



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
to the CPA UK Branch Conference on Tackling Drugs,  
Changing Communities - Challenges for Parliamentarians**

**Canadian Branch of the  
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)**

**London, United Kingdom  
February 3 – 8, 2008**

The delegation of the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association composed of Patricia Davidson, MP and Derek Lee, MP, which attended the CPA United Kingdom Branch Conference on Tackling Drugs, Changing Communities – Challenges for Parliamentarians held in London, United Kingdom, February 3 to 8, 2008 has the honour to present its

# Report

## Overview of the Conference

The delegates arrived at the London Conference site on Sunday, February 3, 2008 with the 24 other Commonwealth delegates attending this Conference, which was hosted by the United Kingdom Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Over the next 5 days they explored with their colleagues the challenge of tackling drugs in their communities and in particular the challenges that the international perspective of drugs presents to parliamentarians.

The aim of the conference was to explore how parliamentarians can hold their executives to account regarding the impact of drugs in their communities. The objectives were to:

- Examine the international perspective of drugs (narcotics) and current measures to tackle the problem;
- Learn about international co-operation and measures to tackle the supply of drugs;
- Consider different ways of treating drug dependency;
- Examine supply reductions in producing countries (Afghanistan and Latin America);
- Discuss prevention education for young people; and
- Invite delegates to take back a tool kit to assist them in holding their respective Executive branches to account on tackling drugs.

The agenda proved to be very ambitious. There was definite agreement on many points, as is evident in the communiqué ([Annex A](#)) that was agreed to unanimously at the end of the conference. The conference had representation from a wide range of countries as seen in [Annex B](#).

There were many diverse views on drug use, supply, and treatment. There were also differences in the substances at issue in different countries. Methamphetamines were not an issue in the U.K., but they are an issue in Canada and Australia. Heroin and cocaine were the main issue in the U.K. and India. There was a wide divergence among the conference's participants in terms of their perceptions of the evidence of incidence of HIV/AIDS and the methods of transmission and therefore treatments or prevention. At times it was a challenge to reach common ground among representatives from such diverse nations.

One of the differences was the use of methadone. Is it used as a treatment or as maintenance? Are we merely trading one addiction for another? There was no clear consensus reached.

The delegates did produce a tool kit ([Annex C](#)) which was one of the goals of the conference.

### **Session Reports: Session 1**

The opening plenary examined the international perspective and the current measures in place. Delegates heard presentations from the Minister for Security, Counter Terrorism, Crime and Policing for the U.K., the Right Hon. Tony McNulty, M.P.; a member and former President of the United Nations International Narcotics Board, Professor Hamid Ghodse, CBE; and the Director of European Cities against Drugs, Mr. Tomas Hallberg.

Delegates were informed that the U.K has just finished a 10 year drug strategy and currently they are experiencing the lowest level of use since 1996 globally, but more serious drugs are being used creating more serious problems. Fifty percent of all crime is related to drugs in some form. It was agreed that better enforcement, rehabilitation and prevention is required. The Minister noted that the supply of opium products from Afghanistan continues to increase and is a huge problem. It was felt that what was needed was a global holistic approach. It was learned that Sweden spends three times more on drug preventions than any other EU country. The numbers of users and addicts in Sweden are very low.

### **Session 2**

In this session delegates examined the social and economic complications for their communities. They heard from Professor Neil McKeganey, Director, Centre for Drug Misuse Research, Glasgow University; Baroness Warsi, the U.K Shadow Minister for Community Cohesion and Social Action; Mr. David Partington, the General Secretary, International Substance Addiction Abuse Centre; and Rabbi Ayreh Sufirin, the Executive Director of Drugline.

### **Session 3**

This session dealt with reducing supply in countries of production. Delegates heard presentations from the Afghan perspective and the Latin American perspective. Both of these presentations were extremely informative and are available at [www.cpaukbranch.org/content/view/93/62](http://www.cpaukbranch.org/content/view/93/62).

There are very diverse challenges and the only general consensus was that a global holistic approach is needed.

### **Session 4**

This session dealt with supply reduction in transit countries. Information on this topic is also available on the above website and again emphasizes the importance of sharing of

information and a global approach. Presentations were made by Mr. Tony Walker, Head of Region, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC); and Mr. Brian Johnson, Operations Manager, HMRC; and Ms. Olga Haven, MBE, Director, HIBISCUS.

On Monday evening delegates were honored to be hosted by the Lord Speaker, Rt. Hon. the Baroness Hayman, at a welcoming reception. It was a good opportunity to network with fellow delegates and members of the host Branch.

