

Canadian Group
Inter-Parliamentary Union



Groupe canadien
Union interparlementaire

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Working Group
Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)**

**Beijing, China
20 March 2009**

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1. Introduction

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (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.

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 (42 members), the Asia-Pacific Group (27 members), the Arab Group (19 members), the Eurasia Group (7 members), the Latin American Group (19 members) and the Twelve Plus Group (45 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 Asia-Pacific Group and the Twelve Plus Group.

2. Background on the Asia-Pacific Group

Given Canada's active trade connections with the Asia-Pacific region, the Canadian IPU Group requested formal membership in the Asia-Pacific Group (APG) in September 1997 and was admitted soon thereafter on the occasion of the 98th IPU Assembly in Cairo, Egypt.

The purpose of the APG is to promote greater regional identification and cooperation, as well as encourage coordinated positions on issues presented before IPU assemblies and meetings of the IPU Governing Council. The membership of the APG is open to all national parliaments from the Asia-Pacific region represented at IPU assemblies and related meetings. At the close of the 120th IPU Assembly the Group had 27 members.

The Asia Pacific 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 chairmanship of the APG is rotated by alphabetical order of the member-parliaments on a yearly basis with the officers – a First Vice-Chair and Second Vice-Chair – selected on an alphabetical basis.

According to the *Rules of Procedure of the Asia Pacific Group*, The Chair shall be supported in his/her work by a Working Group which shall advise him/her and promote

the fulfillment of his/her tasks. This Working Group, which is chaired by the Chair of the APG, includes the following members: the two most recent predecessors of the current APG Chair and Officers (as long as they are members of their national IPU delegation or, alternatively, have a seat in their parliament); members of the APG serving on the Executive Committee (including the President of the Council of the Union); further members, invited by the Chairperson on account of their particular abilities or merits, who could benefit the activities of the APG as a whole.

3. The Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Working Group

Six parliamentarians participated in the meeting of the Asia-Pacific Working Group in Beijing, China on 20 March 2009. The countries represented were: Canada, China, the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia and Viet Nam.

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 Asia-Pacific Group at the 120th IPU Assembly (Addis Ababa, 5-10 April 2009). 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 Beijing.

Respectfully submitted,

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

APPENDIX

Minutes of the IPU Asia-Pacific Working Group Meeting March 20, 2009 Moon Hall, Beijing International Hotel

Participants:

1. Mr. Zha Peixin Vice Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress
Chair of the IPU Asia-Pacific Group
2. Mr. Donald H. Oliver Senator, Canada
Preceding Chair of the IPU Asia-Pacific Group
3. Mr. Jo Gum Chol Chief of Inter-Parliamentary Relations, Foreign Department, Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, DPRK
4. Mr. Shri P.S. Gadhavi Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha, India
5. Mr. Abdillah Toha Member of the IPU Executive Committee
Member of Parliament, Indonesia
6. Mr. Young Chin Member of the IPU Executive Committee
Member of Parliament, Republic of Korea
7. Mr. Ngo Anh Dzung Member of the IPU Executive Committee
Member of Parliament, Viet Nam

1. Call to Order

Mr. Zha Peixin, Chair of the Asia-Pacific Group of the IPU called the meeting to order at 09:00 a.m. at Moon Hall, Beijing International Hotel.

2. Chair's remarks

The meeting was opened by chair with a cordial welcome to all participants.

3. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda of the Working Group meeting was adopted.

4. Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting of the working group

The minutes of the last meeting of the Working Group (Vancouver, Saturday 20 September 2008) was adopted.

5. Briefings on the 120th IPU Assembly by members of the Executive Committee

Mr. Abdillah Toha (Indonesia) briefed participants on the extraordinary session of the Executive Committee held on January 29 -30. Mr. Ngo Anh Dzung (Vietnam) and Mr. Young Chin (ROK) then briefed the Group on the agenda of the Executive Committee to be held in April before the 120th IPU Assembly.

With regard to the venue of the 124th IPU Assembly in 2011, Mr. Abdillah Toha (Indonesia) said that the Executive Committee had received a host-bid letter by Panama. Delegates were also informed the future important events of IPU including two special parliamentary conferences, one on global financial crisis to be held in Geneva in May and the other on climate change during the UN Conference on Climate Change to be held in Copenhagen in December.

6. Draft Agenda of the Asia-Pacific Group meeting during the 120th IPU Assembly

The draft agenda of APG was endorsed by the Group.

The Chair informed the Group of the vacancies for the Asia-Pacific Group to be filled during the the 120th IPU Assembly and 184th session of the Governing Council.

The Group noted that India will comment on the budgetary issue of IPU at the APG meeting in Addis Ababa. And Indonesia will prepare a written report on the work of the IPU Advisory Committee on UN Affairs.

With regard to the appointment of a new secretary-general of IPU, the Group hoped at least one candidate could come from the Asia-Pacific Region.

7. Discussions on how to improve the work of APG

The Group discussed the proposal by Mr. Roger Rice(Australia) on the reform of the APG. Consensus was reached that current practice of annual rotation of chair together with its secretariat was convenient and efficient while a working group consisting of succeeding and preceding 2 chairs ensured its continuity. The Chair was entrusted to convey the Group's comments to Mr. Roger Rice.

With regard to the organization of the Parliamentary Conference on the Global Financial Crisis to be held on May 7-8 in Geneva, Mr. Oliver (Canada) proposed that more resource persons should be invited from the Asia-Pacific Group in consideration of the important role and influence of the region in world economic setup. The Group agreed to convey the proposal to IPU secretariat.

The Group discussed the composition of the preparatory committee of the Third Conference of Speakers of Parliaments. Mr. Zha Peixin (China) informed the group that China would like to participate in the preparation process for the Third Conference of Speakers of Parliaments. Other delegates also showed their interest. The Group asked the executive committee members to get more information and ensure the representation of APG members.

The Group was also briefed on the possibility of the re-affiliation of the United States to the IPU.

8. Other matters

A draft proposal of IPU Committee on Peace and Korean Reunification was tabled by Canada and ROK. And a statement by the Inter-Parliamentary Group of DPRK was distributed. Obviously there was serious disagreement on this matter.

The Group decided not to discuss this issue further and entrusted the Chair to inform the IPU Secretary General about this matter.

The Meeting was adjourned at 12:15.

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
ACTIVITY	Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Working Group
DESTINATION	Beijing, China
DATES	20 March 2009
DELEGATION	
SENATE	The Hon. Donald H. Oliver, Q.C.
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$5,793.43
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 825.41
HOSPITALITY	
PER DIEMS	\$ 346.75
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 209.00
MISCELLANEOUS	
TOTAL	\$7,174.59