

Canadian Group
Inter-Parliamentary Union



Groupe canadien
Union interparlementaire

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the 3rd IPU Global Conference
of
Young Parliamentarians
and
to the 134th Inter-parliamentary Union Assembly
and related meetings**

Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

**Lusaka, Zambia
March 16th - 17th, 2016
and
March 19th to 23rd, 2016**

OVERVIEW

A delegation from the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) attended the [134th IPU Assembly and related meetings](#) in Lusaka, Zambia from 19-23 March 2016¹. The Canadian delegation was comprised of:

- Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, M.P., President of the Canadian IPU Group and head of the delegation;
- Honourable Dennis Dawson, Senator;
- Honourable Salma Ataullahjan, Senator;
- Sven Spengemann, M.P.;
- Blaine Calkins, M.P.;
- Bev Shipley, M.P.; and
- Murray Rankin, M.P.

Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, M.P. also attended the [third IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians](#), held prior to the Assembly on 16 and 17 March 2016.

Meetings of the IPU provide an important opportunity for Canadian parliamentary diplomacy. Multilateral work occurs through the meetings of various committees and other bodies that take place during an IPU assembly. Bilateral work occurs through the side meetings that arise during IPU assemblies.

Throughout the 134th Assembly, members of the Canadian delegation engaged in exchanges with their counterparts and participated in various debates in an attempt to further the principles of representative democracy, the rule of law, human rights and gender equality. They also addressed matters pertinent to Canadian foreign policy, including the fight against terrorism, as well as the reform of the United Nations (UN).

THE IPU: BACKGROUND

Established in 1889, the IPU is the international organization of parliaments of sovereign states. 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;

¹ [Meetings](#) related to the 134th Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU] Assembly were held from 16–23 March 2016.

- 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.²

At present, the IPU's activities are pursued according to its *Strategy 2012–2017: Better parliaments, stronger democracies*.³

THE THIRD IPU GLOBAL CONFERENCE OF YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS

A. Background

The third IPU's Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians took place on 16 and 17 March 2016, in Lusaka, Zambia, prior to the 134th Assembly of the IPU.

Since the adoption by the IPU Assembly of the resolution on youth participation in the democratic process in 2010, the IPU and its Member Parliaments have put in place youth-led global structures to support youth participation in politics and empower young parliamentarians. In 2013, the IPU established the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, a statutory body which aims to enhance youth participation in the IPU and bring a youth perspective to international issues and policies. Since 2014, the IPU has also established an annual conference of young parliamentarians. The event brings together hundreds of young parliamentarians to empower them, strengthen their voices on international affairs and offer them networking opportunities.

The first IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians took place in 2014 and was entitled *Taking democracy to task*. The 2015 Conference was held in Tokyo and was organized jointly by the IPU and the Japanese Diet. The topic of that Conference was *Democracy, peace and prosperity*. The topic of the third Global Conference, jointly organized by the IPU and the Parliament of Zambia, was *Agenda 2030: Youth leading the way, leaving no one behind*. During the two day conference, delegates attended a number of sessions on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the specific role of young parliamentarians in the process.⁴

B. Canadian Participation

In addition to the various sessions he attended, **Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, M.P.** was a panelist in the session entitled *Implementing Agenda 2030: advancing equality, equity and rights*. His presentation focused on enhancing representation and participation in politics. In his remarks, he indicated that Canada views its diversity as a strength, and that the Canadian constitution and statutes promote and protect equality and diversity. He reminded the audience of Canada's commitment to a fair and accessible electoral process, and mentioned several initiatives and measures that have been taken to

² See: IPU, "[Overview](#)"; and IPU, [Statutes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union](#), adopted in 1976 and extensively revised in October 1983, April 2003 and October 2013.

³ IPU, [IPU Strategy 2012–2017: Better parliaments, stronger democracies](#).

⁴ The [detailed program of the conference](#) is available.

encourage increased political participation among historically disenfranchised groups. Although Mr. Erskine-Smith recognized that there is more work to be done to improve women's representation in Canadian politics, he also noted that the Canadian Parliament is more representative than ever of Canadian society with respect to visible minorities and aboriginal people. He mentioned the first gender-balanced cabinet in Canadian history, as well as initiatives in parliament to make the institution more family friendly and to ensure that more women stand for election. Mr. Erskine-Smith concluded his remarks by stating that it is up to young parliamentarians, as leaders, to ensure that electing youth and women parliamentarians, steps that were once deemed exceptional, should become the ordinary. He encouraged all delegates and their parliaments to commit to making diversity and equality in our societies common place.

