

Canadian Group
Inter-Parliamentary Union



Groupe canadien
Union interparlementaire

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the Meeting of the Steering Committee of the
Twelve Plus Group**

Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

**London, United Kingdom
7 September 2007**

Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation to the Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Twelve Plus Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

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 (39 members), the Asia-Pacific Group (26 members), the Arab Group (15 members), the Eurasia Group (7 members), the Latin American Group (19 members) and the Twelve Plus Group (44 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 44 members, including Central and Eastern European countries.¹

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.

¹ See <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

Eleven parliamentarians from seven countries participated in the meeting of the Twelve Plus Steering Committee in London, United Kingdom on 7 September 2007. The countries represented were: Canada, Finland, France, Norway, the United Kingdom and Belgium.

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

The agenda for the meeting included issues and questions for consideration by the Twelve Plus Group at the 116th IPU Assembly (Geneva, 8-10 October 2007). 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.

4. Conclusion

The IPU is the focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue and works for peace and cooperation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative democracy. In recent years the Union has solidified its role as the lead organization through which parliamentarians may promote and debate issues of global importance to civil society.

The Meeting of the Twelve Plus Steering Committee in London was a constructive exercise, during which its participants actively debated and made decisions concerning issues of importance to the Group and of consequence to the structure, functioning and composition of the IPU.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Donald H. Oliver, Q.C., Senator
President, Canadian Group IPU

APPENDIX
Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee
London, UK, 7 September 2007



*Group of the Twelve Plus
in the Inter-Parliamentary Union*

*Groupe des Douze Plus
à l'Union interparlementaire*

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee
Friday 7 September 2007, from 9.30 to 13.00
House of Commons, London, UK

Participation

John Austin (Chair of the 12+ Group), Geert Versnick (Belgium), Senator Donald Oliver (Canada), Katri Komi (Finland), Senator Robert Del Picchia (France), Rudy Salles (France), Karine Peterson (Latvia), Milan Cvikl (Slovenia), Brigitte Gadiant (Switzerland), Rt Hon Ann Clwyd (United Kingdom), Nigel Evans (United Kingdom)

In Attendance

Marc De Rouck (Belgium), Joseph Jackson (Canada), Vesa-Pekka Kangaskorpi (Finland), Bertrand de Cordovez (France), Sandra Paura (Latvia), Tanja Pandev (Slovenia), Penny Vagg (United Kingdom), Kenneth Courtenay (12+ Secretariat), Dominique Rees (12+ Secretariat), Francesca Ingham (12+ Secretariat), Sue Griffiths (12+ Secretariat)

Apologies for Absence

Elsa Papadimitriou (Greece)

1. Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and extended a particular welcome to **Karine Petersone (Latvia)** and **Milan Cvikl (Slovenia)** who were attending the Steering Committee for the first time. He was pleased that the Balkans and Central & Eastern Europe were now represented and understood that representation from central and eastern Europe would continue through rotating membership.

Apologies had been received from **Elsa Papadimitriou (Greece)** who could not attend due to elections in Greece on 16 September.

The Chair noted that some documents were available only in English. This was because a French version had not been received from Geneva.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the 12+ Steering Committee in London on Friday 30 March 2007

The Minutes were approved without comment.

4. Matters arising from the previous Steering Committee minutes

All matters arising from the previous Steering Committee minutes were to be dealt with as separate agenda items.

<p style="text-align: center;">Matters arising from the 116th Assembly in Bali</p>

5. The Emergency Item

The Chair recalled the difficulties that had been experienced in Bali concerning the procedure for the emergency item. A lack of clarity in the rules had been exacerbated by the absence of the IPU President and the inability of the Secretary General to give a firm ruling. This had resulted in the IPU Assembly being placed in the hands of the Speaker of the host Parliament. A copy of the correspondence between the Chair and President Casini on this matter had been circulated, expressing the concerns of the 12+ group. Proposed changes to the statutes to clarify the rules regarding emergency items would be dealt with under item 6.

