

Canadian Group  
Inter-Parliamentary Union



Groupe canadien  
Union interparlementaire

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

## **IPU Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians**

**Mexico City, Mexico**

**From March 13 to 16, 2025**

## **Report**

A delegation from the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (UIPU) participated in the first Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians hosted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Mexico City, Mexico, from 13 to 16 March 2025. The theme of the conference was From Mexico to the world: Let's mobilize for gender parity!

The Canadian delegation also participated in several working meetings during its mission to Mexico City.

The Canadian delegation was composed of:

- Ms. Pam Damoff, Member of Parliament, President of the Canadian Group and Head of Delegation; and
- The Honourable Margo Greenwood, Senator.

The delegation was accompanied by Ms. Laura Salter, Advisor.

## **IPU GLOBAL CONFERENCE OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS**

### **A. Opening Ceremony**

The Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians included opening remarks by:

- Ms. Cynthia López Castro, Senator, and President of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians;
- Mr. Gerardo Fernández Noroña, President of the Senate of Mexico;
- Ms. Gabriela Cuevas, former president of the IPU;
- Ms. Irma Juan Carlos, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Mexico;
- Mr. Sergio Gutiérrez Luna, President of the Chamber of Deputies of Mexico; and
- Dr. Tulia Ackson, President of the IPU, and Speaker of the National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania.

he introductory messages focused on recent constitutional amendments undertaken in Mexico, steps taken toward achieving gender parity in the country, and the importance of taking decisive action to promote women's political participation.

Ms. Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo, President of Mexico, delivered an opening statement. In her remarks, President Sheinbaum provided an overview of Mexico's social and political history, highlighting key reforms and women in Mexico's history she believes paved the way to her becoming the country's first woman president. She also discussed recent legislative reforms that have been introduced to promote gender parity in Mexico's institutions.

### **B. Day One: 14 March 2025**

The first day of the conference featured two panel discussions on the topic of gender parity in parliaments. The panellists' remarks centred on good practices and lessons learned in advancing gender parity; challenges and barriers that hinder advancement toward parity; and measures and strategies that can be used to counter such challenges.

Barriers to increasing the numbers of women in parliaments include the challenge of juggling family, social and work responsibilities; online and offline experiences of verbal, psychological, or physical violence and harassment; social and cultural resistance; and economic limitations for women candidates.

Panellists shared recommendations for strengthening electoral mechanisms to promote parity. These recommendations included establishing financial solutions for women candidates; creating training and mentorship opportunities for women; and introducing quota systems for gender parity. Panellists highlighted that quota systems are more effective when tailored to the specific context of an electoral system and enforced with sanctions for non-compliance.

### **C. Day Two: 15 March 2025**

The second day of the conference featured four panel discussions.

1. The first session focused on “Strategies to engage men to advance gender equality.” This session emphasized that gender equality should not be understood as a women’s issue, but, rather, as a human rights issue. The panel encouraged parliamentarians to consider how to create an environment that encourages men to participate in the movement toward gender equality. Furthermore, men were encouraged to challenge each other and existing power structures.

During the discussion period, **Ms. Damoff** brought attention to the current climate of pushback against gender equality and women’s rights in Canada and globally, asking the panel about how to combat this trend.

2. The topic of the second session was “Breaking the ceilings: Tribute to women’s leadership.” This discussion explored the panellists’ journeys into politics and the challenges they encountered, while also highlighting perspectives on Indigenous leadership in decision-making systems and the influence of women’s participation in financial and corporate sectors.
3. The third session provided an opportunity for moderated debate on “Equal participation and equal power.” Panellists discussed General Recommendation 40 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which calls for gender parity in all decision-making systems. The utility of conducting regular Gender-Sensitive Parliament Audits was also discussed. Such audits aim to identify issues, implement solutions, and monitor progress for gender sensitivity.

During the discussion period, **Senator Margo Greenwood** spoke about the importance of considering Indigenous peoples during discussions about power in parliaments. She asked the panel how countries share power with Indigenous people – particularly women – and how to factor in the question of intersectionality. Ms. Sarah Childs, Professor, Personal Chair of Politics and Gender at the University of Edinburgh responded that new mechanisms for women’s participation can be designed to be inclusive, although in some contexts, Indigenous groups may prefer to have distinct mechanisms – so it is crucial to listen to women’s voices and adapt accordingly.

4. The final panel discussion, entitled “Zero tolerance for online and offline violence against women in politics,” highlighted the dangers facing women in politics. In addition to verbal and psychological harassment and threats to physical safety, many women in politics face digital violence. Digital violence may include disseminating images, audio or video recordings of intimate or sexual content of a person without their consent, and it may also include fake content generated using artificial intelligence to depict an individual. Panellists discussed political violence against women, as well as legislation that has been enacted to combat the issue.

**Ms. Damoff** was a featured panellist in this session. She discussed the harmful effects of misogyny and harassment, sharing her own experiences of facing threats both online and in person and their contribution to her decision not to seek re-election. She brought attention to how parliamentarians can exacerbate the problem by sharing misinformation and personal attacks against other Members. Ms. Damoff recommended that new measures should be undertaken to enable police to better respond to threats against politicians.

#### **D. Closing Session**

At the closing session of the conference, an [outcome document](#) was adopted. The outcome document outlines a plan of action for promoting gender parity in parliaments through three dimensions: parity in numbers, parity in influence and power, and a parity culture. The action plan identifies measures that parliaments can adopt to further these objectives, such as gender quotas, equal campaign resources, zero tolerance policies on sexism and harassment, data collection and monitoring the representation of diverse groups of women in parliament and regulating parity in top leadership roles.

#### **OTHER MEETINGS**

During its time in Mexico City, the delegation also held several meetings with local organizations and parliamentarians.

##### **A. Meeting with Fondo Semillas**

On 13 March 2025, **Ms. Damoff** met with Fondo Semillas, a feminist fund that mobilizes resources for local grassroots movements and organizations that support the advancement of girls, women, trans, non-binary and intersex people’s rights. They discussed the types of projects that the fund supports and the context for women’s rights in Mexico.

##### **B. Meeting with Ms. Marcela Guerra Castillo, Committee on Migratory Affairs, House of Representatives (Comisión de Asuntos Migratorios, Cámara de Diputados)**

On 13 March 2025, **Ms. Damoff** met with Ms. Marcela Guerra Castillo, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Mexico and President of the Comisión de Asuntos Migratorios.

They discussed issues of common interest, such as the representation of women in parliament; migration; and the relationship between Canada and Mexico.

### **C. Meeting with Casa Alianza Mexico**

On 13 March 2025, **Ms. Damoff** met with the staff of Casa Alianza Mexico, a non-profit organization that is part of the Covenant House International network. Casa Alianza provides shelter, care, and educational resources to children and adolescents in situations of social abandonment, such as unaccompanied migrants and youth who have experienced violence, trafficking or exploitation. The meeting included a tour of the facility and discussions with staff about the organization's services.

### **D. Meeting with Senator Reyna Celeste Ascencio Ortega**

On 14 March 2025, **Senator Margo Greenwood** met with Senator Reyna Celeste Ascencio Ortega (Mexico) to discuss issues of common interest, such as the rights of Indigenous populations in Canada and Mexico.

### **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