the framework could lead to more systematic and sustainable response to refugee flows that goes beyond traditional forms of humanitarian action. **Julie Dzerowicz, M.P.** participated as a panellist by video. She presented Canada's approach with respect to the settlement of refugees. She indicated that Canada was able to process 25,000 Syrian refugees in four months thanks to increased immigration officials in the Middle East and a balance between government and privately sponsored refugees. She mentioned that even though the government has a core responsibility to refugees, the private sponsorship model compliments the government program and leads to faster integration of refugees and positive attitudes towards refugees and resettlement. **Sven Spengemann, M.P.** and **Cheryl Hardcastle, M.P.** attended this workshop.

#### **E. 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.

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<sup>35</sup> For the report of the Committee, see: IPU, [Results of the 138th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2018, p. 52

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

Canada belongs to two geopolitical groups:<sup>37</sup>

- the 47 member Twelve Plus Group, which includes nations from Europe, as well as Australia, New Zealand and Israel; and
- the 34 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 24 March 2018. **Michelle Rempel, M.P.**, and **Blake Richards, M.P.** attended the meeting. Agenda items included the following:

- briefing by IPU Executive Committee members;
- report from the ASEAN+3 Group;
- review of vacancies to be filled during the 138th Assembly; and
- discussion of emergency item to be added to the Assembly's agenda;

**Michelle Rempel, M.P.** participated in the debate regarding the group's support for an emergency item. Ms. Rempel spoke in favour of the Swedish proposal on violence against women in the workplace, stating that actual and threatened violence against women remained a significant barrier to female participation in politics.

### **2. Twelve Plus Group**

Meetings of the Twelve Plus Group were held on 23, 26, 27 and 28 March. **All Canadian delegates** participated in these meetings. Agenda items included the following:

- report on the Group's Steering Committee meeting, held in Lisbon on 5 March 2018;
- report from the Group's representatives on the work of the IPU Executive Committee;
- meeting with the IPU President to discuss proposed amendments to the IPU Statutes;
- elections to fill vacancies;
- debate of the proposed emergency items;

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<sup>37</sup> IPU, "[Geopolitical groups](#)."

- presentations from delegations of Venezuela and Qatar;
- hearing with Laurent Sauveur, Chief of External Relations, United Nations Human Rights;
- review of meetings of the IPU standing committees and other bodies; and
- discussion of matters related to the Group, including holding an extraordinary meeting of the Twelve Plus to consider proposed amendments to the IPU Statutes.

Canadian delegates were active participants in the group's meeting. **Michelle Rempel, M.P.**, spoke in favour of the Swedish proposal on violence against women in the workplace; and **David McGuinty, M.P.**, questioned the Qatari delegation on their country's human rights record and informed the group regarding the activities of the IPU Executive Committee.

### **A. Bilateral Meetings**

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

- Chile
- Iraq
- Israel
- Mongolia
- Ukraine
- Australia, New Zealand and United Kingdom

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-parliament 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;

- Opportunities for improving relations between Canada and the other delegation's country, including increasing trade relations.

## **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>38</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 government officials informing them of the resolutions adopted by the IPU and encouraging them to engage with Canadian Group regarding their domestic implementation. For the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly, letters were sent to:

- Ministers and Deputy Ministers of:
  - Environment and Climate Change
  - Foreign Affairs
  - Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
  - International Development and La Francophonie
  - International Trade
  - Natural Resources
- The Chairs of House of Commons Standing Committees on:
  - Citizenship and Immigration
  - Environment and Sustainable Development
  - Foreign Affairs and International Development as well as its Subcommittee on International Human Rights
  - Natural Resources
- The Chairs of Standing Senate Committees on:
  - Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources
  - Foreign Affairs and International Trade
  - Human Rights
  - Social Affairs, Science and Technology

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<sup>38</sup> IPU [Statutes](#), Article 7.

- Chairperson of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
- Special Advisor on LGBTQ2 Issues

Respectfully submitted,  
David McGuinty, M.P.,  
President,  
Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union



## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	138 <sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly and related meetings
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Geneva, Switzerland
<b>DATES</b>	March 24 to 28, 2018
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Dennis Dawson Hon. Salma Atallahjan
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. David McGuinty – Head of Delegation Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle Hon. Michelle Rempel Mr. Blake Richards Mr. Sven Spengemann
STAFF	Ms. Jessica Richardson, Association Secretary Mr. Frédéric Forge, Analyst Mr. Scott McTaggart, Analyst
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$ 23,396.17</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$ 20,935.16</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$ 986.65</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$ 11,766.56</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$ 245.61</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	<b>\$ 176.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 57,506.15</b>