Ann Clwyd (United Kingdom) informed Members that she had also corresponded with President Casini on this matter at the request of the UK delegation. She had been disappointed with the response. It had proved impossible to meet President Casini outside Rome.

The Chair said that IPU Secretary General Anders Johnsson had agreed to meet the 12+ group in Geneva and that this would provide an opportunity for Members to express their concerns.

IPU Matters

6. IPU Reform/Format of the 117th IPU Assembly/Evaluation of the trial

Members had been provided with a timetable and draft agenda for the new IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs (UNC/1/A.1). The Chair asked Geert Versnick (Belgium) to report on the meeting of the Advisory Group of the Committee on UN Affairs.

Geert Versnick (Belgium) said that a report on the meeting had been prepared by Mr Finn Martin Vallersnes (Norway) (UNC/1/R.1). The Group included four 12+ Members. It had made proposals for the agenda of the UN Committee and had asked him to produce a policy paper concerning the future of the relationship between the IPU, the UN and national parliaments to be distributed in the following week. Basically, the paper would claim that national parliaments should increase their engagement with UN issues as part of their daily business, and stress the status of the IPU as the international vehicle by which the UN and national parliaments could be brought together.

He drew Members' attention to paragraphs 27 and 28 of the report on the proposed programme of work. For the Committee's first meeting on 8 October, the Advisory Group had suggested a discussion of the role of parliaments regarding the Millennium Development Goals, Peace Building and the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The idea of an annual award had also been raised. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan might be the recipient of the first award as he had worked to bring together the IPU and the UN. The IPU often suffered from a lack of media attention and this might also bring it some publicity. The main decision for the Committee at the October meeting would be the adoption of a working programme based on the report. It had also been agreed that the Advisory Group could act as a drafting committee for resolutions of the Committee.

The Chair noted that the Committee on United Nations Affairs would be operating on an

experimental basis at the 117th Assembly in Geneva. The United Kingdom delegation had discussed the desirability of forming a small working group to monitor the experiment and evaluate the experience. He hoped the 12+ would support this suggestion.

Katri Komi (Finland) was concerned about the Committee's budget, especially if field trips were planned to gather evidence. Would the cost come from the IPU budget or national parliaments? What mandate would they have to represent the IPU or request information on UN operations?

Robert Del Picchia (France) said that national parliaments were not interested enough in the UN. They provided the UN's budget, but many did not enquire what it was spent on.

Rudy Salles (France) presented the amendments that had been submitted concerning IPU reform. The first placed a duty on parliamentarians to submit a report to their national parliaments with a copy to the IPU Secretary General within six weeks of the closure of each Assembly. The Swiss sub-amendment clarified that any requirement to report should comply with national legislation and that the process should be completed as quickly as possible. He had some reservations about the need for a copy to go to the Secretary General but was otherwise supportive.

The following three amendments concerned the IPU President. The first proposed to extend the term of office from three to four years. He reminded members that the 12+, at the initiative of the Belgian Group, was always opposed to this extension and he recommended as a result that the group agrees to oppose the amendment. The other two were acceptable and provided that the President should be the political leader of the IPU, raising his profile, and that he should have the assistance of six Vice Presidents taken from different geopolitical groupings, as recommended by the 12+.

The first amendment to the Rules of the Assembly provided that rapporteurs could produce multiple reports on a theme. He did not object to this, but thought that one or two reports were sufficient. The second changed the deadline for submission of amendments. He was in favour of the measure which reinforced the proposal of the 12+.

The final amendment, submitted by Uruguay in response to the problems with the emergency item in Bali, provided that an explanatory memorandum should be provided with all proposed emergency items explaining the urgency of the matter. The UK had submitted a sub-amendment replacing 'should' with 'must' to make explanatory memoranda obligatory, which he supported. The amendment also provided that any resolutions which had been declined or withdrawn could not be reintroduced. The wording of the amendment was complicated and could not cover every eventuality, but he felt the amendment should be supported. He also supported the proposal for the 12+ group to analyse the experimental format of the Geneva Assembly via a working party.

