

Canadian Group  
Inter-Parliamentary Union



Groupe canadien  
Union interparlementaire

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
respecting its participation at the Meeting of the  
Steering Committee of the Twelve Plus Group  
Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)  
Paris, France  
September 12, 2011**



# Report

## 1. Introduction

Article 25 of the Statutes and Rules of the Inter-Parliamentary Union permits members of the IPU to form geopolitical groups. These groups play an important role in the functioning and activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

There are six geopolitical groups formally recognized by the IPU: the African Group (46 members), the Arab Group (19 members), the Asia-Pacific Group (30 members), the Eurasia Group (7 members), the Latin American Group (22 members) and the Twelve Plus Group (46 members). Each group decides on working methods that best suit its participation in the activities of the Union and informs the Secretariat of its composition, the names of its officers, and its rules of procedure.

Canada belongs to the Twelve Plus Group and the Asia Pacific Group. Because Canada belongs to more than one geopolitical group, it submits candidatures for vacant positions within the Union through the Twelve Plus Group.

## 2. Background on the Twelve Plus Group

The Twelve Plus Group was formed in 1974 (as the Nine Plus Group) by IPU members from the European Community. Its purpose is to coordinate the action and policy of its member Groups and, where possible, to arrive at common positions on IPU matters. The word “Plus” was intended to indicate the openness of the Group to new members of the EC as well as other like-minded nations, such as Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. Today, the Group has 45 members, including Central and Eastern European countries.<sup>1</sup>

The Twelve Plus Group holds meetings on a regular basis during the IPU’s spring and fall Assemblies. These meetings provide a venue for the Group’s members to discuss the functioning of the Assembly and related meetings. Members also use these meetings to discuss administrative and substantive matters of consequence to the future activities of the Union.

The Chair of the Twelve Plus Group is elected for a term of office of two years. The Chair is advised by a Steering Committee of representatives from approximately seven to nine member countries and normally meets in the weeks prior to an IPU Assembly. The Steering Committee appoints a Vice-Chair among its members by consensus.

According to the *Guidelines of the Twelve Plus Group*, the Steering Committee shall include: the two most recent predecessors of the current Twelve Plus Chairperson (as long as they are members of their national IPU delegation); members of the Twelve Plus Group serving on the Executive Committee; further members, invited by the Chairperson on account of their particular abilities or merits, who could benefit the activities of the Twelve Plus Group as a whole.

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.ipu.org/strct-e/geopol.htm](http://www.ipu.org/strct-e/geopol.htm) for a breakdown of geopolitical group membership in the IPU.

### **3. The Meeting of the Twelve Plus Steering Committee**

Eight parliamentarians participated in the meeting of the Twelve Plus Steering Committee in Paris, France on 12 September 2011. The countries represented were: Austria, Canada, Croatia, France, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

The Canadian parliamentarian in attendance was **Senator Donald H. Oliver, Q.C.**, from the Senate of Canada.

The agenda for the meeting addressed issues and questions for consideration by the Twelve Plus Group at the 125<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly (Bern, 16-19 October 2011). The purpose of the meeting was to debate and make recommendations concerning these matters. The attached appendix summarizes the decisions taken by the Committee on the occasion of its meeting in London.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Salma Atallahjan, Senator  
President, Canadian Group of the IPU

# APPENDIX

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Twelve Plus Group, French Senate, Paris, Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2011

### Participants:

Mr. Robert del Picchia (France), *president*, Mrs. Heidrun Silhavy (Austria), Mr. Donald Oliver (Canada), Mrs. Marija Lugarić (Croatia), Mr. Marek Ziołkowski (Poland), Mr. Robert Walter (United Kingdom), Mr. Krister Örnfjäder (Sweden), Mrs. Doris Stump (Switzerland),

**Absent:** Mr. Norbert Lammert (Germany), Mrs. Barbara Prammer (Austria), Mr. François-Xavier de Donnea (Belgium), Mr. Patrice Martin Lalande (France)

*The meeting commenced at 9am, under the chairmanship of Mr. Robert del Picchia (France), Chairman of the Twelve Plus Steering Committee.*

### 1 Start of the meeting

**Mr. Robert del Picchia (France), Chairperson**, welcomed the participants.

### 2 Approval of the agenda

The Chair noted that there were no comments on the draft agenda.

The agenda was approved.

