



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
29th Executive Committee Meeting and the 9th Plenary
Assembly
Canadian Section of ParlAmericas**

**Panama City, Panama
29 August – 1 September 2012**

Report

ParlAmericas is an independent network made up of national legislatures that are also members of the Organization of American States (OAS). ParlAmericas members are committed to promoting parliamentary participation in the inter-American system and developing inter-parliamentary dialogue on issues of importance to the hemisphere. ParlAmericas seeks to encourage the sharing of experiences and best practices amongst its members, and works to strengthen the role of legislatures in democratic development and promote harmonization of legislation and hemispheric integration as instruments of sustainable and harmonious development in the region.

ParlAmericas was constituted at the Inaugural Meeting hosted by the Parliament of Canada, in Ottawa, in 2001. The organization is made up of three main bodies, namely: the Plenary Assembly, the Executive Committee and the Technical Secretariat. The Plenary Assembly, which meets annually, provides a platform for parliamentarians from the Americas to discuss various themes of common interest to the hemisphere. Topics addressed during the Plenary Assembly are developed and planned by the Executive Committee, which establishes the agenda of the Plenary Assembly. In addition to these activities, the members of the Executive Committee are also responsible for monitoring projects that are assigned to them by the Assembly. The Executive Committee is headed by a Chair, who is elected every two years. Both receive support from the Technical Secretariat.

Canada has been strongly involved in ParlAmericas since its inception. On 10 September 2011, Mr. Randy Hoback, member from Prince Albert, was elected President of ParlAmericas. Mr. Hoback has also served as the head of the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas since April 2010. He became the second Canadian president of ParlAmericas, following Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette, who held this position from 2001 to 2006. In addition, the ParlAmericas Technical Secretariat is incorporated in Canada and is based in Ottawa. Canada is also in charge of maintaining the ParlAmericas website. This site, upgraded and re-launched in the fall of 2011, plays a key role in the organization's activities, allowing parliamentarians and the general public to access up-to-date resources created by ParlAmericas, on a wide range of issues held in common interest by countries of the hemisphere.

29th Meeting of the Executive Committee

A. Introduction

The ParlAmericas Executive Committee held its 29th meeting in Panama City, Panama, at the Sheraton Panama Hotel on 29 August 2012. The meeting was chaired by ParlAmericas President, Mr. Randy Hoback, member of Parliament of Canada. Other participants were:

Mr. Victor Juliao III, First Vice-President and member of the National Assembly of Panama;

Ms. Linda Machuca Moscoso, Second Vice-President, President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians, member of the National Assembly of Ecuador;

Senator Michael L. MacDonald (Canada), representing North America;

Ms. Maria Jeannette Ruiz Delgado, deputy of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica, representing Central America;

Mr. Armando Torres Aguirre, member of the National Assembly of Cuba, representing Central America;

Mr. Ignacio Urrutia Bonilla, member of the National Congress of Chile, representing South America; and

Mr. Germán Alcides Blanco Alvarez, member of the Chamber of Representatives of Colombia, representing South America.

The main objectives of this Executive Committee meeting were:

To receive an update from board of directors members and Secretariat staff concerning recent ParlAmericas activities;

To receive an update and discuss other issues arising out of the preparations for the 9th Plenary Assembly;

To review draft regulations which concern numerous aspects of governance of the organization; and

To receive reports from the various ParlAmericas Standing Committees.

B. Opening of the Meeting

Mr. Hoback opened the session by welcoming the meeting's participants and thanking Mr. Juliao for his work as host. Mr. Juliao was then invited by Mr. Hoback to present welcoming remarks. Mr. Juliao expressed his readiness and desire to commence the hard work that the next several days of meetings would entail. He also invited board members to contact him should they need anything during their stay.

Mr. Hoback then introduced all those who were present and gave the regrets of those who could not attend, including Senator Alberto Grillón Conigliaro (Paraguay) and Mr. Claudio Roberto Perdomo Interiano, member of the National Assembly of Honduras. He also thanked Mr. Leif-Erik Aune, the departing executive secretary of the Canadian section of ParlAmericas, while welcoming Ms. Guyanne Desforges, his successor. Mr. Hoback also thanked the rest of the ParlAmericas Technical Secretariat staff. He then presented the Agenda of the meeting, which was approved. The Executive Committee proceeded with the approval of the report of the 28th meeting of the board of directors.