THE 134TH IPU ASSEMBLY

A. The 134th Assembly Agenda⁵

The IPU Assembly is the principal statutory body that expresses the views of the IPU on political issues.

The agenda for the 134th Assembly included the following items:

- Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 134th Assembly
- Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
- General debate on *Rejuvenating democracy, giving voice to youth*
- Resolution on Terrorism: The need to enhance global cooperation against the threat to democracy and human rights (Standing Committee on Peace and International Security)
- Resolution on Ensuring lasting protection against destruction and deterioration for the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of humanity (Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade)
- Reports of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights and the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs
- Approval of the subject items for the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade for the 136th Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs

⁵ Detailed reports and information on the 134th IPU Assembly and related Meetings are available on the IPU website. See: IPU, "[134th IPU Assembly and related Meetings](#)," Lusaka, 19–23 March 2016; IPU, "[134th IPU Assembly: Overview of Main Events and Decisions](#)," Lusaka, 19–23 March 2016; and IPU, "[Results of the 134th Assembly and related meetings](#)," 2016.

- Debate of an emergency item on *Giving an identity to the 230 million children without a civil status: One of the major challenges of the humanitarian crisis in the 21st century.*⁶

Overall, delegations from 126 member parliaments participated in the activities of the 134th Assembly. Of the 1,227 delegates in attendance, 634 were members of national parliaments; they included 36 presiding officers and 38 deputy presiding officers. At the close of the 134th Assembly, 170 national parliaments were members of the IPU and 11 regional parliamentary assemblies were associate members.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks in Brussels on 22 March 2016, the IPU Assembly endorsed a [Presidential Statement](#) condemning the attacks as a brutal assault on democracy and core human values, and calling for urgent action to counter the growing global threat of terrorism. The IPU also urged all community leaders to clearly and actively engage with their followers in order to promote peace, democratic engagement, and respect for human life.

B. The General Debate

At the 134th Assembly, a general debate was held on the topic of “Rejuvenating democracy, giving voice to youth.” During the debate, which was held over three days, representatives of 95 Member Parliaments, and four Associate Member and six Permanent Observers took the floor to address the theme of the General Debate.⁷ **All members of the Canadian delegation** attended at least one of the sessions.

As President of the Canadian IPU Group and head of the delegation, **Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, M.P.** delivered a speech during the General Debate. He first reminded the audience of the benefits of empowering young people in politics; from bringing new voices on issues like climate change, government modernization and education, to increasing diversity as many young MPs tend to come from more diverse background. Mr. Erskine-Smith then focused on the different ways to engage youth in politics. In addition to expanding civic education initiatives and teaching youth to keep abreast of current affairs, he indicated that politics needs to be relevant to young people: this means ensuring governments and political parties embrace technology and communication platforms like social media that young people use, but also addressing issues that are important to them such as protecting the environment, ending poverty, or making education more affordable or accessible. Finally, he argued that one of the most strategic ways to engage youth is to change the approach to politics and how politicians think about politics and act as politicians. He made the point that young people respond well to positive messages and need to be inspired by their representatives. He proposed that politicians restore idealism to the political process: they must be passionate and positive, open and accessible, honest and principled. While Mr. Erskine-Smith recognized that doing so may be at odds with the requirements for getting elected, he is convinced that it will gain the respect of young voters and help rejuvenate democracy.

⁶ IPU, [Results of the 134th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2016, p. 28.

⁷ Ibid, p. 8.

The Assembly adopted the outcome document of the Assembly's General Debate on 23 March 2016.⁸

C. The Emergency Item

The IPU Statutes provide that an IPU assembly may include one emergency item in its agenda.⁹ The IPU Rules further provide that: "Should several requests obtain the requisite majority, the one having received the largest number of positive votes shall be accepted."¹⁰ The 134th Assembly received four requests for the inclusion of an emergency item on its agenda. Following a roll-call vote,¹¹ the proposed emergency item entitled "Giving an identity to the 230 million children without a civil status: One of the major challenges of the humanitarian crisis in the 21st century" was added to the 134th Assembly's agenda. It had been put forward jointly by the delegations from France and Uruguay. The Canadian delegation voted in favour of this item.