Donald Oliver (Canada) noted that paragraph 25 of Mr Vallersnes' report stated that the new UN Committee "could usefully help to make sure that the IPU Standing Committees adequately reflected the current UN agenda". He thought this was undesirable.

Ann Clwyd (United Kingdom) said that the IPU had to reform its own structures. It claimed to champion human rights but did not give the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, which she had chaired, the resources it needed to do its job properly. The proposal to appoint a Treasurer (for the IPU) had not been discussed. The IPU's own budget needed scrutiny. The format of the general debate also needed reform. She queried the proposal to give an award to the retired UN Secretary General. He had many critics of his term in office. She did not think that the IPU should 'get into bed' with the UN.

Karine Petersone (Latvia) wondered whether a Committee was the best form for scrutiny of the UN. Existing parliamentary bodies already had a mandate to do this. The UN was a governmental institution and needed to be scrutinised by parliamentary sub-committees. Financial scrutiny was a good idea, but were there really enough resources to do the job properly?

Brigitta Gadiant (Switzerland) thought the existing IPU committees were sufficient to increase co-operation with the UN, however, the majority in the IPU was in favour of the Committee so the group needed to co-operate. After the next Assembly, the experimental format had to be reviewed.

Milan Cvikl (Slovenia) asked about strategic partnerships with other multilateral institutions apart from the UN, for example the ILO, World Bank and IMF. He feared that so-called 'experimental' programmes often became permanent without further consideration. He thought that the idea of an annual award given to the UN Secretary General would subordinate the IPU to the UN. On the proposed amendments, there could be more explanation of the intent behind the amendment proposing to make the IPU President the political head of the organisation.

The Chair thanked Members for an interesting debate and reminded Members that the World Bank had established its own Parliamentary Forum, with which the IPU was seeking dialogue. Discussions with the ILO and WTO were continuing. The reform programme had been driven by the 12+ group. The group had not yet achieved all it wanted, for example, there was agreement that the General Debate was really a series of set-piece speeches and needed to change. The IPU was meant for dialogue and could sometimes become fixated on the production of resolutions. Panel debates were successful in this regard. He had chaired the Working Party on Members' Contributions and knew that there was no enthusiasm from Members to increase the level of contributions. Nevertheless, there were resource issues, for example, the increase of resources for the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians had not been implemented. Alternative sources of funding needed to be found. He was sceptical regarding the proposal to present an IPU award. Publicity was generated when the IPU did something newsworthy. In the United Kingdom Parliament, there was an annual debate on the IPU which had helped to raise awareness.

The reforms were not set in stone and were experimental for one Assembly only. There was a need for a small working group to monitor the experiment and report back. This would fall upon the 12+ as no other geopolitical group seemed interested. He did not think it was realistic to assume that a UN Committee meeting twice a year could carry out proper scrutiny of UN finances. Other mechanisms could be used to discuss general UN issues, such as the Standing Committees. It was a shame that the 12+ group proposal for an IPU Treasurer had not been accepted but the 6 Vice Presidents might be able to meet between Assemblies to discuss the budget. This was a hard task for the Executive Committee who only met twice a year. The proposal for a Treasurer had to remain on the table. **The Chair** turned to the proposed amendments to statutes.

The Committee agreed to support the amendment to Article 7 to CL/181/15-P.1 with the Swiss sub-amendment. The Chair undertook to clarify whether delegates' reports would have to be translated into IPU languages, but said he would not support asking national parliaments to bear this extra expenditure.

The Committee agreed not to support the amendment extending the IPU President's term of office from three to four years. The Committee also agreed to confirm that, should the amendment extending the IPU President's term of office be accepted, it would not affect the current President's tenure.

The Chair thought that the proposal for 6 Vice Presidents would allow for more detailed consideration of IPU internal matters, such as the budget, but also IPU policy and programmes. At present this was often undertaken by the Secretary General with no input from Members. The proposal for a Treasurer had not been explicitly rejected and Members should continue to raise it. The Executive Committee should be asked to draw up terms of reference for the office of the Vice Presidents if the amendment were accepted. **The United Kingdom** delegation were concerned that the Secretary General had sought funding from national governments (for the Promoting Peace, Democracy and Global Governance programme) without informing the IPU delegations of those countries.