### 3 Approval of the minutes of the Steering Committee of the Twelve Plus Group, held in Paris on 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2011.

Approved without comments.

### 4 Questions concerning previous meetings

No comments.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY UNION

### 5 IPU Draft Strategy 2012-2017

**The Chair** called his colleagues' attention to the three documents they had been given. The first contained the proposals of the Twelve Plus Group written by Mr. François-Xavier de Donnea, rapporteur, whom the Chair thanked, as well as Mr. Marc de Rouck, his assistant. The second document was the final version of the 2012-2017 strategy, as amended on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> September by the Executive Committee meeting in Geneva. The third document contained the working group's proposals on the remit of the Sub Committee on finance. The final version of the draft strategy was acceptable. The principal amendments presented by the Twelve Plus had been taken into account,

including the suggestion to set up a Sub Committee on Finance. The initial strategic plan had been clarified and was now only half as long as the original version, so that the new one, whilst not perfect, nevertheless was clearer and more readable, thus responding to the wishes of the delegations.

**Mrs. Doris Stump (Switzerland)** considered that the original document had indeed been improved. However, since the Secretary General had refused to define the priorities throughout the plan or provide a provisional budget for this period, then this so-called 'strategic' plan was worthless; the priorities would continue to be decided year after year without necessarily having the resources to implement them. Such a method was totally inconsistent, as demonstrated by the fact that the IPU was asked to 'strengthen the capacity of the Human Rights Committee of the Parliamentarians', whilst cutting the budget for the Committee's missions by half! Even in its new version, the plan only offered up a catalogue of ideas rather than an overall vision. To be applicable, a strategy must be properly thought out and match the financial possibilities of the organization which implements it. In short, the alternative for the readers was either to consider this strategic plan as a worthless document and disdain it, or to vote against.

**Mr. Donald Oliver (Canada)** pointed out that at the last meeting of the Executive Committee in Geneva the IPU President had immediately requested that the 2012-2017 priority actions should be defined. The Secretary General had refused, arguing that the priorities would be translated into the budget. The Executive Committee had finally agreed with this opinion, considering that the general international situation was too uncertain to be able to draw up a provisional five-year budget, and it was thus preferable to concentrate on annual action programmes. In the course of this meeting, **Mrs. Doris Stump (Switzerland)** had emphasized that the Parliamentarians in the delegations expressed their *own* points of view, and not those of their own country's Parliament, and insisted that the document avoid any possible misunderstanding on this point.

**Mr. Krister Örnfjäder (Sweden)** pointed out that several approaches were possible. As a member of the Swedish delegation to the IPU, he could express the point of view of his Parliament. The Union needed a pluri-annual strategy; if its action programme were limited to one year at a time, then it would not obtain financing from funders. A strategic plan had therefore been proposed, but to be applicable, it required financing. Many countries however were unable to increase their dues to the Union. Given this situation, with no clear vision supported by clear priorities, unless it was decided to do nothing, annual priorities remained an option. This should in fact be the role of the Sub Committee on Finance, through which the members of the Executive Committee would find a new means of expressing their opinion about the Union's strategy.

**The Chair** pointed out that members of the Executive Committee had until 15<sup>th</sup> September to suggest final changes to the draft strategic plan. The current text was a significant improvement on the initial version as was the presentation of the budget through the inclusion of comparative tables showing the previous years' budgets, thus responding to the requests of Mr. Robert Walter and Mrs. Marija Lugarić; the creation of the Sub Committee on Finance should mean further progress.

**The Chair** called his colleagues' attention to the content of Objective 2.3 'Contribute to the consolidation of peace and conflict prevention'. After approving an amendment proposed by the Kuwaiti representative on behalf of the Arab group, the sentence 'In addition, the IPU will provide assistance to Parliaments of countries in situations of, or emerging from, conflicts', was completed by the phrase 'or under foreign occupation'. This amendment obviously referred directly to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Was it useful or wise to keep this politically nuanced sentence, which pointed the finger at two members of the IPU, since the original sentence already mentioned all the countries 'in the throes of conflict'?

**Mr. Robert Walter (UK)** was of the opinion that 'conflict' was a generic term, and therefore the initial version should suffice.

**Mrs. Doris Stump (Switzerland)** stated that during the Executive Committee meeting, she had spoken out against the amendment, but that the Kuwaiti representative had fought hard to have it included, and won the day.