C. President's Report

Mr. Hoback provided board members with an update of his activities in June and August 2012. This included a meeting in Ottawa with a delegation from Costa Rica on 5 June 2012 when he and members of the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas met with Ms. Marcela Chacon, Vice Minister of Governance and Police in the Ministry of Governance, Police and Public Security of Costa Rica. He indicated that the meeting touched upon the topics of immigration, free trade and labour agreements, as well as combating drugs and smuggling. Both Mr. Hoback and Ms. Chacon agreed that ParlAmericas served as an ideal forum for parliamentarians to discuss topics of common interest.

On 26 June 2012, Mr. Hoback also gave the keynote address at an Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) Conference on open government and transparency in extractive industries in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Lima, Peru. He used the opportunity to speak of Canada's experience in the extractive industries field, while focusing on the importance of strong governance practices for overseeing the best use of resources, and optimizing revenues to ensure long-lasting prosperity.

Mr. Hoback updated board members on his meeting with Senator MacDonald and the ParlAmericas Director General, Dr. Gina Hill, in Ottawa, on 25 July 2012, during which they discussed matters concerning the 9th Plenary Assembly. On 26 July 2012, Mr. Hoback attended a reception in Ottawa celebrating the 191st Anniversary of the Independence of Peru. In attendance at this reception were a number of ambassadors from Central and South America. Mr. Hoback discussed holding more frequent meetings with them, and promoted stronger participation by their respective countries at the Assembly.

Mr. Hoback also received confirmation from the board of directors that ParlAmericas Secretariat staff would be permitted to intermingle with the board during its informal meetings, in order to help the former gain a greater understanding of the board's work and to facilitate information sharing.

D. Technical Secretariat Report

Ms. Gina Hill provided the board with a report on the activities of the Technical Secretariat. These included, among other things:

Negotiations regarding the Trade Workshop with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC);

Finalization and delivery of budget, financial reports, and work plan for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA);

Preparations for the 9th Plenary Assembly and the 29th Board of Directors Meeting – logistics; preparation of documents; and arranging the selection and attendance of subject-matter experts;

Coordination of certain documents resulting from the ParlAmericas Women's Group gathering in Chile;

Website maintenance; and

Finalization and delivery of the ParlAmericas newsletter ("ParlAmericas Express").

E. Funding Travel for Members of the Board of Directors and Other Parliamentarians

In the past, ParlAmericas provided support to members of the board of directors requiring financial assistance for travel and accommodation at board meetings, when their parliaments could not or would not cover these costs. Recently, the number of directors on the board increased, leading to a concomitant increase in requests for financial support. Under the CIDA project through which provides ParlAmericas with funding, ParlAmericas has an envelope of funds at its disposal to cover travel costs of parliamentarians attending ParlAmericas events and activities. Demands were,

however, increasing on these limited funds. As such, ParlAmericas' International Secretariat asked the board of directors for guidance as to how to prioritize requests for financial assistance. The board discussed the matter before referring it to a standing committee for further study.

F. Capacity-Building Workshop

According to the work plan approved by CIDA and the board of directors of ParlAmericas, ParlAmericas had committed to carrying out one capacity-building activity prior to the end of March 2013. In the summer of 2012, a CIDA-funded study was commissioned by ParlAmericas and carried out by the Foundation for Peace and Democracy to gather input from parliamentarians and/or staff in all 35 ParlAmericas member countries, as to hemispheric policy priority themes. The top priority themes formed the basis of three potential workshops proposed by the International Secretariat to be put on in February 2013. The Secretariat, in turn, sought direction from the board of directors as to which of the three workshop themes would be the one selected. Further, Dr. Hill indicated that the International Secretariat had explored and pursued collaboration opportunities with organizations such as GOPAC and the WTO. The matter was discussed by the board, which resolved that the following topic would be the theme of February 2013 workshop: Parliaments and Extractive Industries: How to Improve Oversight and Increase Collaboration.

G. Review of the Draft Agenda and Participants of the 9th Plenary Assembly

Mr. Juliao reviewed the draft agenda of the 9th Plenary Assembly with the board of directors, highlighting a schedule conflict concerning the Panamanian Vice-President's participation in the First Session of the Plenary Assembly. A review of participant countries and their parliamentarians was also conducted. It was noted by board members that, among the observer countries, the Falkland Islands had been invited to participate at the Assembly. A discussion was held on this matter, with Mr. Juliao sharing information about a discussion he had had on this subject with the Argentinean ambassador to Panama. The protocol for the participation of observer nations was also reviewed and discussed.