On Tuesday morning delegates had the opportunity to conduct some site visits including the London Heathrow Detection and Detention Facilities and in the afternoon visited two treatment centres – Pharmacea House and DAIS (Drugs, Advice, Intervention, Skills). Delegates' exposure to this major initiative in the Hounslow region just outside London near Heathrow Airport was very informative and thought-provoking. It involves a whole range of harm reduction techniques, counseling, "carrot and stick" coercion techniques, drug substitution, education and diversion from the court/criminal justice system.

### **Sessions 5-10**

These sessions dealt with organized crime and tackling the impact of drugs in our communities. Copies of the presentations made in these sessions are available at the above link. Presentations were made by: Mr. Bill Hughes, Director General, Serious Organised Crime Agency; Ms. Kathy Gyngell, Research Fellow, Centre for Policy Studies; Ms. Annette Dale-Perera, Executive Director, Director of Quality, National Treatment Agency; Hon. Kwamena Bartels, M.P., Minister of the Interior, Ghana; Mr. Nick Barton, Joint Chief Executive, Action on Addiction; Ms. Vivienne Evans, Chief Executive, ADFAM; Mr. Shaun Bailey, Director, My Generation; Mr. Mike Trace, Chair International Drug Policy Consortium; Chief Executive, Rehabilitation of Addicted Prisoners' Trust; and Mr. Gary Poole, Drug Strategy Area Coordinator, London, Her Majesty's prison Service.

### **Sessions 11-14**

Sessions 11 to 14 dealt with education, prevention and the role of the media. There were several interesting interactions between the delegates and a group of young people and the delegates and some family members. More information or Copies of the presentations are also available at the above link. Presenters for these sessions included: Mr. Mark Easton, Home Editor, BBC; Mr. Milton Walker, Freelance journalist; Mr. Harry Shapiro, Director of Communications and Information, DrugScope; Mr. Eric Carlin, Chair, Drug Education Forum; Ms. Caroline Healy, Member, Advisory council for the Misuse of Drugs and Chair, Prevention Working Group; Mr. Jeff Lee, Executive Director, Mentor International and, Mr. Christian Kroll, Global Coordinator for HIV/AIDS, United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime.

The final day, Friday, was departure day and the opportunity for a special guided tour of the Parliament buildings. Most delegates stayed to enjoy this and it was extremely interesting.

### **Conclusion**

While the conference was comprehensive in focus, it was comprehensive of the UK experience and policies. As interesting and educational as this was, it did not appear to allow much contribution from the states of the participating parliaments. The large number of African countries represented, most of whom had community drug issue experience as transit countries much different from the developed countries present (Australia, Sweden, Canada, Republic of Ireland, etc.) would also have been a barrier to useful exchange. The focus on UK interdiction of “swallower” smuggling through African and Caribbean transit countries had a much lower profile in the developed countries. The conference was able to illuminate the relationships between the illegal drug trade and organized crime, health care systems, crime prevention, social services, education, media coverage of drug issues, and the threat of HIV/AIDS.

An apparently unique approach to drug/alcohol addiction rehabilitation in the UK involves a several year old initiative which targets “Priority and other Prolific Offenders” (PPO). Persons who have six or more indications of criminal activity over two years (as determined by police intelligence, not convictions) or a conviction for an “acquisitive” offence (e.g. theft, fraud) are designated as PPOs and are offered either enrolment in drug/alcohol addiction treatment programming or intense police surveillance. Programming includes a mandatory blood test and can include medical treatment, education, employment or even housing. This is a major and expensive initiative framed as both crime prevention and social betterment. It is too early to know the rates of success being achieved across a broad spectrum of social and medical indicators. Notable from an overall perspective is the propensity of the drug problem response bodies in the UK (and elsewhere for that matter) to “medicalize” the basis of public response rather than to rely exclusively on the criminal justice system and drug interdiction. It is not clear that all of the essential components of the large UK program would be viable in Canada under our Charter of Rights and Freedoms but the results over time will probably be followed for many years by interested jurisdictions.

This report also includes the following annexes:

[A – Communique](#)

[B – Attendance List](#)

[C – Tool Kit](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Russ Hiebert, M.P.

Chair,  
Canadian Branch  
of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)



## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	CPA UK Branch Conference on Tackling Drugs, Changing Communities - Challenges for Parliamentarians
<b>DESTINATION</b>	London, United Kingdom
<b>DATES</b>	February 3-8, 2008
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Patricia Davidson, M.P. Derek Lee, M.P.
STAFF	
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$ 6,518.34</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$ 471.41</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 7,461.16</b>