**Mrs. Stump** went on to express doubts about whether new amendments could be adopted, even if presented within the time allotted, given that the Secretary General refused to define priorities and translate their impact into figures in the budget. In any case, she would oppose the strategic plan as it stood.

**The Chair** suggested that the Twelve Plus Group should present to the Executive Committee in Bern in October, an amendment to remove the phrase 'or under foreign occupation'. This would avoid interminable debates about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict once again overshadowing the IPU's strategy.

**Mrs. Maria Lugarić (Croatia)** noted that the new version of the document was no clearer than the original one. It was impossible to understand what the Union's overall objective was going to be. Mrs. Lugarić would vote for the action plan, since one was needed, but she deemed it necessary to have another document explaining what the Union's strategy was.

**The Chair** emphasized that upon the request of the Twelve Plus, the initial document had been completed by a paper entitled 'Why should there be an IPU strategy?' which attempted to answer Mrs. Marija Lugarić's question. The first version of the text had been considerably improved by including the many proposals of the Twelve Plus Group. Ideally, there should be a five year strategic plan accompanied by a financing timetable over the same period, but who could take on the responsibility of a five year budget under the current economic circumstances? The effects of the financial crisis were also being felt within the IPU, and it may be better to adopt a two-year financial plan through to the end of 2013, and let the Sub Committee on Finance adapt the Union's strategy depending on its resources.

**The Chair** recalled having refused, on behalf of the Twelve Plus, an initial request from the Secretary General to increase the Union's budget by 3%, saying to him that the budget should be flat. The problem was not that the member Parliaments refused to pay more dues, but they did not have the financial wherewithal. Once the recession hit,

the Secretary General had been asked to prepare a budget reduced by 7%; an agreement was finally reached on a 5.3% reduction. The situation had therefore gone from a 3% budgetary increase to a 5.3% reduction, which would be effected through reductions in the amount of travel undertaken by the Secretariat. It seemed difficult to do more.

**Mrs. Doris Stump (Switzerland)** recalled that the initial version of the strategic plan was a disaster. If the new version was still not satisfactory, that was partly due to the fact that the Executive Committee had not taken on board all of the Twelve Plus' suggestions – indeed, some had not even been mentioned! A lot could be said about the document entitled 'Why should there be an IPU strategy?' The IPU did *not* 'speak effectively on behalf of Parliaments at international level!' Governments and international governmental organizations were *not* 'more attentive to strengthening national parliaments', and for a good reason – no government wanted to see yet stronger Parliaments! All these comments were prejudiced – how could one support them?

As it stood, the document was not acceptable, but the speaker understood how difficult it was to obtain concessions from the Secretary General.

**The Chair** emphasized that the Union was defined in the text as being 'one', but not the only voice, for Parliaments. He recalled having immediately said that the plan was 'suitable' in comparison to the previous one. Whether the proposed strategy was good or contained imperfections, its application would depend largely on the involvement of the members of the Executive Committee and Steering Committee, particularly during discussions on the budget, when action plans would have to fit in with available resources. The Chair stated that upon the initiative of Mrs. Doris Stump, the principle of setting up a Sub Committee on Finance was approved in Panama. This was not entirely to the Secretary General's liking as the Sub Committee would have a consultative and information-providing role vis-à-vis the Executive Committee, which would tie the hands of those in the Union who decided to spend money.

**Mrs. Doris Stump (Switzerland)**, Chair of the working group entrusted by the Executive Committee with drawing up the working mandate for the Sub Committee, explained that the group's proposal was to modify the rules of the Executive Committee in order to create a Sub Committee on Finance; the text described the role of the Sub Committee, its composition and modus operandi. She thanked her colleagues in the Executive Committee of the Twelve Plus for having defended a proposal which the Secretary General had done his best to quash, and moreover he was doing his best to prevent the Sub Committee being set up. Thus the proposal had been sent to the General Secretariat on 15<sup>th</sup> June for discussion by the Executive Committee during the meeting of 8-9<sup>th</sup> September but nobody had informed the drafters of the text that it was not possible to put this point on the agenda since proposals had to be received three months before the meeting, which was not the case. The members of the Twelve Plus Group on the Executive Committee stated however that they intended to see the Sub Committee on Finance set up before the end of 2011. It was now up to the geopolitical groups to nominate their representative(s) on the Executive Committee whom they wished to see sitting on the Sub Committee so that they then could then be elected at