H. Nominations for Vacant Board Positions and Staggered Cycles of Directly Elected Board Members

It was noted that the term for some board of directors' positions would be ending during the Assembly. These countries included Canada, Colombia, Haiti, Honduras, and Panama. Procedures for submitting a candidacy application to one of the sub-regional representative positions were reviewed.

Further, a memo to the board of directors from the International Secretariat was presented. The International Secretariat, along with Mr. Michel Rathier, the Strategic Plan Consultant, had identified a potential problem with the cycles of the members of the board of directors elected directly by the Assembly, resultant from a resolution that was adopted during the 8th Plenary Assembly. Under this resolution, the President, the First Vice-President, and the President of the Women's Group/Second Vice-President were all to be elected in the same year. This meant that every two years, ParlAmericas could face a situation where new individuals would be elected to all three positions. This

was considered an undesirable governance practice as there would be a lack of institutional continuity among the senior leadership of the board of directors. After discussing the matter, the board passed a resolution to extend the term of both the President and the First Vice-President by one year, so that their terms would end in 2014. It was further resolved that this matter would be brought to the Assembly for consideration by the delegates present.

I. Special Presentation by the World Bank

Mr. Mozammel Hoque of the World Bank and former member of Bangladesh's Parliament, made a presentation to the board of directors concerning budgetary oversight in the countries of the Caribbean. This presentation covered the components necessary for strong budgetary oversight; potential political and economic reforms that could be undertaken by countries in the Caribbean; key challenges for stimulating growth in the region; and Parliament's role in achieving desired results. Mr. Hoque indicated an interest on the part of the World Bank to collaborate with organizations like ParlAmericas in new and innovative projects. Mr. Hoback thanked Mr. Hoque for providing the board with information on programs provided by the World Bank and noted that there appeared to be areas of common interest where the World Bank and ParlAmericas could explore creating synergies.

J. Organizational Governance

Mr. Hoback invited Mr. Rathier to provide the board of directors with an update concerning the renewal of ParlAmerica's governance rules. Mr. Rathier indicated that certain corrections and additions had been made to the document. It was, he noted, a "living" document, as the rules and bylaws would continue to evolve. In addition, Mr. Rathier indicated that the adoption of the document by the board and the Plenary Assembly would mean that some sections or chapters would come into effect immediately (in particular, Chapter 16) while others would be implemented by the Technical Secretariat as they became ready. It was discussed that elaborated governance rules would lend ParlAmericas greater status in the eyes of the international community and could become an important feature of a fundraising strategy. The board reviewed and accepted the revisions and additions made to a selection of chapters, provided Mr. Rathier with feedback, and were brought up-to-date on the work which remained in order to complete the renewal of the governance rules.

K. Group of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas Management Report

Ms. Machuca provided the board with a report on the activities of the Group of Women Parliamentarians. This included the work carried out in Paraguay in 2011 and the gathering of the Group of Women Parliamentarians 2012 "Citizen Security for Women" (meeting structure and development; participants; funding; outcomes; venue for the 2013 gathering; funding alternatives for 2013; and management prospects for 2012–2013).

9th Plenary Assembly of ParlAmericas

A. Introduction

The 9th Plenary Assembly of ParlAmericas was held in Panama City, Panama, from 30 August 2012 to 1 September 2012, at the Sheraton Panama Hotel. During the Assembly, three working groups were offered, with each group discussing a separate theme. These themes were: weak rule of law, a threat to citizen security; the impact of the global financial crisis on the Americas; and climate change and the environment. The Plenary Assembly was attended by 43 parliamentarians from 14 countries, which represented each of ParlAmericas' sub-regions (North America, Central America, the Caribbean and South America). There were also delegates who attended from observer countries, including the Russian Federation, the Falkland Islands, and St. Martin. Canada was represented by five parliamentarians:

Senator Michael MacDonald (Nova Scotia), Head of the Canadian Delegation and Vice-Chair of the Canadian Section;

Senator Pierrette Ringuette (New Brunswick);

Mr. Scott Andrews, member from Avalon;

Ms. H el ene Laverdi ere, member from Laurier–Sainte-Marie; and

Mr. James Rajotte, member from Edmonton–Leduc.

