

Canada - United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group
Canadian Section



Groupe interparlementaire
Canada - États-Unis
Section canadienne

Constitution

TERMS OF REFERENCE

(Amended June 6, 2007)

1. Name:

1.1 This organization shall be known as the "Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group".

2. Aim:

2.1 The aim is to exchange information and promote better understanding between Canadian and United States parliamentarians of common interests and accomplishments, as well as differences and difficulties, rather than to arrive at binding decisions.

3. Membership:

3.1 Membership shall be open to all Members of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada on application and payment of an annual membership fee.

4. Operating Year:

4.1 The operating year of the Group shall be the fiscal year, commencing on the first day of April and ending on the thirty-first day of March.

5. Annual General Meeting (AGM)

5.1 At least one meeting of the general membership shall be held each fiscal year.

5.2 An Annual General Meeting must be held within 60 calendar days of the Opening of a new Parliament.

5.3 The Executive Committee or 10 members of the Group may, upon a minimum of two weeks notice, call an Annual General Meeting.

5.4 The quorum shall be set at 20 or one-third of the total membership, whichever is the lesser amount, provided that the Senate and the House of Commons are represented.

5.5 The Annual General Meeting shall:

- a) elect the members of the Executive Committee;
- b) receive a summary report of the expenses of the previous fiscal years and a written report of the association's activities for that year from the co-chairs;

- c) amend, where necessary with one week's notice, the group's constitution by a two-thirds vote of the members' present at the meeting;
- d) make suggestions and adopt resolutions in accordance with the aims of the group;
- e) transact any other necessary business.

5.6 The association secretary shall distribute nomination forms to all members of the Group.

5.7 Nominations should be received at least three calendar days in advance of the Annual General Meeting. The association secretary shall prepare a nominations report based on nominations received. Once the deadline has passed, the nominations shall be made public.

5.8 In order to be eligible to vote, parliamentarians shall be members of the group at least seven calendar days prior to the AGM. Once the deadline has passed, the names of all members eligible to vote shall be placed on a voters list.

5.9 Nominations shall only be accepted from the floor at the Annual General Meeting for positions for which no candidate has been nominated.

5.10 The election shall be presided over by a parliamentarian to be chosen from a list that has received the approval of the Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons and who is not nominated for a position on the executive of the group.

5.11 Elections shall be conducted by secret ballot with the support of the association secretary and additional necessary staff from the International and Interparliamentary Affairs Directorate.

5.12 The ballot box shall be placed in full view and each parliamentarian shall insert his or her own ballot into the box.

6. Special General Meetings

6.1 The executive committee or 10 members of the group may, upon two weeks notice, call a special general meeting.

7. Executive Committee

7.1 The Executive Committee shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting and be composed of at most 17 members, with 30% of its members from the Senate and 70% from the House of Commons.

7.2 Each recognized political party should be represented on the executive committee in numbers proportionate to their representation in the House; nothing precludes an independent Senator or MP from being a member of the executive.

7.3 The Executive Committee will be composed of the following:

- a) Honorary Presidents- The Speakers of both Chambers;
- b) Co-Chairs: One from the Senate and one from the House of Commons. The term of office for the Co-Chairs shall be two years with re-election possible;

- c) Vice-Chairs: The number shall be recommended by the Nominations Committee to reflect the party representation in both Chambers. The term of office for Vice-Chairs shall be two years with re-election possible;
- d) Elections for the Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Senate and the House of Commons will be held on alternate years.

7.4 The Executive Committee shall meet at least twice yearly to:

- a) direct and manage the affairs and budget of the group in accordance with the decisions taken at its General Meetings and directives of the Joint Interparliamentary Council;
- b) draw up a work plan and submit it to the Annual General Meeting;
- c) approve any activities, including travel, that are added to the group's work plan over the course of the year;
- d) convene the Annual General Meeting;
- e) draw up a draft budget for the upcoming fiscal year and submit it to the Joint Interparliamentary Council;
- f) submit reports to the membership as required;
- g) ensure that regular reports are submitted to the Senate and House of Commons, as required in the rules and practices of both Houses;
- h) appoint a member to replace any executive member who is unable or unwilling to complete his or her term of appointment.

7.5 The executive shall meet at the call of the Co-Chairs or any four of its members.

7.6 Quorum should be set at five or at one third of the total membership in the executive, whichever is the lesser amount, provided that a representative from each house is present.

8. Selection of Delegations:

8.1 The Executive Committee shall notify the membership of Group activities and select delegates, including the Leaders, to meetings of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group, in consultation with the Party leaderships, taking into account the following:

- a) the need for a strong Canadian delegation;
- b) that selection should be based on active participation in Parliamentary Committees or in study groups examining relevant issues of Canada-United States relations and the need for some continuity;
- c) that participation provides a valuable opportunity to increase understanding about attitudes and policies and that this educative experience should be available to the widest possible number of parliamentarians;
- d) that fair representation on delegations be given to recognized parties;

- e) that, as a condition of participation, prospective delegates must agree to take part in briefing programs and to give the time required to prepare themselves to make a contribution at these bilateral meetings.

8.2 Each Whip shall approve the participation of their party's members for all group activities

9. Nominations Committee:

9.1 The Nominations Committee shall consist of the Co-Chairs of the Group and the representatives of recognized Parties in both Chambers, or their nominees. A meeting of the Nominations Committee shall be convened at the call of the Co-Chairs.

9.2 The Nominations Committee shall:

- a) determine the size of the Executive Committee and the basis of representation from recognized Parties of both Chambers.
- b) present a report to a meeting of the general membership called to elect the Executive Committee.

9.3 The guiding principles for selection of nominees as members of the Executive Committee shall be demonstrated interest in Canada-United States relations, willingness to accept the post and to give the time required to carry out the duties and responsibilities.

10. Staffing Arrangements:

10.1 International and Interparliamentary Affairs is responsible for providing the organization and administrative support for the Group's activities.

10.2 The Executive Secretary of the Group shall be responsible for the management of the activities of the Group and shall be accountable to the Executive Committee, and particularly to the Co-Chairs.

11. Dissolution of Parliament:

11.1 In the event of a dissolution of Parliament the Executive Committee in office at that time shall carry on the affairs of the Group until an annual general meeting elects a new Executive Committee, with due regard to policies and related procedures as set out in the Financial Management and Policy Guide for Parliamentary Associations.