

Canadian Group
Inter-Parliamentary Union



Groupe canadien
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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the
Meeting of Co-Rapporteurs of the Third IPU Standing
Committee on Democracy and Human Rights**

Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

Geneva, Switzerland

May 18-20, 2011

Report

The Honourable Salma Ataullahjan, Senator, attended a meeting of the Co-Rapporteurs to the Third IPU Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, in Geneva, Switzerland, from May 18 to 20th, 2011. The Hon. Senator Ataullahjan was appointed Co-Rapporteur at the IPU Assembly, in Panama City, in April 2010. The Co-Rapporteurs met for a planning meeting to prepare an outline of their draft report to be considered by the 126th IPU Assembly (Kampala, Spring 2012) on the topic of *Access to health as a basic right: The role of parliaments in addressing key challenges to securing the health of women and children.*

Senator Ataullahjan was joined in Geneva by the two other Co-Rapporteurs, the Hon. F. Sardinha from India, and the Hon. P. Turyahikayo from Uganda, and was assisted by IPU staff Martin Chungong, Secretary to the 3rd Committee, and Sue Mbaya, Parliamentary Policy Advisor, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

On Wednesday morning, May 18, the Co-Rapporteurs met at the IPU Secretariat for a briefing session on the context and approach of the IPU's maternal and child health project. In the afternoon, the participants were briefed by Martin Chungong on the history of the Third Committee, the origin of the topic, and an outline process towards completion of the report and resolution. In the afternoon, the Co-Rapporteurs attended a series of meetings at the United Nations Palais with experts from the World Health Agency, the decision-making body of the World Health Organization. They received information on the role of global health governance and access to reproductive health, in the context of the Millennium Development Goals. In the evening, they met with representatives of the International Health Partnership.

On Thursday, May 19, briefings held at the IPU Secretariat dealt with the current status and challenges related to women's and children's health, maternal and child health as rights, IPU partnerships with United Nations agencies and other stakeholders such as the Partnership on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, and the role of HIV/AIDS in maternal and child health. In the afternoon, at the UN Palais, they attended a technical briefing on the work of the Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health, which was convened under the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health. In the afternoon, the Co-Rapporteurs reconvened at the IPU Secretariat to develop the terms of reference for their draft report, its scope, the key elements to be addressed and the importance of mainstreaming gender considerations.

On Friday May 20th, the Co-Rapporteurs met again at the IPU Secretariat to prepare a work plan for developing the draft report and resolution, define the roles and responsibilities of each Co-Rapporteur in this process, and to establish timelines and identify required resources.

Results

The Co-Rapporteurs concluded that insufficient progress is being made on maternal, newborn and child (MNC) health globally and in particular progress on reproductive health. The report should identify the social determinants of MNC health and should

address inequality in access to health services, especially for the poor. The report should also look at the significant impact of certain diseases and conditions (including HIV), as well as non-communicable diseases, as well as other factors such as gender based violence and the weak state of health systems.

The report should adopt a human rights perspective, which involves the right to life, the right to enjoy adequate health, the right to non-discrimination, the right to equality and the right to dignity. It should take into consideration international and national convention and legal frameworks that make it obligatory for authorities to implement these rights and assure women and children the right to health.

The Co-Rapporteurs concluded that the report should address the accountability gap with respect to authorities, in terms of making available the required resources, in passing the necessary laws and policies to insure universal access, and in delivering the required health services.

In the report, the Co-Rapporteurs will make proposals as to the responses of Parliaments to address the problem, noting the importance of political will, such as to a) represent the health concerns of the citizens; b) legislate “health to all” and “health in all, and to address violence; c) allocate required resources through the budget allocation and monitoring functions; oversee government actions through accountability frameworks, oversight of critical initiatives such as registration of births and deaths, the delivery of sufficient sexual and reproductive health services to all; and d) advocate for the prioritization of maternal and child health. Other important points to be included are the involvement of male parliamentarians, the need to maintain the link between the woman and the child; the need for an action-oriented resolution; the establishment by the IPU of a mechanism for monitoring progress of parliaments in implementing the resolution between 2012 and 2015 and the role of solidarity with other stakeholders.

It was agreed that Canada would be responsible for preparing the first draft of the report to be completed by July 18, 2011, and distributed to the co-rapporteurs for their feedback and comments. Canada would also be responsible for Draft 3 of report (the final draft) to be finalized and submitted to the IPU by 7 September, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Suzanne Fortin-Duplessis, Senator
Canadian Group of the IPU

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
ACTIVITY	Meeting of Co-Rapporteurs of the Third IPU Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights
DESTINATION	Geneva, Switzerland
DATES	May 18-20, 2011
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Salma Ataullahjan
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 4,747.43
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 1,116.76
HOSPITALITY	
PER DIEMS	\$ 872.43
OFFICIAL GIFTS	
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	
TOTAL	\$ 6,736.62