



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
respecting its participation at the 30<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the  
Board of Directors**

**Canadian Section of ParlAmericas**

**Medellin, Colombia  
February 20-22, 2013**

# Report

## Introduction

ParlAmericas held its 30<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Board of Directors in the city of Medellin, Colombia. Participants expressed gratitude to the host, Mr. German Blanco, Member of the Chamber of Deputies, for the hospitality shown to them in Medellin. Mr. Randy Hoback, M.P. led a delegation representing the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas, which also included the Hon. Michael L. MacDonald, accompanied by Mrs. Guyanne L. Desforges, Association Secretary to the Canadian Section. Mr. Hoback attended the meeting in his capacity as President of ParlAmericas, and Senator MacDonald attended as the Canadian representative on the Board of Directors. The main objectives of the meeting were to hear about progress on preparations for the 10<sup>th</sup> ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly to be held in Costa Rica (tbd), to receive various updates from Board members and Secretariat staff, to generate ideas for a long term funding strategy and financing plan for the association, and to consider the new draft regulations being prepared for ParlAmericas, which encompass numerous aspects of governance of the organization.

## Meeting Opening (See Appendix A for a complete list of participants)

Mr. Randy Hoback, President and Chair of the meeting, opened the session. He welcomed the meeting participants and thanked Mr. Germán Alcides Blanco for his warm welcome, his support and for hosting this ParlAmericas meeting.

Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Mr. Blanco, presented welcoming remarks to the participants. He spoke enthusiastically about Medellin, one of the three finalists to hold the 2018 Youth Olympics. He introduced Dr. Juan Camilo Quintero Medina, Advisor on Internationalization and Development to the municipality of Medellin who brought greetings on behalf of the Mayor of Medellin. Both wished the Board members a successful meeting, and hoped that everyone would enjoy their stay in Medellin.

Mr. Hoback then introduced all those who were present, and gave the regrets of those who could not be in attendance, including those of Deputy Linda Machuca Moscoso, President of the Group of the Women Parliamentarians who had been retained for work in Ecuador, and was therefore not able to participate. Dr. Jennifer Simons, Speaker of the National Assembly of Suriname was the acting President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians and consequently the host of the upcoming meeting of the Gathering in May of 2013.

## Special Session of the Fundraising and Financial Standing Committee

Mr. Michel Rathier, consultant, invited all board members to participate in a brainstorming session, to generate ideas which will result in formulating a long term funding strategy and financial plan for the association. The presentation outlined the current situation of ParlAmericas, its objectives, its achievements, and its challenges. Also it outlined the financial resources required to ensure the future viability of the Institution and the business case to engage partners who share ParlAmericas' vision and goals. ParlAmericas is seeking to secure sponsorship funding for its coming operations for fiscal year 2014 to 2015.

## **Adoption of the Agenda**

Mr. Hoback invited members to consider the draft meeting agenda. The Board of Directors members agreed with the proposal, and the agenda was adopted.

## **Approval of the Report of the 29<sup>th</sup> Board of Directors Meeting**

The meeting proceeded with the consideration of the report of the 29<sup>th</sup> ParlAmericas Board of Directors meeting, held in Panama City, Panama, on August 29 and September 1, 2012.

## **President's Report**

Mr. Hoback referred to his written report as he updated Board of Director members on his activities since the last meeting in September 2012. He mentioned his participation in the Atlantic Basin Initiative, coordinated by Johns Hopkins University, which considered ways to work more effectively among Atlantic nations.

Mr. Hoback informed the Board that he had met with various Ambassadors (Guatemala, Colombia, Haiti, Ecuador, Chili and Costa Rica) during the fall. He also noted that he had accompanied the Governor General of Canada, the Rt. Hon. David Johnston, on his working visit to Mexico, for the inauguration of Enrique Pena Nieto as President of Mexico. The official visit continued to Peru and Guatemala in December 2012.

## **Update on Recent Activities of Board of Directors Members**

Mr. Buchanan stated that Jamaica had received a visit from GOPAC Canada, with an interest on parliamentary oversight.