B. First Session of the Plenary Assembly

The first session of the 9th Plenary Assembly began with the election of Mr. Victor Juliao, First Vice-President and member of the National Assembly of Panama, as President for the Plenary Assembly. Mr. Juliao, in his opening remarks, offered delegates a warm welcome and congratulated them on their attendance, which demonstrated a desire to work on solving the important issues facing the hemisphere. He highlighted the importance of studying climate change and noted a number of steps Panama had taken to protect its environment. Ms. Linda Machuca, Second Vice-President, President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians and member of the National Assembly of Ecuador then provided the Plenary Assembly with an update of the work of the Women's Group. She indicated that the recent economic downturn had disproportionately impacted women in the hemisphere. Ms. Machuca also noted that domestic work traditionally accomplished by women had for too long gone ignored, statistically, in the calculation of national accounts. In her view, there needed to be recognition of this work, referring to it as the "economy of love/care." Mr. Randy Hoback, President and member of the Parliament of Canada, also addressed the Assembly. He began by underlining the importance of the forum provided by ParlAmericas for allowing parliamentarians to engage in frank and open discussions on very important topics. He noted that having positive dialogue between the countries of the Americas was especially important because geography made these countries natural trading partners. Mr. Hoback stated that through participation in organizations such as ParlAmericas, parliamentarians could commit to positive interactions that would foster economic, social and cultural improvements of the countries of the hemisphere and the hemisphere as a whole. Lastly, he provided the participants of the Assembly with information on the work accomplished by ParlAmericas over the past year, as well as an

update on potential strategic partnerships with other international organizations, and an overview of upcoming ParlAmericas events.

Mr. Miguel Fanovich, Vice-President of the National Assembly of Panama, delivered a special address to the ninth Plenary Assembly. He noted the positive dialogue promoted and fostered by organizations such as ParlAmericas. He also underlined the importance of such organizations, as these constituted the basic building blocks for democratic scholarship, while also acting as a direct bridge to the international community. He closed by noting that it was through gatherings such as the Assembly that parliamentarians could work together to achieve progress.

Mr. Hoback returned before the Plenary Assembly to deliver the Annual Report from the President. In it, he provided participants with an update on ParlAmericas' newly redesigned website; noted that ParlAmericas had begun producing a newsletter containing current hemispheric issues, delivered straight to parliamentarians; provided an overview of recent ParlAmericas activities, including a Caribbean workshop (January 2012) and the annual gathering of the Women's Group in Valparaiso, Chile (May 2012); noted that the board of directors were currently renewing ParlAmericas' regulations; and provided participants with some operational and financial information concerning the past fiscal year.

In respect of other business, a motion was brought by Mr. Ignacio Urrutia Bonilla, board member and member of the National Congress of Chile, to extend the mandates of the ParlAmericas President and First Vice-President by one extra year. After interventions by several participants, the Plenary Assembly voted in favour of the proposed resolution.

The floor was then given to Major Pricilla de Oliveira Azevedo, military police, State Security, Rio de Janeiro, to make the keynote address. Major de Oliveira Azevedo provided the Plenary Assembly with an overview of the stark situation faced by police in the slums (*favelas*) of Rio de Janeiro in respect of the criminal activities of the drug cartels. In many cases, these slums were lawless, ruled by gangs armed with weaponry more powerful than that possessed by the police. All public services in such slums were provided for by competing gangs. Many of those involved in the most violent gang activities were in fact youths, who had finished their conscription in the national army, only to find employment with a drug cartel. Under the leadership provided by military police such as Major de Oliveira Azevedo, the security policy for such slums had changed from a traditional policy of confrontation to one of pacification. Over the last decade, a federal-state-municipal partnership created models for mediating conflicts, including the creation of a pacifying police force that held as an objective the re-institution of peace and stability to communities. There were presently 26 pacifying police units working in the communities of Rio to the benefit of approximately 1 million citizens. Since the creation of these pacifying units, the basic quality of life in many communities had improved (access to food, water, sanitation, electricity, etc.). There had also been a marked decrease in the number of slain police officers (a decrease of approximately 61%).

