

Canadian Group
Inter-Parliamentary Union



Groupe canadien
Union interparlementaire

Report of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations: Scaling up action for the Sustainable Development Goals: Finance, Institutions, and Politics

New York, New York, United States of America

From February 13 to 14, 2025

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 13 to 14, 2025 to participate in the IPU's [2025 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations](#). The Canadian delegation comprised the following parliamentarians:

- Ms. Pamela Damoff, M.P., President of the Canadian Group of the IPU and Head of Delegation;
- The Honourable Andrew Cardozo, Senator;
- The Honourable Mary Robinson, Senator;
- The Honourable Michelle Rempel Garner, P.C., M.P.; and
- Ms. Andréanne Larouche, M.P.

The delegation was accompanied by Ms. Erica Pereira, Association Secretary, Mr. Matthieu Boulianne, 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.¹

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 181 national parliaments in addition to 15 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.²

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 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.

¹ See: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), "[About us](#)"; and IPU, [Statutes and Rules](#).

² 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. The IPU's Strategy 2022–2026 underscores the importance of these goals. Its strategic objectives include, "Catalysing collective parliamentary action," through which it aims 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 2025 PARLIAMENTARY HEARING

Approximately 180 parliamentarians from 60 countries attended the 2025 Parliamentary Hearing. The theme of the hearing was Scaling up action for the Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs]: Finance, Institutions and Politics. The theme was chosen in response to growing concerns that the SDGs will not be implemented by the 2030 deadline.³

The Hearing's programme included seven interactive panels focusing on specific dimensions of the overall theme. Each of these sessions is discussed below.

The President of the UN General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Philemon Yang (Cameroon) and the IPU President, Dr. Tulia Ackson (Tanzania) provided opening remarks, each emphasizing that the implementation of the SDGs was off track and that parliamentarians must strengthen efforts to make progress by the 2030 deadline.

A. Session 1 – The deep challenge of the SDGs: Mobilizing political will

Presenters:

Ms. Nelly Mutti, Speaker of the National Assembly, Zambia

Mr. Guy Ryder, Under-Secretary-General for Policy, United Nations

Professor Jeffrey Sachs, President, Sustainable Development Solutions Network

The presenters unanimously agreed that lack of political will was among the most significant obstacles to achieving the SDGs. Other challenges that were raised included financial constraints, growing isolationism and the erosion of multilateralism. Parliamentary delegates made several recommendations about how to generate the necessary political will to advance the SDGs, including prioritizing goals that resonate with people, such as education, health care and basic infrastructure, as well as raising awareness about the SDGs.

³ The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 goals established in the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), a document adopted as a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on September 25, 2015. The SDGs are accompanied by 169 targets and over 230 indicators aimed at ending poverty, reducing inequalities, protecting the environment and setting the world on a more sustainable path by 2030. The SDGs are universal in scope, applying to both developed and developing countries, and cover a wide range of socio-economic and environmental issues.

B. Session 2 – Parliamentary oversight of the SDGs: The unfinished business of institutionalization

Presenters:

Mr. Adama Bictogo, Speaker of the National Assembly, Cote d'Ivoire

His Excellency Ambassador Ulugbek Lapasov, Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the UN

Ms. Marina Ponti, Global Director, UN SDG Global Campaign

The presenters on this panel noted that parliamentary engagement in the SDGs has been uneven and undermined by fragmented attention. In particular, they emphasized that few parliaments exercise effective oversight of national SDG progress reports or even have dedicated SDG committees and caucuses. Parliamentary delegates heard about some best practices concerning parliamentary oversight of the SDGs in Uzbekistan and Cote d'Ivoire, among others. Delegates encouraged the establishment of parliamentary structures that review the SDGs and support reporting mechanisms that track their progress. They also underscored the importance of strengthening the budget process to ensure greater transparency and oversight of government expenditures relating to SDGs.

C. Session 3 – Development cooperation and the SDGs: Making the most of aid

Presenters:

Her Excellency Ambassador Lok Bahadur Thapa, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the UN

Ms. Susan Brown, Assistant Secretary-General and Director, Bureau for External Engagement and Advocacy, UN Development Programme

Ms. Nilima Gulrajani, Principal Research Fellow, Development and Public Finance Team, ODI Global

The presenters underscored the importance of development assistance for financing the SDGs, particularly in those instances where it leverages other types of financing, such as private investment. They encouraged donor countries to meet their development assistance commitments in order to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs. At the same time, they acknowledged the need for improved aid effectiveness. Parliamentary delegates offered several recommendations for making aid more effective, such as ensuring that aid is transparent and results-driven, as well as prioritizing multilateral aid channels which are generally considered less politicized and more cost-effective than bilateral ones.

D. Session 4 – Raising domestic resources for the SDGs: A case for tax reforms

Presenters:

Mr. Navid Hanif, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Mr. Ian Gary, Director, Financial Accountability and Corporate Transparency (FACT) and Member of the Global Alliance for Tax Justice

Ms. Marlene Nembhand Parker, Chief Tax Counsel, Tax Administration of Jamaica

The presenters on this panel emphasized the importance of reforming national and international tax systems, in part to reduce revenue losses resulting from tax evasion. They highlighted the role that parliamentarians can play in making tax systems fairer and more equitable in order to increase revenues and support the implementation of the SDGs. Parliamentary delegates stressed in their recommendations the importance of clarity and transparency in tax laws, and of improving compliance with them. They also made recommendations related to tax reforms, including the application of the proposal by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) of a global minimum tax of 15% for multinational corporations.