The Steering Committee agreed to support the amendment concerning Vice Presidents and to instruct the Executive Committee to draw up terms of reference for the office. The Committee further agreed to support the amendments on the Rules of the Assembly and the Rules of the Standing Committee as well as the amendment submitted by Uruguay on emergency items, with the United Kingdom sub-amendment, although Geert Versnick (Belgium) pointed out that this amendment and sub-amendment did not deal with the issue of a possible conflict between the IPU President and the Assembly President regarding the interpretation of the IPU Statutes and rules.

The Committee agreed to recommend to the 12+ group that a working party should be established to review the operation of the reform programme at the Geneva Assembly.

7. Preparation of the 117th IPU Assembly in Geneva

a. Reports and Panel Discussions of the Standing Committees

The Chair informed Members that the deadline for the submission of reports had now passed. There would be a chance to offer feedback on the process in Geneva. Three Members of the 12+ were acting as rapporteurs of the Standing Committees:

Committee I: Peace and International Security: The role of parliamentarians in striking a balance between national security, human security and individual freedoms, and in averting the threat to democracy: Lord Morris of Aberavon (United Kingdom)

Committee II: Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade: Parliamentary oversight of State policies on foreign aid: Mr F.-X. De Donnea (Belgium)

Committee III: Democracy and Human Rights: Migrant workers, people trafficking, xenophobia and human rights: Mr A. Dismore (United Kingdom)

b. Emergency item

The Chair informed Members that the United Kingdom wished to propose an Emergency Item on climate change. A draft had been circulated. No other emergency items had so far been submitted by any other delegation.

Ann Clwyd (United Kingdom) said that the resolution came at a time of recent loss of life due to extreme weather conditions. 2007 was a pivotal year for climate change negotiations, with the meeting in Bali at the end of the year. The Intergovernmental Panel would also be issuing its final report in November. Parliamentarians needed to raise the level of ambition for the Bali talks. An IPU October resolution would send the message that urgent action was wanted by parliamentarians. It would also send a message of solidarity to countries facing human and financial losses from climate change.

The group agreed to put the draft resolution to the 12+ for support.

c. Proposed topics and rapporteurs for future assemblies

The Chair informed Members that, if the format of the Second Assembly continued in the format of the forthcoming meeting in Geneva, the topics for the 120th IPU Assembly in 2009 would need to be decided in Cape Town. He asked Members to give it some thought.

8. Vacancies

A list of vacancies to be decided at the 117th Assembly had been circulated (A/117/Inf.2). The Chair informed Members that his own term as a Member of the Executive Committee would expire in Geneva and nominations were open until the Geneva Assembly.

Donald Oliver (Canada) said that the Canadian group had asked him to stand for the Executive Committee and that he would be submitting his nomination the following week.

Robert Del Picchia (France) thought it likely that the French group would ask him to put himself forward at its next meeting.

The Chair noted the two nominations for the Executive Committee. There was also a vacancy for a titular member of the Committee on the Middle East, currently held by Guinea, but not reserved for any geopolitical group.

Nigel Evans (United Kingdom) proposed Ann Clwyd as titular member of the Committee on the Middle East. He said that her knowledge of the Middle East was well known and respected. **The Chair** informed Members that, as Ann Clwyd was a substitute member of the Committee, there would be a vacancy if she were elected. **The Committee agreed to recommend Ann Clwyd to the 12+ group for the position of titular member of the Middle East Committee.**

Rudy Salles (France) informed the Committee that he would not be able to continue in his position as a substitute on the Committee as he would not be part of the IPU delegation for the next two years. There would therefore be a further substitute vacancy.

Geert Versnick (Belgium) said that Francois-Xavier Donnea had expressed an interest in standing for the position of substitute member of the Committee. **The Chair** thought this nomination would attract support.

The Committee agreed to support the candidature of Mr Fuchtel of Germany for the position of Internal Auditor.