the Bern meeting. Since the Secretary General would not be writing any letters to anybody on this point – although one might think that that was his job – Mrs. Stump offered to do it in his stead. She emphasized how appalled she was to see the Secretary General using fallacious arguments to get round decisions of the Executive Committee. If you believed the Secretary General, Parliamentarians knew nothing about finances – as if the members of Parliamentary Committees on finance were totally ignorant of such questions! In fact, the manoeuvre was aimed at preventing Parliamentarians from asking questions which the Secretary General did not want exposed in public. In any case, the working group would concentrate all its efforts on effectively setting up the Sub Committee as soon as possible.

**Mr. Robert Walter (UK)** paid tribute to the work done by Mrs. Doris Stump and her colleagues. The creation of the Sub Committee on Finance of the Executive Committee was an essential objective. This was not any kind of audit, nor the work of a ‘quaestor’, but the purpose was to examine the overall budget and how it was broken down. That being said, the seats on the Sub Committee were also divided up amongst the geopolitical groups. Given that the Twelve Plus Groups contributed to over half the Union’s budget, would it not be appropriate to suggest some kind of weighting mechanism depending on the amount of dues paid? It should be remembered who the main funders of the Union were.

**Mr. Donald Oliver (Canada)** congratulated Mrs. Doris Stump. For too long now, Parliamentarians had not been able to say directly what they thought of the IPU budget. Thus, when setting up the Sub Committee on Finance of the Executive Board, great care should be taken to define very precisely its remit and prerogatives in terms of control and investigation, otherwise the Secretary General would block its path, refusing access to the accountancy records.

**The Chair** noted that the role of the Sub Committee, as stated in point 2 of the proposal, was described in a precise enough manner for it to have a free rein. He also pointed out that Objective 3.3 of the strategic plan mentioned the Sub Committee on Finance. In Geneva, the working group had run up against the hurdle of non-compliance with procedure, but the agreement in principle, taken upon the initiative of the Twelve Plus Group and unanimously approved, provided for the proposal to be debated in Bern. At the end of an outstanding piece of work, the Sub Committee on Finance would indeed be created.

## **6. 2012 DRAFT BUDGET**

**The Chair** noted that the Executive Committee which met on 8-9<sup>th</sup> September had discussed the draft budget for 2012, which was down 5.3% over 2011. In the current environment, this was a good start, consistent with the request of the Twelve Plus Group. Savings were to be made on day-to-day operations – becoming a paperless organization; reducing the number of visits by the President, Secretary General and staff; new, cheaper premises in New York; and Mrs. Anda Filip, who left her post as IPU representative in New York was to be replaced by a lower grade representative, thus costing less money. Staff reductions would take place and when somebody was to be replaced, ‘junior’ staff would be given the priority. Finally certain activities had been

cancelled such as the Parliamentary meeting on sustainable development in Rio, and that of UNCTAD in Qatar. In addition, voluntary contributions were only mentioned if they were certain to be received— hence a substantial reduction in this item, with income now being assessed at 1.2 million CHF. Last year, only half of the 4 million due to be received was actually paid. The Chamber of MPs in the Netherlands, considering that their dues were too high, had asked their Speaker to obtain a substantial reduction. Given the overall reduction in the IPU budget and the scale applied in 2012, the reduction in dues would in fact be 7.4% - perhaps this would be sufficient to convince the Dutch Parliament to change its mind? Finally, given the need to cut costs, the Chair suggested reducing the dues paid by the members of the Twelve Plus into that Group by 5%, which would still allow it, in its current financial situation, to operate satisfactorily.

**Mr. Robert Walter (UK)** congratulated the Chair on having obtained a reduction in the IPU budget, but noted that this must be set against the fluctuations in the Swiss franc which was the currency for the budget. Thus the actual contribution of the UK would go up from £473 000 to £624 000. Whilst France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland's dues went down quite sharply, those of the UK, Spain, Poland and Turkey went up quite significantly. At home, national Parliaments were asking for 10% reductions in budgets. It was therefore important to reflect upon the dues paid in currencies other than the Swiss franc, as well as how to change the breakdown of overheads. Even if the Swiss government tried to stop the Swiss franc gaining value compared with the euro, the battle was never finally over.