Ms. Ruiz indicated that as the president of International Affairs Commission for Costa Rica, she kept in contact with Ambassadors of all countries that visited Costa Rica, including recent meetings with members of the European Parliament and the OECD.

Dr. Simons met with a number of Caribbean states and sought to mobilize their participation in ParlAmericas, including Dominican Republic, Trinidad & Tobago, and representatives of Caricom.

## **Update from Group of Women Parliamentarians Gathering**

Dr. Simons reported that a technical committee was established in Suriname which maintained contact with the International Secretariat as preparations remained on-going for the upcoming Gathering. The theme and title of the event had been chosen: "*Women in Power: Recent Changes in the Political Arena*".

The Director General of the International Secretariat, Ms. Gina Hill, presented a proposal on behalf of Ms. Machuca, the President of the Group of Women parliamentarians regarding the possibility of ParlAmericas making an application for formal status with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Following a discussion which included the involved costs, process of choosing the Parliamentarians attending the meetings; the strategy, the expectations of formally reporting back to the Board; and the condition that all participation in IPU activities would be coordinated with the International Secretariat; a resolution was accepted.

The following resolution moved by Mr. Hugh Buchanan (Jamaica), seconded by Mr. Victor Juliao (Panama) and was unanimously asddopted:

*That the Board of Directors instructs the International Secretariat to apply for Permanent Observer Status with IPU. Attendance at meetings will be contingent upon available resources and/or funded by Board members themselves*

## **International Secretariat Report**

Ms Gina Hill, Director General of ParlAmericas pointed to the written report circulated to members and explained that this new more comprehensive reporting mechanism was developed to facilitate the Board's understanding of the work done by the International Secretariat. Ms. Hill highlighted that each bullet item had several steps or components to it. President Hoback expressed his appreciation for the detailed report, and commended the organization's willingness to undertake and accomplish difficult tasks has taken on much more work compared to a few years ago. He encouraged Board members to review the Secretariat's report.

Ms. Viviane Rossini, Program Manager, was then invited to give a brief overview of the major activities undertaken since the last meeting of September 2012. She presented a draft work plan for the period of April 2013 to March 2014, which highlighted numerous activities related to projects currently implemented with CIDA funding.

Ms Rossini then provided the Board of Directors with a report on the organization's finances. Her report compared actual revenues and expenses to the forecast figures for the year ending September 30, 2012. Ms. Rossini also answered questions from the Board. The report indicated that the year ended with a net revenue of \$60,078 (CAD).

The Board of Directors approved both the proposed Work Plan for the year 2013-2014, as presented and the budget for the period of October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013, as presented.

Ms. Hill then presented a document to the Board regarding an initiative that the International Secretariat had been pursuing to build on the success of the capacity building workshop held in Antigua and Barbuda in January 2012, on budget oversight. With the support of a consultant working *pro bono*, a roadmap had been developed along with a critical path of activities. Further, dialogue had occurred with a number of interested organizations as to the possibility of joining forces to seek funding, and to implement modules identified in the critical path.

*It was agreed unanimously that the Board of Directors authorizes the International Secretariat to pursue discussions with the named organizations, with a purpose to secure funding, and carry out activities to further strengthen parliamentary budget oversight in the Caribbean.*

## **Standing Committee Reports**

Mr. Randy Hoback reported that he and Senator MacDonald had had a very positive informal meeting with Scotiabank representatives in January. In their discussion, it was raised that ParlAmericas ought to emulate the best practices, as to fundraising, of organizations that have demonstrated successful approaches to fundraising, while also being sure to target a diversity of potential sources of funds.

## **10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly Preparations**

Ms. Hill informed the Board of Directors that the location of the next Assembly remained uncertain, following discussions with Peru as potential host, as well as Costa Rica, who

had previously offered to host the Group of Women Parliamentarians Gathering in 2013. She went on to explain that this would not be the traditional case of the host country covering the majority of costs, but that the International Secretariat would have to use funds from the CIDA project to pay the expenses of the Plenary Assembly, and that this would require reducing expenditures in other areas. She then invited Ms. Maria Jeannette Ruiz to speak to the matter.

