



Inter-Parliamentary Union

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting
its participation at the Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the
United Nations**

Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

**New York, New York, United States of America
February 22-23, 2018**

Report

1. Overview

On February 22, 2018, a delegation from the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) travelled to New York to attend the IPU's annual parliamentary hearing at the headquarters of the United Nations (UN). The delegation included the **Honourable Senator Dennis Dawson** and **Ms. Julie Dzerowicz**. The hearing saw the delegation participate in various panel sessions and events. It provided an important opportunity for parliamentarians to engage in dialogue and exchange views and experiences with one another, and to hear from the UN management team. This report provides an overview of the IPU-UN parliamentary hearing.

2. Background

The IPU is the international organization of parliaments of sovereign states. It was established in 1889, is “the focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue,” and “works for peace and co-operation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative democracy.” The IPU “supports the efforts of and works in close co-operation with the United Nations, whose objectives it shares.”

The IPU's annual parliamentary hearing brings parliamentarians to the UN headquarters in New York “for an interactive discussion with high-ranking UN officials, representatives of [UN] Member States and experts drawn from think tanks and civil society organizations.”

As a joint event of the IPU and UN, the hearing reflects a commitment by the UN to hear the views of parliamentarians with regards to urgent issues facing policymakers and legislators around the world and on the key issues on the UN agenda. The importance of the annual hearing to the ongoing work of the IPU and its engagement with the UN system and activities was underlined in the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in June 2012, which:

- Recalled its 2010 resolution deciding “to pursue a more systematic engagement with the Inter-Parliamentary Union in organizing and integrating a parliamentary component of and contribution to major United Nations deliberative processes and the review of international commitments”; and
- Called for “the annual parliamentary hearing at the United Nations to be more closely linked to major United Nations processes, including the preparation of global conferences, so as to help to inform such deliberations from a parliamentary perspective.”

The conclusions of the hearing are circulated to the wider UN community as well as to all national parliaments.

3. Programme of the Parliamentary Hearing

The main theme of the hearing that took place in New York from 22-23 February 2018 was: *Towards a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration: A parliamentary perspective*. The key questions that were explored during the event included:

1. What are the main facts and agreed principles of migration today, and what are the gaps that the emerging Global Compact for Migration (GCM) could fill to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration?
2. What are the best practices in national migration policies, and how can national policies support sub-national and municipal governments?
3. How can countries support each other in managing large movements of people?
4. What are practical ways to support the social, cultural and economic integration of migrants?
5. Paying special attention to gender-sensitive policies, what are best practices for migrants to realize their rights to live in dignity?
6. What are principles and best practices for diversifying regular pathways in order to prevent irregular migration and for facilitating regularization?
7. How can we allow migrants to participate in formal and informal decision-making processes at all levels?
8. What are ways and means of parliamentary oversight in the national implementation of GCM commitments through national and global mechanisms?

The full programme, which includes details on the themes and case studies explored during the hearing, and the complete list of panellists, may be found online.

4. Summary of Event and Canadian Participation

Senator Dennis Dawson and Julie Dzerowicz were the two Canadian participants at this year's meeting on global migration and refugees. Two key documents informed the IPU session discussion: The New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants and Zero Draft – Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

A key objective of the meeting was to allow for a comprehensive parliamentary perspective on key questions of migration and inform the UN negotiations of the Global Compact. The Global Compact is a new framework for the practical arrangements that need to be in place globally and nationally to ensure migration is properly managed with due regard for the human rights of migrants and the sovereign rights of States.

Another important objective was to create a common understanding of the possible objectives of the Global Compact, to demonstrate the need for it in the context of the current global migration trends. Key questions that were discussed during the sessions included: how do we manage migration so that it is safe, orderly and beneficial for home countries, and how do we create pathways for regular migration and discourage

irregular migration? It was recognized that most migration is not voluntary; internal state civil war, climate change impacts and the desire for a better future were all key reasons for migration.

Senator Dawson and Ms. Dzerowicz agreed that there is an urgent need for a Global Compact on Migration in the context of current global migration trends, and that it should address the following key points:

- Communication is key to success, in order to both ensure that correct information about to legal migration is disseminated, about the importance of migration to the general public;
- Integration takes time and it can be expensive;
- Return policies should be part of the Compact, particularly in relation to the reintegration of irregular migrants in home countries;
- Making the case between migration and economic development;
- Best practices to combat racism and xenophobia;
- Pay special attention to the most vulnerable migrants, including unaccompanied minors, women, and people with disabilities. This includes combatting human trafficking and all forms of migrant exploitation, including the sexual exploitation of women.

Moreover, **Senator Dawson and Ms. Dzerowicz** outlined Canada's immigration and refugee actions in light of global migration trends. Key points made included:

- Canada taking in over 40,000 Syrian refugees. Over half were privately sponsored by groups of Canadians across the country, and all are now permanent residents with the full process and relocation taking less than one year;
- Government officials invented innovative onsite processing in the Middle East to ensure expedited medical and security checks and ensure that all refugees arrived in Canada as permanent residents and could focus on integration upon arrival;
- The private sponsored group model was highly successful;
- There was a deliberate federal government increase in funding and capacity building for settlement agencies to support successful integration of the large number of incoming refugees;
- Focused communication to reduce racism and xenophobia, highlighting that diversity is Canada's strength;
- That irregular migration does exist in Canada, primarily by those who come to fulfil jobs that companies are desperate to fill.

- That Canada is grappling with the questions of whether immigration policy meets labour needs, and how do we regularize irregular migrants without delegitimizing the legal immigration system;
- That Canada has dramatically increased its immigration levels to 310,000 in 2018, 320,000 in 2019 and 340,000 in 2020;
- Canada is working on managing its increased asylum claims along the US border, through better communications while strictly adhering to international laws and rights.

At the official reception, **Senator Dawson and Ms. Dzerowicz** met the UN Secretary General, who encouraged all parliamentarians to play a role in agreeing to a Global Compact on Migration and ensuring that respective countries do their part, based on their respective capacities and abilities.

Ms. Dzerowicz was asked to present Canada's best practices re refugee policy at the IPU 138th Assembly in Geneva in October 2018.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
ACTIVITY	Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations
DESTINATION	New York, New York, United States of America
DATES	February 22-23, 2018
DELEGATION	
SENATE	The Hon. Dennis Dawson
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Ms. Julie Dzerowicz
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 1,054.62
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 1,269.49
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00
PER DIEMS	\$ 652.30
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$ 0.00
TOTAL	\$ 2,976.41