

Canadian Group  
Inter-Parliamentary Union



Groupe canadien  
Union interparlementaire

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## **Report of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**

### **Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations: Putting an End to Conflicts: Prescriptions for a Peaceful Future**

**New York, New York, United States of America**

**February 8 to 9, 2024**

## Report

A delegation of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was at the United Nations (UN) headquarters in New York from February 8 to 9, 2024 to participate in the IPU's [2024 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations](#). The Canadian delegation comprised the following parliamentarians:

- The Honourable David McGuinty, P.C., M.P., President of the Canadian Group of the IPU and Head of Delegation;
- The Honourable Rebecca Patterson, Senator;
- The Honourable Rosemarie Moodie, Senator;
- Mr. Stéphane Bergeron, M.P.; and
- Mr. Matthew Green, M.P.

The delegation was accompanied by Ms. Catherine Cuerrier, Association Secretary and Ms. Natalie Mychajlyszyn, Advisor.

## THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Established in 1889, the [IPU](#) is the international organization of national parliaments of sovereign states. The IPU is the focal point for global parliamentary dialogue, working for peace and co-operation as well as for the establishment of representative democracy. To this end, it:

- fosters contacts, co-ordination, and the exchange of experiences among parliamentarians of all member parliaments;
- considers questions of international interest and concern, and expresses its views on relevant issues in order to bring about action by parliaments and parliamentarians;
- contributes to the defence and promotion of human rights, which are essential aspects of parliamentary democracy and development; and
- contributes to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions, and to the strengthening and development of their means of action. <sup>1</sup>

The IPU's activities are pursued according to its Strategy [2022–2026](#).

As of the time of the Parliamentary Forum, the IPU's membership comprises 180 national parliaments in addition to associate members such as the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe among other similar bodies. <sup>2</sup>

## THE PARLIAMENTARY HEARING

The Parliamentary Hearing at the UN is an annual event, organized jointly by the IPU and the Office of the President of the UN General Assembly. It provides an invaluable opportunity for parliamentarians to interact with UN officials, provide input to major UN processes as well as share experiences and best practices on a topic of global concern.

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<sup>1</sup> See: IPU, "[About us](#)"; and IPU, [Statutes and Rules](#).

<sup>2</sup> IPU, [Members](#).

The Parliamentary Hearing is a highly significant event in the IPU's calendar of activities given the long-standing importance placed by the organization on promoting the role of parliamentarians in multilateralism generally and cooperation with the UN specifically. More recently, the IPU's Strategy 2022–2026 underscored this importance in its strategic objective, "Catalysing collective parliamentary action," and its aim to "further strengthen the parliamentary dimension of multilateralism and global governance including the voice of parliaments at the United Nations and other multilateral organizations" in order to "accelerate multilateral policy solutions to key global issues."

## **THE 2024 PARLIAMENTARY HEARING**

Approximately 200 parliamentarians from 50 countries attended the 2024 Parliamentary Hearing. Taking place from February 8 to 9, 2024, the theme of the hearing was Putting an end to conflicts: Prescriptions for a peaceful future. The theme was specifically chosen in light of the growing tensions and increasing number of conflicts around the world. In addition, it aligned with one of the priorities for the current presidency of the UN General Assembly – peace – as well as the IPU's priority focus in 2024 on international peace and security.

The Hearing's programme included six panels that focused on the following dimensions of the overall theme:

- The Future of Peace and Security: From good intentions to a renewed collective action;
- Might is not right: International law vs the law of the jungle;
- "Security" redefined: From State-centric approach to a "new security paradigm" based on Human Security;
- Lowering the temperature: Climate change and conflict;
- "Not in my name:" Women, youth and other groups working for peace; and
- Emerging threats to peace: Technology for evil vs. human progress.

