



Canada - China Legislative Association
Association législative Canada - Chine



Canada - Japan Inter - Parliamentary Group
Groupe Interparlementaire Canada - Japon

Report of the Canada-China Legislative Association and Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group

**28th Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum
(APPF)**

Canberra, Australia

From January 13 to 16, 2020

Report

From 13–16 January 2020, the Honourable Michael L. MacDonald, Senator, attended the 28th Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) in Canberra, Australia, on behalf of the Canada–Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group and the Canada–China Legislative Association.

Overview of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum

The APPF brings together parliamentarians from across the Asia-Pacific region. Currently, the national parliaments of the following 27 countries are members: Australia, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, the United States of America and Vietnam. Brunei Darussalam is a permanent observer country, and the host parliament can invite other observer countries at its discretion. Canada is a founding member of the APPF and hosted the 5th and the 24th Annual Meetings in Vancouver in 1997 and 2016, respectively.

As a regional parliamentary forum, the APPF enables parliamentarians to discuss issues of common concern, to deepen their understanding of both the region and the interests and experiences of its diverse countries, to further regional cooperation, and to build relationships between and among parliamentarians from its member countries. The APPF's proceedings generally involve debates about political, security, economic, social and cultural issues facing the region, which lead to a joint communiqué and the adoption of resolutions that the delegations propose.

The host parliament for each Annual Meeting is selected following discussions among the APPF's member countries. The APPF's secretariat functions are undertaken by the host parliament for a one-year term: from May in the year preceding the Annual Meeting that it will host until the following April. The host parliament develops the program and the draft agenda for the upcoming Annual Meeting under the direction of the APPF's president, who is appointed by the host parliament to represent the APPF during its one-year mandate.

The APPF was founded in 1993 under the leadership of former Japanese Prime Minister NAKASONE Yasuhiro, who was the APPF's Honorary President until his death in November 2019. At the 28th Annual Meeting, the APPF decided to end the role of Honorary President and instead to expand the role of the APPF president to include a mandate to promote the APPF as an international parliamentary forum. These changes were made on a temporary basis, and will be further discussed at the 29th Annual Meeting in South Korea in 2021. At the 28th Annual Meeting, the Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives was appointed APPF President.

In accordance with the APPF's Rules of Procedure, the Executive Committee is responsible for matters relating to the management of the APPF. It is chaired by the APPF President and convenes prior to the Annual Meeting's opening ceremony to make decisions relating to: the approval of the program and agenda; the approval of draft resolutions submitted by delegations for consideration; the establishment of the Drafting Committee; the designation of a chair for the Drafting Committee; and the formation of

relevant Working Groups. It also confirms the parliament that will host the next Annual Meeting. Canada is currently a member of the Executive Committee; its term will end after the Annual Meeting in 2021.

The Annual Meeting is the APPF's "highest decision-making organ." Its agenda identifies topics that will be the focus of plenary sessions that are organized along more general themes, typically relating to: political and security matters; economic and trade matters; regional development cooperation; and the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. In addition to plenary debates, the substantive work at the Annual Meetings entails consideration and adoption of draft resolutions on various topics submitted by the delegations from various APPF member countries.

At the Annual Meeting, the draft resolutions are examined by the Drafting Committee. When multiple draft resolutions have been submitted on the same or similar topics, Working Groups create new joint texts for the Drafting Committee's consideration. The Drafting Committee and the Working Groups make decisions on the basis of consensus. Representatives from all delegations can participate in the Drafting Committee and the Working Groups. The Drafting Committee also finalizes the Annual Meeting's joint communiqué. The final resolutions and the joint communiqué are adopted during a plenary session held at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting.

The 28th Annual Meeting

The overarching theme for the 28th Annual Meeting of the APPF, hosted by the Honourable Tony Smith, Speaker of Australia's House of Representatives, was *Parliamentary Partnerships to 2020 and beyond*. The agenda included a meeting of the Executive Committee, and plenary sessions during which delegates exchanged views about specific aspects of the overarching theme. Moreover, delegates considered draft resolutions that had been submitted by delegations from member countries on a variety of political and security matters, economic and trade matters, and regional development cooperation among other themes. Of these, a total of 19 resolutions were passed by the APPF. In addition, the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians was held.

At the opening ceremony the delegates were welcomed by an elder from the Ngunnawal Indigenous people, who are the traditional owners of the land on which the APPF was held, and heard a message from the Governor-General of Australia.

Activities of the Canadian Delegation

After Senator MacDonald's arrival in Australia it was recommended that the full delegation to Australia for the APPF be cancelled due to the massive fires which were wreaking havoc in Canberra and other areas of south-eastern Australia. Based on his experience at the conference and the fact that none of the business activities were affected in any way by the fires, Senator MacDonald would like to formally put on the record that he considers this decision to have been unnecessary.

A. Executive Committee

Senator MacDonald attended the Opening Day executive committee meeting, which was chaired by Mr. Tony Smith, Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives. The

discussion was mostly centered on the passing of Mr. NAKASONE, former Prime Minister of Japan, and upcoming changes to executive committee's mandate.

B. Plenary Sessions

Senator MacDonald attended all plenary sessions. The sessions for the 28th rendition of the APPF were: Session 1: Political and Security Matters, Session 2: Economic and Trade Matters and Session 3: Regional Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region.

C. Draft Resolutions and Working Groups

Senator MacDonald presented Canada's draft resolution "A Digital Economy for All" for in Session 2, and "Prioritizing Oceans Management and the Blue Economy to Advance Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific Region" during Session 3. The resolution on Oceans management, proposed by Canada and sponsored by Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and Japan, was adopted by the APPF. It focused on several aspects of oceans management and recognized the imperative of protecting and preserving the ocean, "which is common heritage shared by all."¹

Canada's draft resolutions on "Addressing the Humanitarian Plight of the Rohingya People", "Enhancing the Role of Women in the Promotion of Peace and Security in the Asia-Pacific Region", and "Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Decision-Making about Climate Change and Sustainable Development" were also submitted. The APPF ended up adopting resolutions on all of these topics, but Canada was only listed as a sponsor on the Oceans Management resolution.

D. Additional Activities of the Canadian Delegation

Senator MacDonald attended briefings with the Canadian High Commission and bilateral meetings with members of the Japanese, Mexican, and Korean delegations.

Conclusion

At the end of the APPF a joint communiqué signed by all member countries was issued detailing all actions taken at the assembly as well as the report of the executive committee.²

South Korea is scheduled to host the 2021 Annual Meeting and Thailand has offered to host the 2022 Annual Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Honourable Paul J. Massicotte,
Senator, Co-Chair
Canada-China Legislative Association

The Honourable Jim Munson,
Senator, Co-Chair
Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group

¹ <https://appf28.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/11.-FINAL-Oceans-Management.pdf>

² <https://appf28.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/FINAL-Signed-Joint-Communique.pdf>

Mr. Han Dong, M.P.
Co-Chair
Canada-China Legislative Association

Mr. Terry Sheehan, M.P.
Co-Chair
Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada–China Legislative Association and Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group
ACTIVITY	28 th Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF)
DESTINATION	Canberra, Australia
DATES	January 13-16, 2020
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Michael L. MacDonald
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 17,197.86
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 2,786.62
HOSPITALITY	\$ 304.10
PER DIEMS	\$ 475.65
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0.00
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 243.66
TOTAL	\$ 21,007.89*

* As noted in the report, due to massive fires, most delegates had to cancel their flights. The amount indicated here includes those cancellation fees, in the amount of \$8,572.68.