A debate on the emergency item was held on 21 March 2016; the topic was subsequently referred to a drafting committee, which was tasked with finalizing a resolution on the topic. **Blaine Calkins, M.P.** served as a member of this drafting committee¹². On 22 March 2016, the Assembly adopted the resulting resolution unanimously.¹³

D. IPU Standing Committees

Each IPU assembly is assisted in its work by standing committees. Each delegation is represented on standing committees by one member and one substitute member.¹⁴ At the 129th Assembly in October 2013, the Governing Council adopted significant amendments to the rules of the standing committees: in addition to the topic of a draft resolution, a committee's work plan can now include other activities, such as hearings, reports and missions.

During the 134th Assembly, the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, and the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade each debated a draft resolution.

1. Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

⁸ IPU, [Outcome document of the General Debate on Rejuvenating democracy, giving voice to youth](#), Endorsed by the 134th IPU Assembly (Lusaka, 23 March 2016).

⁹ IPU, [Statutes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union](#), article 14(2).

¹⁰ IPU, "[Rules of the Assembly](#)," adopted in 1976 and extensively revised in October 1983, April 2003 and October 2013, Rule 11.

¹¹ IPU, [Results of the 134th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2016, pp. 42–43. The number of votes to which each IPU member parliament is entitled is calculated according to the provisions of Article 15 of the IPU [Statutes](#).

¹² The drafting committee was composed of representatives from the delegations of Bahrain, Canada, Cote d'Ivoire, France, Iceland, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Malaysia, Mexico, United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay.

¹³ The [full text](#) of the unanimous resolution is available.

¹⁴ IPU, [Statutes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union](#), article 13; and, IPU, "[Rules of the Standing Committees](#)."

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security addressed the topic: “Terrorism: The need to enhance global cooperation against the threat to democracy and human rights.” The Committee met on 20–22 March 2016. The co-rapporteurs, Ms. C. Guittet (France) and Mr. K. Hari Babu (India), presented the draft resolution.

The Standing Committee then moved to finalize the draft resolution in a plenary session of the committee. It had 95 amendments to consider,¹⁵ including several that had been submitted by the Canadian delegation.

During the plenary debate on the proposed amendments, **Murray Rankin, M.P. and Bev Shipley, M.P.** presented and explained each of Canada’s proposed amendments, and participated in the debate on certain amendments that had been submitted by other delegations.

The Canadian delegates explained that a number of the Canadian proposed amendments aimed to strengthen the draft resolution by referring to core obligations and standards related to the protection of civil and political rights, specifically in the context of counter-terrorism. In particular, they highlighted that Canadian amendments would flesh out which human rights are to be protected when criminalizing terrorist activities. Most of the Canadian amendments have been incorporated into the resolution.

2. Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade addressed the topic: “Ensuring lasting protection against destruction and deterioration for the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of humanity.” The Committee met on 20–22 March 2015.

The Standing Committee finalized the draft resolution prepared by the two co-Rapporteurs, Mr. A. Destexhe (Belgium) and Mr. H. Kouskous (Morocco) in a plenary session. It had 169 amendments to consider,¹⁶ including several that had been submitted by the Canadian delegation.

During the plenary debate on the proposed amendments, **Sven Spengemann, M.P.** presented and explained each of Canada’s proposed amendments, which complemented and were intended to build on the existing draft resolution. He also participated in the debate about certain amendments that had been submitted by other delegations. He explained that a number of the Canadian delegation’s proposed amendments sought to provide clarity to the draft resolution to ensure that States’ obligations would be explicit. For example, when referring to the destruction of cultural heritage as a war crime, it is necessary to use precise terminology consistent with international conventions. Most of the Canadian amendments have been incorporated in to the resolution.

3. Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

¹⁵ The [full list](#) of proposed amendments is available.

¹⁶ The [full list](#) of proposed amendments is available.

The Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights held sessions on 21–22 March 2016 in order to:¹⁷

- debate on the subject matter of the resolution to be adopted at the 135th Assembly on "The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective;" and
- debate on "Open Parliaments: Building an association on accountability."

Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, M.P. participated as a panelist during the debate on the freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference. He shared his views with respect to the main challenges to women's full participation in political life in Canada. For example, he highlighted that women in Canada continue to be underrepresented in the upper echelons of law, academia and the business world, and as a result, they have fewer opportunities to acquire relevant experience, financial backing and skills, or to develop the networks sought by political parties. He also underlined some of the actions the government and political parties have taken to enhance women's political participation. With respect to violence and intimidation that female politicians face, he indicated that Canada's parliament has become the first parliament in the world to adopt a code of conduct to deal with harassment between MPs. The goal of the Member-to-Member sexual harassment Code is to create a culture in which ongoing deterrents to reporting are diminished and complainants feel as safe as possible in coming forward with a complaint.