**Mr. Donald Oliver (Canada)** remembered a time when given the fluctuations between the Swiss franc and the Canadian dollar, his country's dues amounted to more than \$100 000. It would seem moreover that the 5.3% savings achieved represented \$640 000, of which \$300 000 came from the jobs of six of the most important civil service jobs disappearing, or being replaced by less expensive personnel.

**The Chair** agreed that the Swiss franc was certainly too expensive for some countries, even within the Euro zone. Expenditure in Swiss francs should be compared with that in other currencies. It was true that the Swiss Federal Bank had fixed the Swiss franc to euro parity at 1.20 to 1 to limit risks, but the Swiss currency still remained too expensive.

**Mrs. Doris Stump (Switzerland)** noted that the IPU had always had to contend with the Swiss franc fluctuating, and pointed out that in the international conferences she organized, the staff were always paid in that currency – other expenses being paid for by the host countries - which limited possible sources of savings.

**The Chair** believed that the Sub Committee on Finance should look at what savings could be made.

According to **Mrs. Doris Stump (Switzerland)** it was impossible to wait for this committee to be set up. Many countries were already paying in far more than before and the dues should be re-examined. In such a period of crisis, could the IPU not delve into its reserves?

**The Chair** pointed out that national Parliaments were giving considerably less to the IPU since quaestors and Financial Committees were seeking to make savings. Moreover, the new IPU scale of contributions – to be applied from 2012 onwards and for the next two years – was based on the percentages laid down by the UN for 2010-2012. It aimed to better reflect the national wealth of the different countries. In addition, the new scale was organized slightly differently given the absence of the United States, which was a member of the UN but not of the IPU. Previously, medium-sized contributors had borne a larger share of the burden so that the biggest contributors i.e. Japan, Germany, France and the UK did not have to pay even more. Whilst the new scale kept the proportion paid by Japan at 11.75%, it slightly raised that of the other major contributors. On the other hand the proportion paid by medium-sized contributors was reduced overall, except for countries like Poland, whose contributions had been raised to take account of their increase in national wealth. The increases in the relative amounts paid were fair and moderate – especially given the overall 5.3% reduction in the budget, which meant that almost all the members of the Twelve Plus in fact saw their dues going down in absolute terms, when expressed in Swiss francs. The two main exceptions remained the UK and Poland.

**Mr. Marek Ziolkowski (Poland)** noted that given the exchange rate, the increase in his country's proportional contribution was so high that it would be difficult for him to convince his fellow MPs to accept it.

**The Chair** indicated that the Netherlands' contribution had been significantly reduced from 263 700 to 244 000 CHF, a reduction of 7.1%

**Mr. Krister Örnfjäder (Sweden)** believed that it was particularly necessary to obtain agreement on the new contribution scale since everyone was suffering from the high Swiss franc. The Sub Committee on Finance should look at this problem of parity by trying to simplify the IPU contributions' scale.

**Mr. Robert Walter (UK)** noted that the European Parliament's contribution – a wealthy institution – had gone from 10 100 CHF to 9 051, an almost symbolical amount. The Twelve Plus would do well to ask the President of the European Parliament to contribute more to the financing of the IPU. What did 5 or 10 million Euros represent to the European Parliament?

**The Chair** approved this idea, although it would be difficult to ask the European Parliament for such an increase as even national Parliaments had refused to contribute more to the European Parliament's financing. The IPU could however argue that the two institutions shared common values and objectives, and therefore a volunteer contribution might be considered.

**Mr. Krister Örnfjäder (Sweden)** was of the opinion that the Sub Committee on Finance could look at this excellent idea, since it was as important to reduce costs as to increase revenues. A plan should be established to define how the IPU could work with different organizations likely to provide financing, including corporate organizations.

**Mr. Donald Oliver (Canada)** pointed out that the IPU, and in particular its Secretary General were constantly in touch with the European Parliament as part of the Parliamentary Conference Steering Committee on the WTO, and he believed that any request for further financial contributions should take account of the opinions of the African or Asia-Pacific geopolitical groups. When travelling, the IPU Secretary General ensured he met representatives of institutions or companies that could make a volunteer contribution to the IPU, as for example the Canadian International Development Agency, the CIDA, or its Swedish equivalent, the SIDA. Comparable organizations in other member states of the Twelve Plus Group could certainly do the same. Finally, the Canadian Parliament could not contribute any more than it was doing already to the financing of the IPU since out of all the Parliamentary organizations it helped financially, the IPU, at \$500 000 CAD was the most expensive.