Ms. Ruiz explained that as of May 1, 2013, there will be a new President of the Assembly in Costa Rica, and that preliminary conversations with the likely new President have been positively received. She noted that even with a willingness to host the Plenary Assembly, there would be a need for additional sources of funding as the budget for the period had already been allocated, and that Costa Rica would therefore look for other sponsorships from within the country. Ms. Ruiz indicated that she would continue to work closely with the Director General of ParlAmericas on this matter, and that they would present a budget to the new President of the Assembly in May 2013.

The Board then turned to the question of the agenda, the theme, and the sub-topics of the upcoming Plenary Assembly. The Board members discussed a number of points including: the desire for more space for exchange among parliamentarians; the need for follow-up with participants after the discussions as to their usefulness; and the possibility of creating a flexible agenda that could accommodate larger or smaller groups depending on the number of participants in attendance. The Chair noted consensus on the proposal to reduce the number of Working Groups to two, and the session organized by the Group of Women Parliamentarians.

Discussion then turned to the specific Themes and Topics for the Plenary Assembly. It was recognized that a great many topics were of interest to parliamentarians from the region. As the overarching themes and the sub-topics presented in the proposal before them were developed based on feedback from previous events, they were agreed to.

The following resolution was unanimously adopted: *That the overarching theme of the 10<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly be Economic Development, and that the sub-topics be 1) natural resource development (including environment and energy), and 2) food security.*

It was further resolved that the Chairs of the Working Groups be as follows:

- 1) *Natural Resource Development (including environment and energy): German Blanco (Colombia)*
- 2) *Food Security : Hugh Buchanan (Jamaica)*

The Chair invited Ms. Hill to review with the Board which members had terms that were set to expire at the upcoming Plenary Assembly, and those that had terms which carried on. The current composition of the Board was discussed, and suggestions for modification, including comparisons to the structures of other regional organizations were made.

It was pointed out that developing the right balance of governance for the Board of ParlAmericas had been an on-going project to which the Board has regularly contributed, as the organization develops its comprehensive governance regulations. There was concern as to making yet further changes following the arduous process already completed.

From a financial perspective, it was pointed out that the consultant who has been supporting ParlAmericas in this initiative must now concentrate on supporting the

financing of the organization, and that there are limited resources to handle rethinking the governance structure of the organization. Members also recognized that a number of members have their travel covered from the budget of ParlAmericas, and not by their assemblies, and that it will likely not be possible to maintain that practice with a larger Board.

### **Organizational Governance**

The Chair introduced the session to review the final version of the regulations, reminding members that Mr. Michel Rathier was working with ParlAmericas as a consultant on key items related to the Strategic Plan adopted by the Plenary Assembly in 2011, including the drafting of new regulations for the organization.

Mr. Rathier gave an overview of the process to date, and stated that there were some new chapters as well as some sections that had been added or amended in order to comply with the coherence of the document and to address challenges encountered in the translation process.

There was some debate as to whether the Regulations as presented should be considered at all, given that there was a proposal to change the composition of the Board of Directors. The Chair suggested that the Board create a sub-committee to develop a concrete proposal regarding possible changes to Board composition, noting that there are very limited resources to pay for outside support on this. The Chair asked for volunteers.

It was agreed that Ms. Adriana Gonzalez and Mr. Randy Hoback would review the composition of the Board of Directors, and other relevant portions of the Regulations, and report back to the Board with suggested revisions, and the implications of said revisions, at the 31<sup>st</sup> Board of Directors Meeting, to be held in Suriname, in May 2013.

It was further resolved that, should it be necessary, the next Board of Directors Meeting will begin one day earlier, on May 13, 2013.