Senator Ataullahjan and Sven Spengemann, M.P. also attended the session on women participation in political processes. **Senator Ataullahjan** addressed the issue of social norms that discourage women from talking about violence and harassment in many countries. She stressed the importance for societies to accept that the role of women is changing as they become more educated and search for greater independence. She also urged men to support women in their effort to speak up against violence and harassment in political life.

4. Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

A dedicated IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs was created in 2007 "in order to better respond to the growing partnership between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations."¹⁸ Following changes to the IPU Statutes and Rules that were adopted at the 129th Assembly in October 2013, the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs became the fourth standing committee of the IPU.

a. Bureau of the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

¹⁷ For the report of the Standing Committee's session, see: IPU, [Results of the 134th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2016, pp. 47–48.

¹⁸ IPU Cooperation with the United Nations, "[IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs](#)"

Since the 130th Assembly in March 2014, **Senator Dawson** has been a member of the Bureau of the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs.¹⁹ The Bureau meets during each assembly, and is tasked with preparing and reviewing the implementation of the Standing Committee's work plans and with considering proposals for subject items to be discussed at future assemblies.²⁰ The Bureau met on 20 March 2016. The members of the Bureau were given an update on recent developments at the UN. They also discussed possible topics for the Standing Committee sessions to be held at the 135th Assembly in October 2016.

b. Session of the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee held a session on 22 March 2016 in order to:²¹

- debate the appointment process for the UN Secretary-General; and
- discuss the institutional arrangements for the implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Senator Dawson, and **Sven Spengemann, M.P.** attended the Committee's sessions. In his remarks during the debate on the appointment process for the UN Secretary-General, **Sven Spengemann, M.P.** agreed to the position taken by several other delegates on the importance of appointing a woman to this position. He also stressed that parliaments will need to support the UN Secretary-General in his/her efforts to implement key administrative reforms: as taxpayers from all member countries finance the UN, Parliamentarians have a key role to play in overseeing the work of the UN and the impact of their countries' contributions to the organization. As the Standing Committee agreed to send questions to the declared candidates to the position of Secretary-General, **Senator Dawson** suggested adding a question on how to involve the IPU in the selection process for future appointments of the Secretary-General.

With respect to the discussion on the implementation of the SDGs, **Senator Dawson** shared the Canadian Group's intention to table a motion on the SDGs in both chambers of the Canadian Parliament.

PARTICIPATION BY CANADIAN DELEGATES IN RELATED MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

A. IPU Governing Institutions

1. Governing Council ²²

¹⁹ The [full list](#) of Bureau members is available.

²⁰ IPU, "[Rules of the Standing Committee](#)," adopted in 1971 and extensively revised in October 1983, April 2003 and October 2013.

²¹ For the report of the Standing Committee's session, see: IPU, [Results of the 134th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2016, pp. 49–52.

²² This section reflects highlights of the [198th Session](#) of the IPU Governing Council. For further details, see also: IPU, [Results of the 134th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2016, pp. 11–14, 17–20, and 53–112.

The Governing Council is the plenary policy-making body of the IPU.²³ Moreover, several committees fall under the Governing Council's responsibility and report to it on their work.²⁴ The Council is composed of three representatives from each IPU member parliament, provided that its representation includes both men and women parliamentarians.²⁵

Meetings of the 198th Session of the Governing Council were held on 20 and 23 March 2016. **All Canadian delegates** attended at least one of these meetings.

The Governing Council had a number of items on its agenda, including the following:²⁶

- questions relating to IPU membership;
- report of the IPU President;
- annual report by the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU for 2015;
- financial results for 2015;
- implementation of the IPU's *Strategy 2012–2017*, and preparation of the next strategy
- IPU cooperation with the UN system;
- reports on recent IPU specialized meetings;
- action by the IPU to strengthen democracy and parliamentary institutions
- activities of committees and other bodies;²⁷
- the 135th Assembly;
- future inter-parliamentary meetings; and
- elections to the Executive Committee.

The Council approved the decision to remove Burkina Faso and Haiti from the list of countries to be closely monitored as the transitional period had ended in the former

²³ The functions of the Governing Council are outlined in Article 21 of the IPU [Statutes](#).