9. Budget

The Chair said that this year's IPU budget, entitled *Transparent and Green*, had been received on the previous day. It contained a commitment to carbon offsetting. He asked Members to send their comments to the 12+ Steering Committee secretariat for collation so the group could engage in a fuller discussion at the Geneva Assembly.

Donald Oliver (Canada) noted that the budget asked for more money from member parliaments. He asked the Chair for his assessment of how much more money could be raised in this way.

The Chair repeated his view that there was no enthusiasm from Members for increased contributions. The balance had been altered so that contributions were fairer between the large countries as well as between the richer and poorer countries. The new scales would be phased in. Contributions were assessed

using the UN formula and were reviewed every three years. As the United States was not a member, some countries were paying much more than under the UN model and these countries were not prepared to go further. Even if a resolution were passed to increase subscriptions, national parliaments would not provide the money.

Nigel Evans (United Kingdom) said that the budget provided for increases significantly above inflation. This seemed difficult to justify.

Robert Del Picchia (France) said that the French Parliament had already decided to refuse any increase in subscriptions. They would not be able to pay more, even if the delegation wished to.

Milan Cviki (Slovenia) asked how the budget could be amended or rejected. He found the increase of 24% in the budget for the IPU President's travel expenses extraordinary. There needed to be more explanation of the reasons for the changes, particularly in the section on the promotion of democracy.

Ann Clwyd (United Kingdom) referred to paragraph 39 of the budget. This stressed the importance of human rights work, yet the budget is cut.

Rudy Salles (France) said that Members needed to take a tough line on any proposed increase in contributions. All national parliaments were cutting budgets, not increasing them. Inflation was low. This needed to be addressed now as it was becoming a dangerous trend.

The Chair told the Committee that the budget had not yet gone to the Executive Committee. There was time for Members to study it in detail and pass on their concerns. Any comments sent to the 12+ Steering Committee secretariat would be circulated to other Members and the Executive. It would be possible to take up the issues with Anders Johnsson and John Piper in Geneva.

10. IPU Membership

The Chair referred to the report on IPU Membership that had been circulated (EX/249/5-R.1). The Democratic Republic of Congo and Guinea were liable to suspension for non-payment of subscriptions.

Ann Clwyd (United Kingdom) asked what progress had been made on the invitations to Iraq, Lesotho and Timor-Leste. She had spoken to parliamentarians from Iraq and Timor-Leste who were very keen to join and wondered why this had not yet happened. The report also needed to inform Members what progress had been made in organising another vote for USA affiliation.

The Chair said he would raise the matter at the Executive Committee and asked the secretariat to prepare a memorandum on the subject.

Katri Komi (Finland) asked if there had been any progress on the issue of Palestinian membership.

The Chair replied that President Casini had been instructed to investigate the matter and report to the next Executive Committee meeting. The main problems were that Palestine was not an internationally recognised state, and so was not

eligible for membership under the IPU statutes. In addition, there was debate over the identity of the legitimate parliamentary body in Palestine: was it the Legislative Council (which was elected) or the National Council (which included the diaspora)?

11. Specialised IPU meetings held since the 116th IPU Assembly in Bali

The Committee noted a list of the meetings held since the 116th Assembly.

12. Other Matters relating to the IPU

a. ILO

The Chair had received a letter from the Secretary General about a Conference to be held with the ILO in November. He had responded positively, but the members attending had not yet been confirmed. Mick Clapham MP was nominated for the United Kingdom delegation and Members informed the group that there would be a Swedish/Norwegian nominee and a nominee from Central Europe.

b. Appointment of the President and Secretary General

The Chair asked Members to give thought to the election of a new IPU President in a year's time. He hoped a candidate might come forward from Africa or Eurasia. The latter group had never provided a President. Further consideration would be possible in Geneva.

Katri Komi (Finland) said she understood there had been a nomination for the Namibian Speaker, Theo-Ben Gurirab.

