

Canadian Group
Inter-Parliamentary Union



Groupe canadien
Union interparlementaire

Report of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Second Meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

Geneva, Switzerland

October 18, 2024

Report

The Hon. David McGuinty, P.C., M.P., in his capacity as President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was in Geneva, Switzerland, on October 18, 2024 to participate in the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (WCSP) of which he is an ex-officio member. He was accompanied by Ms. Natalie Mychajlyszyn, Advisor to the Canadian Group of the IPU. ¹.

The Preparatory Committee meeting was attended by sixteen representatives of the 181 members of the IPU and invited participants from the United Nations (UN). The Speaker of the Senate, the Hon. Raymonde Gagné, is also a member of the Preparatory Committee and joined the meeting virtually.

The purpose of the meeting was to follow-up on the discussions from the inaugural Preparatory Committee in May 2024 and to provide further guidance for the planning of the Sixth WCSP that will take place from July 29 to 31, 2025 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Its agenda included items relating to the proposed structure and main themes for the conference, potential ideas for the content of its outcome document, or high-level declaration, as well as the draft rules of the conference and potential special guests.

The highlights and key decisions from the discussions include the following:

- Based on discussions from the inaugural preparatory meeting, participants considered “Practicing true multilateralism and creating a common bright future for mankind” as the conference’s proposed overall theme.
- The conference programme would comprise a general debate on the overall theme, during which Speakers will be allocated limited time to make statements.
- The topics for five parallel panels and the perspectives offered by parliaments continued to be discussed, with proposals ranging from an examination of the current global structure, emerging technologies and their regulation to sustainable development, migration, and human rights of minorities.
- Participants exchanged views on the proposed content for the conference’s declaration.
- Participants were invited to volunteer to prepare conference reports on the overarching themes of peace and security, sustainable development, democracy and human rights, gender equality and youth participation, and innovation in parliaments and society.

Participants were also briefed by Mr. Courtenay Rattray, Chef de Cabinet of the UN Secretary-General on the UN’s Summit of the Future which took place in September 2024 at the UN Headquarters in New York, United States, and its outcome document, the Pact for the Future. In particular, he highlighted that the Pact includes a strong commitment to

¹ Mr. McGuinty and Ms. Mychajlyszyn were in Geneva together with other delegates of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to attend the 149th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly. The Assembly concluded on October 17, 2024.

deepen the UN's engagement with national parliaments and the IPU. He also drew attention to the Pact's two annexes: the Global Digital Compact, which constitutes the first comprehensive global framework for digital cooperation and governance; and the Declaration on Future Generations, whose action items seek to strengthen work on human rights and gender equality for long-term impact.

Mr. McGuinty participated in the discussions, making the following remarks:

- The conference and its impact on global discussions would benefit from special guests who offer an honest albeit difficult message about the crises facing parliamentarians so that they may carry out their mandates more responsibly and contribute to multilateral processes more meaningfully.
- Parliamentarians from around the world need to take every opportunity to become more informed about technological and scientific advances that are currently building and that, together with their challenges and opportunities, will be upon the global community even faster than artificial intelligence.
- The Pact for the Future, like many international documents that ultimately fall to parliamentarians to legislate in order that they be implemented, is poorly understood if legislators are even aware of it. Multilateralism is being undermined by many factors, including the multitude of documents that overwhelm the very people they are intended to benefit. He recommended that the conference consider ways in which the Pact for the Future and similar agreements can be more effectively communicated to parliaments so that they can better understand the urgent challenges such documents are trying to address and so that they may act on their responsibilities to debate them on behalf of their constituents.

Travel Expenses

Travel expenses associated with this activity can be found in the delegation's financial report. This report is available in the Financial Disclosure section of the Parliamentary Diplomacy website.

Respectfully submitted,

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

President, Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union