²⁴ These committees include: the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians; the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians; the Committee on Middle East Questions; the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus; the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law; the Gender Partnership Group of the Executive Committee; the Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS and Maternal, Newborn and Child Health; and, the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU.

²⁵ IPU, "[Rules of the Governing Council](#)," adopted in 1971 and extensively revised in October 1983 and April 2003.

²⁶ IPU, [Convocation: 198th Session of the Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union](#), Lusaka (Zambia) 20 and 23 March 2016," CL/198/C.1, 19 November 2015.

²⁷ Further information is contained on pages 17–20 of the following document: IPU, [Results of the 134th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2016

case and a fully functioning parliament is now in place in the latter. The Governing Council decided to continue to monitor the situations in Burundi, Central African Republic, Libya, Syria, Thailand and Yemen.

The Council approved the financial results for 2015. In his report on the state of voluntary funding, the IPU Secretary General announced new donations including a \$2 million contribution by the Government of Canada to fund activities on gender equality in politics.

The Council was informed of the preparation of a revised IPU Strategy. A preliminary draft was prepared by the IPU Secretariat and examined by the Executive Committee at its session in Lusaka. The draft has been shared with geopolitical groups and the entire IPU Membership for consultations, with a view to submitting a final draft to the Governing Council for adoption in October 2016. IPU Members have been invited to submit inputs to the IPU Secretariat in written form by 1 July 2016.

Finally, the Council agreed to hold the 135th Assembly in Geneva in October 2016 and the 136th Assembly in Dhaka (Bangladesh) in April 2017.

B. The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

In accordance with the IPU Statutes, a Meeting of Women Parliamentarians is held during the assemblies; it reports on its work to the Governing Council. In general, the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians aims to:

- encourage contact among women parliamentarians;
- foster democracy by promoting partnership between men and women in all fields;
- promote the participation of women parliamentarians in the work of the IPU and the equitable representation of women at all institutional levels within the IPU; and
- pre-study certain issues on the agendas of IPU assemblies and/or the Governing Council.²⁸

The 23rd Meeting of Women Parliamentarians took place on 19 March 2016. Agenda items included the following:²⁹

- a briefing on the work and recommendations of the Gender Partnership Group;
- amendments to the Rules of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians;

²⁸ IPU, [Rules of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians](#).

²⁹ For the report of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, see: IPU, [Results of the 134th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2016, pp. 16–17

- consideration, from a gender perspective, of the items “Terrorism: The need to enhance global cooperation against the threat to democracy and individual rights” on the agenda of the 134th Assembly; and
- a panel discussion on women’s participation in politics and young women’s political empowerment;

Among the changes to its rules, the Meeting agreed to change its name to the **Forum of Women Parliamentarians** and to change the name of its Coordinating Committee to the **Bureau of Women Parliamentarians**.

1. The Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians

The Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians assists the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians by:

- preparing the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and facilitating its normal working in conformity with the Statutes and Rules of the IPU;
- ensuring the continuity of work and the coordination of the initiatives of women parliamentarians; and
- ensuring coordination between the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and the other bodies of the IPU.³⁰

It is composed of 12 elected members representing the geopolitical groups and women members of the Executive Committee, who are *ex officio* members. During the Assembly, **Senator Atullahjan** was elected titular member of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians for the Twelve Plus Group. She participated in the Committee’s 37th Session, which took place on 22 March 2016.

C. The Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU

The Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU was created in March 2014 as a permanent body dedicated to enhancing the quantitative and qualitative participation of youth in parliaments and in the IPU. Its objectives are to:

- Broaden diversity and inclusiveness by increasing the presence of young parliamentarians at IPU Assemblies and meetings;
- Strengthen the added value of youth in the IPU by incorporating a youth perspective in the IPU’s agenda and work and building bridges between the IPU and youth organizations;

³⁰ IPU, [Rules of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians](#).

- Achieve better parliaments and stronger democracies by promoting youth participation in parliaments and reaching out to young people involved in politics; and
- Ensure better follow-up and implementation of decisions and recommendations contained in the IPU resolution on "Youth participation in the democratic process", adopted by the 122nd Assembly in Bangkok.

The Forum met on 20 March 2016.³¹ **Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, M.P.** attended this session. The Members shared their views from a youth perspective on the draft resolutions under consideration at the 134th Assembly. They also identified their input to the resolution to be considered by the 135th Assembly entitled: "The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective." Finally, they exchanged views on the Third IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians held a few days before the Assembly.