C. Working Lunch with the Canadian Ambassador to Panama

The Canadian delegation met with Ms. Sylvia Cesaratto, Ambassador of Canada to Panama, at the Sheraton Panama Hotel for a working lunch. In her remarks, Ambassador Cesaratto provided the delegation with an overview of the political system in Panama. She noted that the atmosphere could be characterized as pro-business, with large investments being made in the country's infrastructure. She noted, however, that very few Canadian companies were involved in these projects. She cited a number of reasons for this, including that Canadian companies tend not to purposely underbid during competitive bidding processes. Ambassador Cesaratto also indicated that Panama had large income inequality; practically no unemployment; and a large Aboriginal population (accounting for approximately 10% of the total population) whose jurisdiction represented approximately 30% of the land. She also provided the delegation with information on a \$6 billion mining project, the largest investment ever made in Panama, being undertaken by the Inmet Mining Corporation, a Canadian company. The delegates were also given a briefing on security issues in Panama, including the illicit trade in drugs and firearms, money laundering, and human trafficking. It was noted that Panama could use Canada's help with respect to technology transfer and training. Also, the visa requirement for Panamanian citizens seeking to visit Canada remained a constant source of frustration, especially for businesspeople. It was made clear that it would be greatly appreciated if this process could be streamlined, if not eliminated.

D. Working Group Sessions

On 30 August and 1 September 2012, parliamentarians were invited to attend and contribute to one of three concurrent working groups, according to their areas of interest. The first group looked at the impact of the global economic crisis in the Americas. The second group focused on the weak rule of law as a threat to citizen security. The third group examined climate change and the environment. In addition to these three groups, the Group of Women Parliamentarians met twice to discuss the global financial crisis and its impact on women in the region. A summary of the discussions that took place in each group is presented below. The resolutions resulting from the working group sessions are also presented in Appendix A of this report.

The Working Group "Impact of the global economic crisis in the Americas" drew delegates from Argentina, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Panama, Paraguay, and Suriname. Ms. Jeannette Ruiz, member of the National Assembly of Costa Rica, and Senator Michael L. MacDonald (Canada) chaired the meetings of the Group, which had as its objectives to:

Analyze the political and social consequences of the global economic crisis;

Study to what extent and how the global crisis affected political dynamics and democratic governance in the Americas;

Study current fiscal and social policy responses to the crisis; and

Analyze the "China effect" in mitigating the impact of the global economic crisis in the Americas.

The working group's discussions were facilitated by Mr. Otton Solís Fallas (Costa Rica) and by Ms. Laura Gómez Mera (Argentina). In the Americas, although many countries faced economic slow-downs, most economies fared better than the majority of G20 economies, and experienced higher growth rates than both Canada and the United States. Professor Solís' presentation highlighted the continued foreign direct investment by China in the Americas as the strongest indicator in explaining of the resilience of many Latin American countries.

The Working Group "Weak Rule of Law: a threat to citizen security" drew delegates from Argentina, Canada, Chile, Panamá, Paraguay, Suriname, and Venezuela. Mr. Germán Blanco, member of the National Assembly of Colombia chaired the sessions of the Group, which had as its objectives to:

Analyze how administrative justice and security are related;

Study current programs (public benefits, individual licensing and permitting, regulatory programs with individual impact);

Study the application of the rule of law to administrative justice;

Analyze the adaptation of local microstructures in the democratic rule of law;

Study social microstructures and new leadership systems; and

Study social microstructures that weaken the rule of law.

Leading the discussion of this working group were two subject-matter specialists: Mr. Howard Fenton (United States) and Mr. Marco Castillo (Guatemala). Mr. Fenton described the elements of the rule of law as including criminal justice, civil justice and administrative justice. He noted that administrative justice was often overlooked as an important legal pillar, and provided delegates with an overview of the role that administrative justice could play in a society with a strong adherence to the rule of law. The positive attributes ascribed to a healthy administrative justice system included a citizenry who felt more secure in their livelihood; greater confidence in the government; increased accountability; a reduction in petty corruption; and more effective delivery and review of government programs. Mr. Castillo discussed cases of communities in the Northern Triangle (Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras) in which the state was completely absent, having abandoned providing services to the citizenry. In these communities, the rule of law did not exist. These communities became, as such, silenced and hidden. Mr. Castillo discussed strategies to be undertaken by the state to recover its role in such communities, including identifying and legitimizing grassroots leaders; strengthening citizen participation; and engaging citizens in peaceful dialogue in order to learn and take into account their needs and experiences.

The Working Group "Climate Change and Environment" drew delegates from Argentina, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, Suriname, and Panama. Mr. Ignacio Urrutia, member of the National Assembly of Chile chaired the sessions of the Working Group, which had as its objectives to:

Analyze extractive industries policy issues such as fiscal regimes and health, safety, environment oversight;

Analyze the impacts of extractive industries on the environment and climate change (the “clean energy,” “green jobs” debates); and

Study current best practices in capacity building (how to improve poorly equipped government institutions and bodies).