Participants heard presentations from a variety of experts and parliamentarians and engaged in a fulsome exchange of views on the topics. A panel of parliamentarians led discussions during the special segment entitled "Parliamentary diplomacy for peace: Good practices and common challenges." A common theme emerging from the participants' discussions was the expectations of the global parliamentary community regarding the UN Summit of the Future taking place in September 2024 and the commitments by UN member-States to reinvigorate the multilateral system. In this context, the Hearing's programme also included a special briefing by the UN Under-Secretary General for Policy, Mr. Guy Ryder, on the Summit of the Future as well as on the preliminary draft of the Summit's Pact for the Future. Over the course of their exchanges, parliamentary delegates made several recommendations about the unique role parliamentarians play in addressing many of the issues discussed and in strengthening global peace and security.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed report of the 2024 hearing and presentations by panelists, as well as the hearing's programme, please see the event's [website](#).

The President of the UN General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Dennis Francis (Trinidad and Tobago) and the IPU President, Dr. Tulia Ackson (Tanzania) provided opening remarks, each emphasizing the critical role parliamentarians play in maintaining global peace and security, and in delivering transformative solutions to the problems that underpin conflict. They also underscored the value of multilateralism and the contributions of parliamentarians in making international cooperation meaningful.

### **A. Session 1 – The Future of Peace and Security: From good intentions to a renewed collective action**

Presenters:

Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

Her Excellency Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations (virtually)

Mr. Adam Lupel, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the International Peace Institute

Parliamentarians heard from presenters who were unanimously of the view that UN bodies, such as the Security Council whose primary mandate is peace and security, reflect past realities and are no longer suited to address current global challenges. The presenters also unanimously emphasized that the Security Council needed to be reformed to make it more representative, inclusive and effective. The presenters encouraged parliamentarians to play their budgetary, legislative and oversight roles and to leverage their engagement in order to make the most of current opportunities to invest in dialogue and conflict prevention and to restore global trust in multilateralism.

### **B. Session 2 – Might is not right: International law vs the law of the jungle**

Presenters:

His Excellency Ambassador Tareq Al-Banai, Permanent Representative of Kuwait, Co-chair of the intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council

Ms. Ana Lilia Rivera Rivera, President of the Senate of Mexico

Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR)

Professor Rebecca Hamilton, American University Washington College of Law (virtually)

The presenters on this panel noted what they characterized as the disturbing decline in respect for international law, including constraints on the use of force. They underscored that respect for international legal obligations and the rule of law are vital foundations of an international community. Parliamentary delegates made several recommendations about how adherence to international law can be improved, including by ensuring its universal and consistent application.

### **C. Session 3 – “Security” redefined: From State-centric approach to a “new security paradigm” based on Human Security**

Presenters:

Her Excellency Ambassador Maritza Chan Valverde, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica

Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, UN Special Coordinator for Development in the Sahel

Mr. Jonathan Granoff, President, Global Security Institute and Representative to the UN World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates

The presenters underscored that security is influenced by many political, social and economic factors that concern human development and basic human needs, including good governance, human rights, health care, education, and a clean environment. They also stressed that efforts to advance such human-centred rather than state-centred approaches to security continue to be undermined by models that prioritize military-spending with consequences for national and international security.

In his intervention, **Mr. Bergeron** remarked that the peace and stability that Europe has enjoyed for decades is based on recognition of the value of common prosperity and investments in the political, social and economic needs of people. He argued that countries should focus on addressing hunger and poverty rather than engaging in military spending, arms races and the use of force in order to build stability and peace.

### **D. Session 4 – Lowering the temperature: Climate change and conflict**

Presenters:

Her Excellency Margo Deiye, Permanent Representative of Nauru, Co-chair of the Group of Friends on Climate and Security

Mr. Issa Mardo Djibir, M.P., Chad

Ms. Ligia Noronha, Assistant Secretary-General, UN Environment Programme

Ms. Nisreen Elsaïm, Former Chair of the UN Secretary-General’s Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change, Climate and Security (virtually)

The presenters underscored that climate change can increase the threat of conflicts within and between countries by aggravating food and resource insecurity, soil degradation and desertification, as well as forced migration. Participants stressed in their recommendations that all stakeholders need to accelerate their efforts to realize international commitments regarding climate action in order to reduce climate-related security risks.