### **Other Business**

Senator MacDonald chaired three sessions/meetings of the ParlAmericas Corporation. It covered approval of minutes of the annual meeting, financial statement and election of Board of Directors of ParlAmericas Corporation.

The Chair presented a proposal that, in keeping with the Regulations as adopted in Panama, the Board recognize the organization's first Non-Voting Associate to the Board of Directors. He noted the time, energy, and guidance Mr. Michel Rathier had offered the organization, far exceeding the terms of our contractual agreement with him. He stated his belief that Mr. Rathier would continue to provide such support to the Board and to the Secretariat, as a Non-Voting Associate. The Board agreed the following: *That Mr. Michel Rathier, currently serving as consultant to ParlAmericas, be recognized as a Non-Voting Associate to the Board of Directors, pursuant to Article 1.13 of the Regulations.*

### **Future Meetings and Close of Meeting**

Mr. Hoback advised that the 31<sup>st</sup> Board of Directors meeting will take place in Paramaribo, Suriname, on May 14 & 15, 2013, prior to the Gathering of the Women Group Parliamentarians. Board members are invited to stay on for the Gathering to take

place on May 16 and 17. Mr Hoback expressed his appreciation to Dr. Simons for the generous offer to host both meetings.

The Chair reminded the Board that the subsequent Board of Directors meeting would take place immediately prior to the Plenary Assembly.

The Chair then thanked Mr. German Blanco for offering such a warm and hospitable welcome to the members of the Board, and expressed appreciation for the work of Mr. Blanco's team lead by Mr. Mauro Palacio. He thanked the interpreters for their excellent work, acknowledging that our meetings would not be possible without their support. Mr. Hoback recognized that a great deal of preparation goes into these meetings, and thanked Ms. Gina Hill and the International Secretariat staff for their on-going support. Finally, he thanked everyone for their participation, and wished everyone safe travels home.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Hoback adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Randy Hoback, M.P.  
Chair, Canadian Section  
ParlAmericas

## **Appendix A:**

### **MEMBERS OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

#### **President**

- Randy Hoback, M.P. (CANADA)

#### **First Vice President**

- Deputy Victor Juliao III (PANAMA)

#### **North America**

- Senator Michael L. MacDonald (CANADA)
- Deputy Adriana González Carrillo (MEXICO)

#### **Central America**

- Maria Jeannette Ruiz Delgado, Member of the Legislative Assembly (COSTA RICA)

#### **Caribbean**

- Hugh Buchanan, Member of Parliament (JAMAICA)
- Armando Torres Aguirre, Member of the National Assembly (CUBA)

#### **South America**

- Deputy Ignacio Urrutia Bonilla (CHILE)
- Representative Germán Alcides Blanco Álvarez (COLOMBIA)
- Senator Alberto Grillón Conigliaro (PARAGUAY)

#### **Representative of the Group of Women Parliamentarians**

- Speaker Jennifer Simons (SURINAME)

#### **ParlAmericas TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT**

- Gina Hill (Director General)
- Viviane Rossini (Program Manager)
- Thaïs Martin Navas (Project and Communications Officer)

#### **OTHER GUESTS and PARTICIPANTS**

- Michel Rathier (Consultant)
- Guyanne L. Desforges (Parliament of Canada)
- Mauro Palacios Morales (Advisor, Colombia)
- Saima Cabenda (Head of Secretariat, Suriname)
- Nathalie Grant (Liaison Officer, Suriname)

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBERS ABSENT**

- Linda Machuca Moscoso, Second Vice President, President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians and Member of the National Assembly (ECUADOR)
- To be Designated (Central America)



## **Travel Costs**

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Section of ParlAmericas
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Board of Directors
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Medellin, Colombia
<b>DATES</b>	February 20-22, 2013
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Michael L. MacDonald, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Randy Hoback, M.P.
STAFF	Mrs. Guyanne L. Desforges, Association Secretary
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$ 9,731.19</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$ 1,504.52</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$ 1,342.11</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES</b>	<b>\$ 96.92</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 12,674.74</b>