In order to achieve these objectives, the Working Group heard presentations from two experts: Ms. Michelle Michot Foss (United States) and Ms. Margarita Astralaga (Colombia). Mrs. Michot began her presentation by outlining different aspects of the extractive industry’s operations that are of concern to policy makers. She noted the importance of good governance, transparency, open markets and a step-by-step approach. She set out the best practices in planning better energy systems (i.e., wind, solar, fuel, platinum) and ways to improve the various institutions (extraction, urbanisation, fiscal regime, etc).

Ms. Astralaga discussed the United Nations Energy Programme’s fifth Global Environmental Outlook, a report which provides a scientific review of a selected set of environmental challenges, as well as of solutions available to respond to them, including their social and environmental costs, and the associated benefits. The report assessed 90 of the most important global environmental objectives and found that significant progress had only been made toward four objectives; marginal progress had been made toward 40 goals (including the expansion of protected areas such as National Parks and efforts to reduce deforestation); little or no progress had been detected for 24 (including climate change, fish stocks and desertification and drought); and further deterioration was shown for eight goals (including the state of the world’s coral reefs). No assessment was made of 14 other goals due to a lack of data.

The Working Group of the Group of Women Parliamentarians met twice in conjunction with the 9th Plenary Assembly, drawing the participation of delegates from Argentina, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Suriname, and Venezuela. The group “Financial Crisis and its impact on women in the region” was presided by Ms. Machuca, President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians, and had the following objectives:

Reflecting upon the economic crisis and its impact on women;

Identifying the unique characteristics of women as vulnerable subjects in the economic crisis;

Defining the social and historical context giving rise to the economic crisis, as well as its financial components; and

Identifying potential government policies to protect women and support them in an economic downturn.

Participants in this Working Group heard a presentation from Ms. Mayna Buvinic (Chile). She discussed the impacts that the recent global financial crisis had had on women and their children in poor countries, including how women postpone childbearing during economic crises. She noted that in a study conducted on the impact of positive and negative economic shocks, while boys and girls benefitted from positive shocks in a similar way, negative shocks were more harmful to girls than to boys as they affected girls’ healthcare. According to Ms. Buvinic’s analysis, gender differences

emerged from a review of the effects of aggregate economic shocks, as differences exist between men and women in terms of access to labour and credit markets and in the allocation of household labour. Also, they are the result of households' coping strategies when faced with a drop in household income. It was an issue that affected all women in the hemisphere, especially providers of services (mostly in social reproduction and care work) in developed countries.

E. Second Session of the Plenary Assembly

The second session of the 9th Plenary Assembly began with an announcement of the new countries selected, by acclamation, to fill positions on the board of directors. Positions on the board are allotted to each of the four ParlAmericas sub-regions, namely North America, Central America, the Caribbean and South America. The countries selected to fill positions on the board were:

Canada, representing North America;

Jamaica, representing the Caribbean; and

Colombia, representing South America.

The session continued with the presentation of the recommendations by the chairs of each working group (see Appendix A). These recommendations were fully received and adopted by the Assembly, without amendments.

There was also some discussion as to the location of the 10th Plenary Assembly, scheduled for fall 2013. A location was not, however, decided upon.

Mr. Hoback closed the session by offering his thanks to the chairs of the working groups for their focused and efficient efforts; to the subject-matter experts; to the delegates; to the staff and Technical Secretariat; and to the translators. He noted that the event had been a success, with harmonious yet substantive discussions, while also offering the opportunity for the creation of lasting friendships between parliamentarians.

F. Board of Directors Meeting

The board of directors met during a working lunch to discuss the remaining items on its agenda. The meeting opened with a warm welcome extended by Mr. Hoback to the new members of the board. It was noted that ParlAmericas, as an organization had made a number of structural changes that will allow it to move forward in a positive way. Further, ParlAmericas had created a new strategic plan, overhauled its governance, and was in the process of reviewing and enhancing its regulations. The need remained, however, for secure, stable funding. The board then reviewed the work plan which had been approved by the board and CIDA in February 2012. A discussion also took place concerning the role of observer countries at future plenary assemblies.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Section of ParlAmericas
ACTIVITY	29 th Executive Committee Meeting and the 9 th Plenary Assembly
DESTINATION	Panama City, Panama
DATES	29 August – 1 September 2012
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Michael L. MacDonald, Senator Hon. Pierrette Ringuette, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Scott Andrews, M.P. Mrs. Hélène Laverdière, M.P. Mr. James Rajotte, M.P.
STAFF	Mr. Leif-Erik Aune, Association Secretary Mr. André Barnes, Analyst Ms. Guyanne Desforges, Association Secretary
TRANSPORTATION	\$16,470.59
ACCOMMODATION	\$6,848.51
HOSPITALITY	\$0.00
PER DIEMS	\$2,236.91
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$233.74
MISCELLANEOUS /	\$79.40
REGISTRATION FEES	
TOTAL	\$25,869.15