**Mr. Green** intervened to highlight the negative impact of war and armed conflict – particularly aerial bombardments and ground attacks – on the environment. He asked the panelists to consider the extent to which International Humanitarian Law is applicable and to which perpetrators can be held accountable in these situations. and thereby perpetrators can be held accountable.

## **E. Session 5 – “Not in my name:” Women, youth and other groups working for peace**

Presenters:

His Excellency Ambassador Michael Imran Kanu, Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone and Co-Chair, Informal Group of Experts of the Security Council on Women, Peace and Security

Mr. Dan Carden, M.P., House of Commons of the United Kingdom, and President, IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians

Ms. Cynthia Lopez Castro, M.P., Chamber of Deputies of Mexico, and President, IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

Ms. Sarah Hendriks, Director of Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division, UN Women

Ms. Sara Wahedi, Human Rights Activist and Founder, Ehtesab

The presenters focused their remarks on the importance of increasing the participation of women and young people in decision-making processes to strengthen their contribution to activities that address the various political, economic and social conditions of inequality, injustice and conflict. Moreover, they argued, it is essential that women and young people are meaningfully included in national and international peace negotiations so that these efforts reflect their perspectives and are enduring. In their recommendations, participants underscored the responsibility of all parliamentarians, not just women or those under 30, to work towards realizing greater gender equality and addressing the priorities of young people.

**Senator Moodie** intervened to express her views on the concrete measures to be taken to normalize the full, equal and meaningful engagement of women and young people in decision-making roles, including as elected representatives given their unique contributions to peacebuilding and conflict prevention. She also noted the many contributions women and young people make in Canada through various civil society organizations. As well, she highlighted the support through Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy and the Women, Peace and Security program for women and youth peacebuilding efforts.

## **F. Session 6 – Emerging threats to peace: Technology for evil vs. human progress**

Presenters:

Mr. Amandeep Singh Gill, UN Under-Secretary-General, Special Envoy on Technology

Mr. Jim Balsillie, Co-founder, Centre for International Governance Innovation

Ms. Alexandra Reeve Givens, President and CEO, Center for Democracy and Technology (virtually)

Participants heard from the presenters about the challenges and opportunities new technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), pose to national and international security, economies, democratic processes and social equality. Among their

recommendations, participants noted that parliamentarians should use their unique legislative and oversight roles to ensure that emerging technologies are applied in such a way that they do not present threats and vulnerabilities for national security, social inequality and human rights.

In his intervention, **Mr. Green** shared with participants the observation of one expert who argued that AI had a destructive capacity comparable to that of nuclear weapons, particularly in the context of democratic processes and institutions. Given the comparison between AI and nuclear weapons, Mr. Green suggested that consideration be given to developing an international agreement to regulate AI similar to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty that regulates access to and use of nuclear technology and nuclear weapons.

## **G. Special Segment – Parliamentary Diplomacy**

Presenters:

**The Hon. David McGuinty, P.C., M.P.**, in his capacity as Chair of the UN Affairs Committee, IPU

Senator Stéphanie D'Hose, Speaker of the Senate of Belgium, Member of the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine

Ms. Khaddouj Slassi, M.P., House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Morocco

Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary-General

**Mr. McGuinty** presented his observations on parliamentary diplomacy, specifically its emphasis on the exchange of views regarding the most pressing issues facing the global community, building common ground out of diverse perspectives and continuous learning in order to make informed decisions for the benefit of the constituents parliamentarians represent. He noted the value of parliamentary diplomacy in preventing conflict, underscoring in particular its cost-effectiveness compared to that of military weapons. He highlighted Canadian parliamentarians' long standing commitment to parliamentary diplomacy and their continuous efforts to engage in it across every region and continent in the world. He also underscored that conflict is not always violent, and, increasingly, cannot be addressed by inter-governmental processes alone.