**Mrs. Marija Lugarić (Croatia)** suggested that the Executive Committee, as part of the strategic plan should create an extra column detailing the sums of money used by the IPU to organize conferences and meetings.

**The Chair** replied that this already appeared in the budget. Volunteer contributions were linked to the IPU's commitment to a specific project, and the ordinary budget was therefore not impacted in any way, no more than dues were. The problem would be solved when the United States started paying dues once again.

**Mr. Krister Örnfjäder (Sweden)** stated that financing by the Swedish International Development Agency was not project-based but allocated on the basis of global strategies, with annual reports detailing how the credits had been used.

**The Chair** concluded that the Sub Committee on Finance – and the Twelve Plus Group would have to appoint one of its members to sit on it – would have a lot of work to do to reduce the dues paid into the ordinary budget, and in particular to bring down the value of the Swiss franc!

**Mr. Krister Örnfjäder (Sweden)** pointed out that many Parliaments had started to prepare their 2012 budget, which would only be approved in spring, rather than in the autumn.

*(The meeting was adjourned at 10.45am and re-commenced at 11.10am)*

## **7. Preparing the 125<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the IPU in Bern.**

**The Chair** stated that the main points on the agenda for the Assembly in Bern were already known. The Twelve Plus Group had a rapporteur in each of the three commissions where there was to be a debate. In addition, an emergency point had been suggested by Namibia on 'The tragic famine which is hitting the Somali population and humanitarian aid from members of the IPU'.

**Mrs. Doris Stump (Switzerland)** believed that by organizing this assembly, Switzerland was demonstrating how attached it was to the IPU. Indeed, its organization would be different from that of previous conferences as Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the UN would be attending the opening evening. The next day a reception was organized at the Parliament, and then there was a lunch for women MPs, with two keynote speeches on the question of gender equality; dinner would be at the Stade de Suisse. Outings and a certain number of round tables, for example on the regulation of the financial markets (with Messrs Donald Oliver and Robert Walter attending) or on sustainable development, were to be held.

**The Chair** was delighted at such a programme, and congratulated Mrs. Doris Stump for her work.

**Mr. Donald Oliver (Canada)** recalled that during the 124<sup>th</sup> Assembly, Mrs. Salma Atallahjan, a Toronto Senator, had been appointed co-rapporteur to the third Standing Committee, together with a Ugandan and an Indian colleague. Their work had progressed well, the key points identified, different approaches assessed and the responsibilities of everyone decided upon. Five major sections had been defined, including the implementation of the Millennium Goals on development and removing inequalities affecting women and children in the most vulnerable groups. Indeed, Parliamentarians, as the report said, had a major role to play on these issues. During Canada's presidency of the G-8 two years ago, Canada had committed itself financially to guaranteeing access to health for women and children.

**The Chair** added that the rapporteur for the First Commission was Hungarian, and for the Second, British.

## **8. Posts to be Filled**

**The Chair** informed the Steering Committee that a certain number of posts would have to be filled during the Assembly in Bern. The first was that of President of the IPU, and two candidates had come forward for this: Mr. Radi, of Morocco, who had officially announced his candidacy, and Mrs. Ali Assegaf from Indonesia, who was currently chairing the Women Parliamentarians' Coordination Committee, and who should soon be announcing that she was officially standing. Traditionally, the Presidency rotated among the geopolitical groups at each election. In the past, the Arab group had chaired the IPU for the last time between 1994 and 1997 with Mr. Sorour of Egypt, and the Asia-Pacific Group had occupied the post from 1992 to 2002, with Mrs. Heptulla from India. The candidates would introduce themselves to The Twelve Plus Group on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October, their order of appearance being decided by drawing lots. Each would have

five to ten minutes to speak, and then answer the Group's questions. The Group would then decide on a joint, but not compulsory, position, either by vote, or by common approval.

**The Chair** pointed out that there was also a post becoming available on the Executive Committee to replace himself. The Twelve Plus could present a candidate, who could be nominated by vote if necessary. Mr. Lammert had already said that Mr. Winckler from Germany would be standing, but other nominations could be received right up until the evening before the vote which would take place on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October. Moreover, Mrs. Doris Stump would not be standing again at the Swiss federal elections in October, and therefore not be finishing her term of office in the Executive Committee.

