



Joint Interparliamentary Council

Conseil interparlementaire mixte

Minutes

Meeting No. 123

October 16, 2012

The Joint Interparliamentary Council met this day at 8:02 a.m., in room 172-E of the Centre Block, the Honourable David Tkachuk, Senator, presiding.

Representing the Senate: Hon. David Tkachuk and Hon. Marie-P. Charette-Poulin, Senators.

Representing the House of Commons: Joe Comartin, Harold Albrecht, Hon. Rob Merrifield, Philip Toone, Massimo Pacetti and Randy Hoback, MPs.

In attendance:

From the International and Interparliamentary Affairs Directorate: Jeremy LeBlanc, Deputy Principal Clerk, Parliamentary Associations; Gérald Lafrenière, Deputy Principal Clerk, Parliamentary Exchanges; and Marie-Andrée Rainville, Manager, Resource Planning and Administration.

From the Senate: Nicole Proulx, Director of Finance, Finance and Procurement Directorate.

From the House of Commons: Gilles Larocque, Senior Financial Advisor, Policy and Financial Planning.

1. Approval of Minutes:

On motion of Mr. Toone, the minutes of the meeting of June 20, 2012 were approved.

2. Activity Budget Status Report:

The Clerk provided an update on the status of the envelope for association activities.

3. Annual General Meetings for Parliamentary Associations:

The Chair sought advice from members of the Council concerning the timing of association annual general meetings (AGMs). Due to the election, the AGMs for 2011 were held in the fall rather than the spring, however some associations are proposing to wait until February or March 2013 to hold their next AGM which would respect the requirement for a meeting each fiscal year, but would extend the term of executive committee members and potentially conflict with the timing of membership renewal.

After discussion, it was agreed that the timing of the AGMs be left to individual associations.

4. Briefing from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT):

Further to the recommendation of the Subcommittee on Restructuring Parliamentary Associations adopted on March 14, 2012, the Chair suggested that the Council receive, at its next meeting, a briefing from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade concerning the government's foreign policy priorities. Members of the Council agreed with this suggestion and asked that all association chairs and co-chairs be invited to attend the briefing.

5. Cost of Airline Tickets:

Further to the recommendation of the Subcommittee on Restructuring Parliamentary Associations adopted on March 14, 2012, the Council reviewed an information note concerning the use of the official travel agent and the use of more restrictive airline fares.

Based on the analysis conducted by IIA, the use of the official travel provider does generally result in cost savings. In addition, there are a number of other benefits that result from using their services. With regard to more restrictive fares, by and large, association secretaries already seek additional savings through the purchase of semi-restrictive fares where these purchases are appropriate to the situation.

Members of the Council again reiterated their view that the most substantial cost savings come from earlier whip approval of delegates, since airline tickets are generally more expensive when purchased closer to the date of departure.

The Council agreed to hold a discussion at a future meeting concerning business class travel.

6. CPA Request:

The Clerk provided an overview of a proposal by the Canadian Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) to twin provincial and territorial legislatures with those of Caribbean Commonwealth countries, following a model developed between Australian and South Pacific legislatures. The Federal Branch of the CPA has been asked to help coordinate this Caribbean twinning initiative and to seek outside sources of funding to support it. The JIC agreed to revisit this issue when further information becomes available.

7. JIC Annual Report:

The Chair drew members' attention to the third report on Parliamentary Associations' Activities and Expenditures, related to activities for the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

After discussion, on motion of Mr. Merrifield, it was agreed to forward the report to the internal economy committees of both Houses and then make it publicly available via the International and Interparliamentary Affairs section of the Parliamentary Web site.

8. Canada-China – Request to host in three cities:

The Chair provided an overview of a request received from the Co-Chair of Canada-China Legislative Association during the summer recess. Senator Plett requested and was granted permission to host an incoming delegation in three cities, despite the service standards adopted by the JIC on June 20, 2012.

It was agreed to ratify the Chair's decision.

At 8:37 a.m., the Council adjourned to the call of the Co-Chairs.

Eric Janse

Clerk