D. Meetings of the Geopolitical Groups

Article 27 of the IPU Statutes permits IPU members to form geopolitical groups; there are six such groups formally recognized by the IPU. The groups play an important role in the functioning and activities of the IPU. Each group determines its own working methods, and informs the IPU Secretariat of its composition, officers and rules of procedure.

Canada belongs to two geopolitical groups:³²

- the 47-member Twelve Plus Group, which includes nations from Europe, as well as Australia, New Zealand and Israel; and
- the 31-member Asia-Pacific Group.

While Canada participates in the activities of both groups, it submits candidatures for vacant positions within the IPU through the Twelve Plus Group.

1. Asia-Pacific Group

A meeting of the Asia-Pacific Group was held on 19 March 2016. **Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, M.P., Murray Rankin, M.P., and Bev Shipley, M.P.** attended the meeting.

Agenda items included the following:

- presentation by the IPU President on the possible creation of a secretariat for the Group;
- briefing by IPU Executive Committee members;

³¹ For the report of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, see: IPU, [Results of the 134th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2016, pp. 63–64.

³² IPU, "[Geopolitical groups](#)."

- report from the ASEAN+3 Group;
- review of vacancies to be filled during the 134th Assembly; and
- discussion of emergency item to be added to the Assembly's agenda.

2. Twelve Plus Group

Meetings of the Twelve Plus Group were held on 19, 21, and 23 March 2016. **All Canadian delegates** participated in these meetings.

Agenda items included the following:

- report on the Group's Steering Committee meeting, held in Brussels on 22 February 2016;
- report from the Group's representatives on the work of the IPU Executive Committee;
- elections to fill vacancies;
- debate of the emergency item;
- meetings of the IPU standing committees; and
- draft statement on the situation in Ukraine.

E. Side Events

On 22 March 2016, **Blaine Calkins, M.P.** participated in the side event "Reducing nuclear threats – the role of parliamentarians." As a co-rapporteur of the IPU resolution "Toward a Nuclear Weapon Free World: The Contribution of Parliaments" adopted by the 130th Assembly, he discussed further possibilities for parliamentary action on these issues.³³

On 23 March 2016, **Sven Spengemann, M.P.** participated in a focus group on "My party is in government: What is my role in parliamentary oversight?" This meeting was part of a series of focus groups on parliamentary oversight organized as part of the second Global Parliamentary Report on Parliament's power to hold government to account: realities and perspectives on oversight.³⁴

The Global Parliamentary Report analyses current challenges and makes recommendations to strengthen parliaments. The first Global Parliamentary Report investigated the changing nature of parliamentary representation. It was published by the IPU and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2012.

F. Bilateral Meetings

³³ IPU, [Results of the 134th Assembly and related meetings](#), 2016, p. 22.

³⁴ More information on the [Second Global Parliamentary Report](#)

Members of the Canadian delegation held bilateral meetings with other delegations, including the following:

- Egypt,
- Pakistan,
- Indonesia, and
- Burundi.

These exchanges provide an important opportunity for the Canadian IPU Group to engage in parliamentary diplomacy, to increase its understanding of other countries and regions, to discuss key bilateral issues and matters pertinent to the international agenda, and to work towards shared multilateral goals, including in the context of the work of the IPU.

More specifically, discussions focused on parliamentary cooperation in capacity building, bilateral trade relations, the fight against terrorism, and the situation of certain Canadian citizens detained abroad.

The delegates also discussed the political situation in Burundi, and reaffirmed the Canadian position that the Burundi government must participate in the open dialogue under international mediation that was proposed by the East African Community and unanimously supported by the international community.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, M.P.
President
Canadian Group of the IPU

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
ACTIVITY	3 rd IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians and 134 th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and Related Meetings
DESTINATION	Lusaka, Zambia
DATES	March 16 and 17, 2016 March 19 to 23, 2016
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Salma Ataullahjan, Senator Hon. Dennis Dawson, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, M.P. Blaine Calkins, M.P. Murray Rankin, M.P. Bev Shipley, M.P. Sven Spengemann, M.P.
STAFF	Line Gravel, Association Secretary Frédéric Forge, Analyst
TRANSPORTATION	\$76,053.00
ACCOMMODATION	\$36,348.19
HOSPITALITY	\$153.40
PER DIEMS	\$7,910.41
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$504.35
MISCELLANEOUS	\$512.10

TOTAL

\$121,481.45