In response to questions and comments from delegates, **Mr. McGuinty** encouraged parliamentarians to be more assertive in finding ways to engage in inter-parliamentary dialogue and to ensure that parliamentary diplomacy is properly resourced. He remarked that such opportunities would have a positive impact on the levels of trust citizens around the world have in social institutions, which would in turn help to prevent or address conflict.

## **H. Special Briefing – Summit of the Future**

Presenter:

Mr. Guy Ryder, UN Under-Secretary-General for Policy

Mr. Ryder updated participants on the preparations for the upcoming UN Summit of the Future and provided an overview of the preliminary draft for the Summit's outcome

document, the Pact for the Future. The Summit and the Pact are intended to provide UN member states an opportunity to recommit to multilateralism and to take those actions required to reform the UN system to restore and reinvigorate its institutions for greater effectiveness and inclusivity.

Participants asked questions about the Summit, including how parliamentarians can be included in its preparations and how they can attend the event as delegates. They also shared their views on the preliminary draft of the Pact, calling for the next version to address the role parliamentarians play in multilateralism and promoting international cooperation.

## **OTHER MEETINGS**

During their time in New York, the delegates also met with Canada's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, His Excellency Ambassador Robert Rae. Delegates offered their parliamentary perspectives on various matters relating to Canada's priorities at the UN, the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East, the war in Ukraine, UN Security Council reform, the state of the UN's finances and the future of multilateralism.

Members of the delegation also engaged in substantial exchanges with parliamentary delegates to the Parliamentary Hearing from Chad, Denmark, Ireland, Kenya, Morocco, and the United Kingdom about current global challenges and the role of parliamentarians in addressing them.

**Mr. McGuinty** engaged in other activities in his capacity as President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs. Notably, he met with the UN Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres to discuss the current agenda at the UN, the challenges facing the international system, and the importance of ensuring that the parliamentary perspective is sought on all matters. Mr. McGuinty was accompanied by the IPU President, the IPU Secretary-General and the IPU Permanent Observer to the UN.

Mr. McGuinty also met with the UN Under-Secretary and Special Adviser on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, Ms. Alice Wairimu Nedritu. They discussed their shared interest in strengthening the engagement of parliamentarians in the prevention of genocide. They exchanged views on the impact of technology and communication on the prevalence of hate speech in the digital sphere, noting the link between hate speech and genocide. They agreed that more should be done to raise awareness of this link – and its implications for democracy – so that the global community, including the private sector, governments, and parliamentarians, take more concrete and effective action to address these problems. Mr. McGuinty committed to contact the IPU leadership on possible opportunities for the Special Adviser to engage with the IPU membership more directly regarding her mandate.

Mr. McGuinty also joined other IPU officers at a lunch with selected UN permanent representatives and UN officials considered as "Friends of the IPU." The discussions focused on the UN's current priorities, notably preparations for the Summit of the Future and the preliminary draft of the Pact for the Future. In particular, attendees underscored the value of the IPU as a mechanism for deepening engagement between the UN and

parliamentarians in all regions of the world in order to strengthen multilateralism, global institutions and international cooperation.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Rob Oliphant, P.C., M.P.

President, Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

### **Travel Costs**

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations
<b>DESTINATION</b>	New York, New York, United States of America
<b>DATES</b>	From February 8 to 9, 2024
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Rebecca Patterson, Senator Hon. Rosemary Moodie, Senator  Hon. David McGuinty, P.C., M.P.
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Stéphane Bergeron, M.P. Mr. Matthew Green, M.P.
STAFF	Ms. Catherine Cuerrier, Association Secretary Ms. Natalie Mychajlyszyn, Analyst
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	\$ 7,505.27
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	\$ 3,246.92
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	\$ 0.00
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	\$ 3,030.38
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	\$ 0.00
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	\$ 0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 13,782.57</b>