APPENDIX A

WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Working Group 1 – Weak Rule of Law, a Threat to Citizen Security

1. Identify and recognize local social microstructures even if they have not achieved institutional recognition; i.e., leaders who have earned respect in their local social structures through their informal activities, and therefore are able to meet social needs through legitimate structures.
2. Strengthen citizen security through participatory budgeting, in the understanding that the community itself can identify its main needs for social investment.
3. Develop the capacity for citizens to engage in social auditing (social monitors, public watchdogs, etc.) as a process of continuing improvement in which all community sectors are involved, and which results in recommendations for corrective or remedial actions.
4. Establish clear and understandable regulations and descriptions of responsibilities in the public sphere, in order for citizens to readily understand and assess the adequacy and quality of public services, and compel the local authority to consider and respond to citizens' claims.
5. Strengthen law enforcement by establishing adequate systems of audit, control, and limits, towards efficient functioning and benefit to the community.

B. Working Group 2 – The Impact of the Global Economic Crisis on the Americas

1. Promote internal legislation so that our countries have macroeconomic and structural management tools that strengthen them to better face potential changes in the world's state of affairs, in a way that makes it possible to take defensive action in case of external threats that could destabilize our economies.
2. Legislate to promote – through public policies – management of knowledge of human resources, science and technology in order for our countries to become competitive, in local and international markets, in fields such as education, agriculture, health and industry.
3. Legislate to strengthen the independence of the entities responsible for prosecuting corruption that causes an unfair distribution of wealth, and decreases confidence in democratic states, increasing political instability and social unrest.
4. Create a legal framework that promotes the strengthening of domestic production, to satisfy internal demand and stop the commoditization of exports; this could be achieved through incentives

for those producers who add value to their products, and also through legislation that causes an equitable distribution of wealth.

5. Promote legislation that would turn the reintegration of migration flows into a positive factor for our economies.

C. Working Group 3 – Climate Change and the Environment

1. Aim for the diversification of energy sources that are compatible with protecting the environment. Each State should adopt the most appropriate energy matrix, from the point of environmental, social, economic and energy security, so that a coherent energy policy exists.
2. Encourage the creation of public policies or the design of national strategies that stimulate energy savings.
3. Seek international support among countries, international and regional financial institutions and development agencies, incorporating the concept of a green economy through a more equitable and balanced distribution of the global carbon market.
4. Recommend to States that they increase their investment in research and technology in the energy sector as an engine of sustainable development through the exchange of technology and knowledge between developed and developing countries.
5. Improve, implement and monitor national and international environmental law (whether treaties, agreements, protocols or conventions) that has been approved and ratified by each State, abolishing subsidies, taxes and incentives that are unhelpful or counterproductive to the environment, and ensure its implementation.

D. Working Group (Women Parliamentarians Group) Recommendations on the Financial Crisis and its Effects on Women in the Region

1. Encourage the private sector to hire a female labour force in times of economic contraction. (This goes against the normal presumption that it is the man who needs employment). Finance, with state funds, quality job-training programs for young people.
2. Promote positive initiatives so that the banking system offers financial services to women with limited resources. Promote, along with these banking services, credit policies that also encourage saving.
3. Legislate to build, create, improve and support with human, technical, and financial resources, quality of care centres geared towards the elderly, children, people with disabilities, and those in

other care situations, that have traditionally been assigned to women. Providing care is the reason that women are impeded from leaving their homes to work.

4. Legislate so that public investments have rigorous and periodic impact evaluation systems, and monitor to ensure that the results of these evaluations define the content and direction of future investments.
5. Monitor and ensure that conditional fund transfer policies encourage the cultural change necessary to advance our people out of the cycle of poverty (health, education, formal employment, etc.).