The Chair noted that the Secretary General's term of office would end in 2010. Preliminary work to draw up a person specification and terms of reference for the job needed to be completed by mid 2009 at the latest. This could be a task for the six new Vice Presidents.

c. Fax from the German Bundestag about the 'International Year of Sanitation'

The Chair referred to the letter, in members files, that he had received from Dr Eid of the German Bundestag about the 'International Year of Sanitation'. Sanitation was as important as clean drinking water and water-borne diseases killed more people than AIDS and war combined. He thought it was important to participate, perhaps by organising a panel discussion.

The Committee agreed that the Chair should write to Anders Johnsson about the matter and to place it on the 12+ agenda for Geneva.

d. Future Inter Parliamentary Meetings

The Chair referred to the list of future Inter Parliamentary Meetings in member's files.

Donald Oliver (Canada) said that Canada was interested in hosting the 2010 Assembly but had experienced problems with Clause 5 of the standard agreement for the IPU Assemblies which required the host country to guarantee a visa to all delegates in advance. He had corresponded with the Secretary General on the matter. The problem centred on international travel bans, which had to be respected. There was no way that Canada could give a comprehensive assurance and this was similar to most Western countries. Canada was not prepared to fund a bid unless this problem could be resolved. Anders Johnsson had told him that he thought a solution could be found by means of Ministerial Visas, but these were rarely used. He asked members of the Executive Committee to press the Secretary General for a solution at the next meeting.

The Chair informed Members that there had been opposition to revisiting Clause 5 within the Executive Committee. Members of the EU were parties to an agreement which prevented them from guaranteeing visas to persons subject to travel bans. Even if this was not the case, few developed countries would guarantee visas to unspecified persons in the context of post 9/11 terrorism. He thought that significant consultation would be required before any changes to the model agreement could be made.

Milan Cviki (Slovenia) said that Slovenia would shortly enter into the Schengen agreement. Modern structures such as this did not fit in with Clause 5, which had been historically overtaken. The EU was now more than just the 'Western' states and it was illogical that IPU Assemblies could now not take place in a large part of the world.

e. Agenda of the Executive Committee

The Chair referred to the agenda of the Executive Committee's meeting to be held in Geneva.

Milan Cviki (Slovenia) asked if the draft working programme was agreed before the draft budget.

The Chair said that the budget was normally presented by the Secretary General and there was little input from Members of the Executive Committee.

Milan Cviki (Slovenia) thought that the draft programme should be adopted at the spring meeting and then followed by the draft budget in the autumn. This was much more logical. It was strange to adopt the budget before the working programme.

The Committee agreed that the Chair should write to the Secretary General with this proposal and copy it to the Executive Committee.

<p style="text-align: center;">12+ Matters</p>
--

13. Programme of activities and timetable of meetings for the 117th IPU Assembly in Geneva

The programme of activities and timetable of meetings for the 117th IPU Assembly in Geneva had been circulated. This would include a meeting with the Secretary General and a report from Mr Vallersnes.

14. Membership

The Chair had written to Serbia and to Montenegro to ask if they would like to join the 12+ as separate countries. He had not yet received a reply. He would be grateful for any new contact details from Members with links to those countries.

Milan Cviki (Slovenia) asked for copies of the correspondence and undertook to write a follow-up letter to the new authorities in the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Montenegro.

15. Financial Matters

The Chair reported that the 12+ account was very healthy and no increase in contributions was required. A more up to date report would be supplied in Geneva.

16. Date of Next Meeting

The Chair proposed 7 March 2008 as the date of the next Steering Committee meeting. He asked Members to let the secretariat know if this was a suitable date.

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
ACTIVITY	Meeting of the Twelve Plus Steering Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
DESTINATION	London, United Kingdom
DATES	September 7, 2007
DELEGATION	
SENATE	The Honourable Donald H. Oliver, Q.C.
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	Mr. Joseph Jackson, Advisor
TRANSPORTATION	\$5,000.65
ACCOMMODATION	\$2,043.64
HOSPITALITY	
PER DIEMS	\$ 478.22
OFFICIAL GIFTS	
MISCELLANEOUS	
TOTAL	\$7,522.51