**Mrs. Doris Stump (Switzerland)** explained that, under the established procedures, a member of the Executive Committee could be replaced by a colleague from the national delegation to finish his/her term of office. And so, the Swiss delegation would nominate her replacement during the winter, who could sit on the Executive Committee from the Kampala Conference onwards up until the end of her term, in October 2013.

**The Chair** stated that three posts – one titular and two deputies – were to be filled on the Human Rights Committee of Parliamentarians. Three others, including two titular post-holders, and one deputy, were also to be filled on the Middle East Committee, with rules of parity requiring that the two fully-fledged post holders be women. If no geographical quota were defined for these two committees, then the Steering Committee would ensure a proper balance was struck in terms of where the candidates came from. A post of deputy needed to be filled on the committee dealing with promoting respect for international humanitarian law, as a replacement to Mr. Kurt, who was no longer a member of the Turkish Parliament. And finally, two internal auditors had to be appointed for the fiscal year 2012, who would be reporting in spring 2013. The Twelve Plus could propose a candidate to succeed the Israeli MP currently occupying one of these posts, particularly as 2012 would be a year of important budgetary changes.

**Mrs. Doris Stump (Switzerland)** believed that a four year term of office on the Executive Committee was not long enough. If the Executive Committee wanted to shoulder its responsibilities as the Statutes required, then the Committee should ensure greater continuity amongst its members.

**The Chair** noted that extending the term of office would require a change to the Statutes – a lengthy procedure. Whilst Mrs. Stump's concern was quite legitimate, lengthening the term of office could lead to membership on the Executive Committee becoming fixed and stale, whereas the purpose was to recruit as widely as possible amongst Members. In addition, the four-year term matched the term of office of MPs in many countries. However, the subject could be discussed amongst the Twelve Plus.

## **10. Members of the IPU**

**The Chair** informed the Steering Committee that the Parliament of Equatorial Guinea had lodged a request to become a member of the IPU. The subject would be dealt with in Bern in the course of the Executive Committee meeting, and then before the Twelve Plus Group.

## **11. Working Group on the IPU contributions (dues) scale**

This point had already been discussed under the item on the budget.

## **12. Specialist Meetings of the IPU organized since the 124<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the IPU in Panama**

**Mrs. Marija Lugarić (Croatia)** took part in the regional seminar on children's rights for the Parliaments of the CEE-CIS region held in Erevan between 14-16<sup>th</sup> June 2011, organized by UNICEF. The discussions were extremely interesting, and dealt mainly with the intention of certain States to no longer have a children's Mediator – to be noted, *en passant*, that it was not always wise to associate these two regions. She regretted that the financing of this type of meeting was not subject to any control. As an example she had recently been asked by the IPU to travel to Egypt for an event, all expenses paid. She considered that such expenditure should be controlled.

**The Chair** indicated that Mr. Patrice Martin-Lalande, Chair of the French delegation had taken part in the fourth parliamentarian forum on the information society held in Geneva 18-20<sup>th</sup> May, 2011, finding it very interesting.

**Mrs. Marija Lugarić (Croatia)** noted that the consultative group of the IPU Commission on United Nations Affairs, in its first visit for two years, had gone to Ghana and Sierra Leone in June, in order to examine how the UN system functioned there. The speaker had not been able to go herself, but there would be a report on the trip at the Bern Assembly.

## **13. Other Questions on the IPU**

**Mr. Donald Oliver (Canada)** announced that preparations for the 127<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Quebec, October 2012, were well underway. A presentation by top-ranking representatives from the City of Quebec would be made in Bern. The provisional programme, which the Canadian delegation was working on closely with the IPU secretariat, was based on an integrated approach. The 'compulsory' part of the Assembly, as laid down by the Statutes, was to be completed by two days of meetings, in total five days of conference. An innovative programme had been devised on the theme of challenges to citizenship, cultural and linguistic diversity and identity in a globalised world. Canada was one of the most multi-cultural countries in the world, with two hundred languages spoken just in Toronto. This of course contributed to the successful cultural model of the country, hence the choice of the theme. The official internet site of the Conference would be launched just after the Bern Assembly, giving all practical details. Finally, a preliminary agreement had been signed with the Cirque du Soleil, which would be presenting a highly creative programme.

## QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE TWELVE PLUS GROUP

### 14 Programme of Meetings and Activities at the 125<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the IPU in Bern

**The Chair** stated that the first meeting of the Twelve Plus would be held on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> October, from 9am to 1pm at the Bernexpo Centre. The specific meeting on candidacies would take place on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October, and the following meeting would be on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>, between 8 and 9am. The Group's official evening was to be held on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October, between 7 and 9pm.

### 17 Financial Questions

**The Chair** stated he would contact the Netherlands to settle the problem of their dues.

He suggested to the Twelve Plus that there should be a 5% reduction in the contributions to the Group. On 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010, the French Group which was now the account holder, had received £51 671 i.e. 59 790€. On 9<sup>th</sup> September 2011, 38 countries out of 47 had paid their annual dues, totaling 38 084.34€, i.e. 87.5% of the total due, which stood at 43 537€. With some savings being made, the suggested reduction in dues should not be a major problem – the Group's budget was balanced and its reserves had increased slightly.

**Mrs. Doris Stump (Switzerland)** asked where the savings were coming from.

**The Chair** replied that they came mainly from savings in operating costs, particularly receptions.

**Mrs. Robert Walter (UK)** asked how much was in the reserves.

**The Chair** replied that in 2011 the total dues received would come to 43 558€, and that the Group's reserves – including interest on the previous year – stood at 59 790.88€. With an interest rate of 2.5%, the return on the sums invested could be improved – although prudence was obviously required.

With expenditure in a full year coming to a maximum of 40 000€, one could see that a 5% reduction in dues – bringing their total down from 43 558€ to 41 380€ - would not impact coverage of expenditure. For information, the reception in Panama had cost 8 700€. In total 14 300€ were spent, including translation costs. The financing of the Bern Assembly posed no problem. In fact, reserves were going up each year. The 5% reduction in dues was therefore amply justified; whilst modest, it was of symbolic importance. In any case, the question would be discussed again in Bern.



## 19 Date of the next meeting

**The Chair** suggested that the next meeting, due to take place in a month's time before the Kampala Assembly, should be held on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> March.

**Mrs. Marija Lugarić (Croatia)** wondered about Bosnia-Herzegovina's participation in the work of the IPU and the Twelve Plus, since this country had not yet formed its Parliament, despite elections having been held a year ago.

**The Chair** proposed to get in touch with Bosnia-Herzegovina's representatives, probably in Bern. That country's dues amounted to 627€. The few remaining countries that still had not paid probably would do so before Bern. There were not many countries left in that situation, since out of 45 000€ due in total, 38 000€ had already been paid. The European Parliament, which was an associate member of the Twelve Plus, paid only 437€ in dues, the same as the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

**Mr. Donald Oliver (Canada)** asked what new sources of revenue could be found for the IPU. National contributions could no longer be increased; Canada's contribution was close to \$500 000 CAD, and pressure to reduce this amount was strong.

**The Chair** agreed that the official institutions had no money left. Personally, he would rather turn to major companies or bosses, who like Bill Gates or François Pinault, contributed to major causes.

**Mr. Krister Örnfjäder (Sweden)** explained that Ikea, a few days previously, had contributed around 100 million CHF to different organizations working in Africa. To obtain such funding, it was necessary to present a project that typically reflected what the IPU did. The suggestion was a good one, but presentation was the key – the project had to tie in with the company's objectives.

**Mr. Robert Walter (UK)** considered that the European Parliament's financial contribution was a promising avenue to explore, since that body had observer status at the IPU assemblies. It would therefore be legitimate to ask it to increase its contribution. Moreover, the IPU worked on specific projects which other like-minded institutions could contribute to – the WTO, the European Parliament, the European Commission, but also the World Bank, regional development banks and the EBRD. All were interested in capacity-building, creating and supporting stable democracies. Partnerships should therefore be sought with them on projects that were already underway or planned for the future, and the IPU would have to pay close attention to the commercial presentation of these projects, to make them attractive to these institutions.

**The Chair** believed that the Executive Committee could make proposals along these lines.

*The meeting ended at 12.25*

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Twelve Plus Group
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Paris, France
<b>DATES</b>	September 12, 2011
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Donald H. Oliver, Q.C.
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	Mr. Joseph Jackson, Advisor
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$ 3,324.92</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$ 1,515.82</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$ 604.89</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	
<b>MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 5,445.63</b>