E. Session 5 – The debt crisis and the SDGs: Proposals for sustainable solutions

Presenters:

Ms. Shair Spiegel, Director, Financing for Development Office, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Mr. Jason Rosario Braganza, Executive Director, AFRODAD

Ms. Jill Dauchy, Chief Executive Officer, Potomac Group

The presenters focused their remarks on the importance of reforming the global debt architecture to make it more sensitive to the impact of interest rates on the ability of low-income countries to provide public goods such as education and health. They drew attention to the need for stronger adherence to the principles of responsible lending, borrowing and debt sustainability, as well as the inclusion in borrowing arrangements of climate-resilient clauses and mechanisms to address external shocks. Parliamentary delegates made several recommendations about ways in which national governments and international lenders could improve debt management practices. They also recommended that parliamentary oversight of public investment systems be strengthened.

Ms Rempel Garner intervened to discuss growing distrust in public institutions, which she attributed to a lack of transparency in government spending and wasteful use of taxpayer money. She underscored that the debt crisis can be addressed by increasing efficiencies and adherence to fiscal discipline. In addition, she encouraged greater transparency and the establishment of innovative financing systems that are market based and promote self-sufficiency. She also urged national governments and international lenders to ensure that development assistance and lending facilities do not benefit terrorist groups or authoritarian regimes.

F. Session 6 – International trade for the SDGs: The challenge of poverty eradication through export-led growth

Presenters:

Mr. Thomas Schnoll, Permanent Observer of the OECD to the United Nations

Mr. Juan Jose Martinez Badillo, Chief, UN Trade and Development, New York Office

Ms. Melinda St. Louis, Director, Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch

Participants were told that trade agreement negotiations often lack transparency and did not allow sufficient input from parliaments, the public and civil society. The presenters emphasized that the benefits of international trade, which they described as including sustainable growth and poverty reduction, require multilateral rules, strong domestic policies and capacity-building. Parliamentary delegates made several recommendations for improving international trade, including reform of the World Trade Organization and increased oversight of the negotiation and implementation of trade agreements.

In his intervention, **Senator Cardozo** noted that the lack of progress towards the implementation of the SDGs could be attributed, in part, to a lack of awareness among parliamentarians and the public about them. The situation, he argued, has arisen because of inadequate communication strategies, as well as the dominance of negative narratives, disinformation and misinformation on social media about the various processes connected to the SDGs and multilateralism more generally. He asked the panelists for their thoughts about how the situation could be improved.

Ms. Rempel Garner intervened to ask the panelists to consider how to ensure that contemporary international trade agreements and dispute mechanisms address new opportunities and challenges created by artificial intelligence. Among other issues, she highlighted the ownership of AI-generated content, cross-border data flows, security standards, bias and fairness, and human rights.

G. Session 7 – Private investments for the SDGs: The role of private long-term investments and of international finance

Presenters:

Mr. Hugo Carneiro, Member of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal

Ms. Norine Kennedy, Senior Vice President for Global Strategy and UN Affairs, United States Council for International Business

Ms. Rouguiatou Diallo, Economic Research Officer, International Trade Union Confederation

The presenters highlighted the estimated financing gap of almost US\$4 trillion annually over the next five years in order that the SDGs be implemented by 2030. They underscored that increasing private sector investment requires clear guidelines, an enabling business environment and reliable governance institutions. Parliamentary delegates made several recommendations to enhance the private sector's involvement in the implementation of the SDGs. These included enhanced engagement between public institutions and the private sector, the establishment of mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness of public-private partnerships, and steps to ensure compliance with internationally accepted labour standards and wage guidelines.

In her intervention, **Ms. Larouche** cautioned that public-private partnerships must be better evaluated to avoid creating unintended consequences or amplifying distrust in public institutions. Moreover, she argued that private financing to support the

implementation of the SDGs should be presented as an investment that will ultimately benefit the private sector by helping to create a healthier and more educated society.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

During their time in New York, delegates also met with Canada's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, His Excellency Ambassador Robert Rae. They discussed various matters relating to Canada's priorities at the UN, UN reform, the state of the UN's finances, the rise of authoritarianism and unilateralism in the world, as well as the future of multilateralism and global cooperation.

Members of the delegation also actively engaged in substantive exchanges with parliamentary delegates from Denmark, Mexico, South Korea, and the United Kingdom. They shared their perspectives on current global challenges, including the proliferation of tariffs, their disruption of international trade, recent assertions challenging national sovereignty and social media misinformation. They also discussed the role of parliamentarians and parliamentary diplomacy in addressing these issues, particularly with regard to the promotion of free trade specifically.

The delegation also met with Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support at the UN, and several of her officials. They discussed Canada's leadership in UN peacebuilding efforts, including as a top contributor to the UN Peacebuilding Fund. They also considered current challenges to the UN's mandate in promoting international security and preventing conflict, including the state of the UN's finances.

Ms. Damoff, Ms. Larouche and **Ms. Rempel Garner** actively participated in the intergenerational dialogue on Supporting the political participation of women organized by the IPU in parallel to the Parliamentary Hearing. The invitation-only event was attended by approximately 50 parliamentarians who shared their diverse experiences and strategies to boost the political participation of women. The exchanges also considered the key challenges that need to be addressed, including the need to eliminate violence against women in politics. **Ms. Damoff** underscored the importance of ensuring mutual respect in social media as a first step in reducing harassment. **Ms. Larouche** noted that social media harassment is resulting in fewer women standing as candidates at all levels of government. For her part, **Ms. Rempel Garner** stressed that women parliamentarians must be treated with equal respect and have meaningful access to power rather than be subjected to token roles or symbolic gestures. She also shared her work in introducing legislation concerning digital restraining orders.

Ms. Damoff also recorded an interview with the IPU concerning her insights on advancing women's political participation, achieving gender parity in parliaments and enhancing diversity. She highlighted some of the Parliament of Canada's gender-sensitive policies, such as remote voting.

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. Robert Oliphant, P.C., M.P.

President, Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union