

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  
15 September 2008**

# Report

## Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation to the Meeting of the Twelve Plus Steering Committee 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.<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

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

Chairperson on account of their particular abilities or merits, who could benefit the activities of the Twelve Plus Group as a whole.

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

Eleven parliamentarians from eight countries participated in the meeting of the Twelve Plus Steering Committee in London, United Kingdom on 15 September 2008. The countries represented were: Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Greece, Latvia, 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 included issues and questions for consideration by the Twelve Plus Group at the 119<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly (Geneva, 8-10 October 2008). 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 Donald H. Oliver, Q.C., Senator  
President, Canadian Group IPU

# Appendix

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE  
London (Attlee Suite, Portcullis House)  
Monday 15 September at 9.30am**



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

*Groupe des Douze Plus  
à l'Union interparlementaire*

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## **Participation**

Mr John Austin (Chair of the 12+ Group), Mr Geert Versnick (Belgium), Senator Donald Oliver (Canada), Mr Daniel Reisiegel (Czech Republic), Senator Robert del Picchia (France), Ms Asta Möller (Iceland), Mrs Karine Petersone (Latvia), Mr Finn Martin Vallersnes (Norway), Mrs Brigitte Gadiant (Switzerland), Dr Roger Berry (United Kingdom), Mr Nigel Evans (United Kingdom).

## **In attendance**

Mr Marc De Rouck (Belgium), Mr Joseph Jackson (Canada), Mr Philippe Bourasse (France), Mr Bertrand de Cordovez (France), Mr Philippe Bourasse (France), Ms Arna Bang (Iceland), Mrs Sandra Paura (Latvia), Mr Chintan Makwana (United Kingdom), Mr Kenneth Courtenay (12+ Secretary), Ms Dominique Rees (12+ Secretariat), Ms Gabriella Liberotti (12+ Secretariat), Ms Sue Griffiths (12+ Secretariat)

## **Apologies for absence**

Mrs Elisavet Papadimitriou (Greece), Mr Milan Cvikl (Slovenia)

## **1. Opening Remarks**

**The Chair** welcomed Members to the meeting and extended a particular welcome to **Ms Asta Möller** (Iceland) who was attending the Steering Committee for the first time as the 12+ Group's representative on the IPU Executive Committee. He noted that it was the International Day of Democracy and that a number of events were planned in 12+ Group national parliaments to mark the occasion.

## **2. Adoption of the Agenda**

The agenda was adopted.

## **3. Approval of the Minutes of the 12+ Steering Committee in London on Friday 7 March**

The Minutes were approved without comment.

#### **4. Matters arising from previous meetings**

**The Chair** noted that these were covered under separate agenda items. Any additional business could be raised under items 15 and 20 as appropriate.

### **IPU Matters**

#### **5. Report from the Executive Committee**

**Senator Robert del Picchia** (France) reported on the Executive Committee meeting that had taken place on 15 June. The meeting had focused on the question of admitting Palestine as a full member of the IPU. There were two main problems: firstly, Palestine was not recognised as a sovereign state and secondly there was disagreement over which body was the legitimate parliament of Palestine. The Cape Town Assembly had expressed its strong desire that Palestine should be admitted to full membership and had mandated the Executive Committee to consider these matters. This had avoided an immediate vote which would have resulted in the admission of Palestine in contravention of existing IPU statutes. The 12+ Group had been in the minority in opposing the immediate admission of Palestine and had accepted this as a compromise. The Group's view was that the statutes should be respected.

The aim of the Executive Committee meeting was to formulate an amendment to the statutes to allow Palestine entry. The text that was finally agreed upon did not mention Palestine specifically and for this reason it was not supported by the members from Indonesia and Morocco. The question of which body should be admitted to membership was difficult. The Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) was the elected legislative body, but many of its members were in prison and it was not functioning properly. However, this body was still referred to in the Executive Committee's recommendation. The text was also based on Palestine's special status within the United Nations, which endorsed its aspiration to become a sovereign state. At present, it was the only country to enjoy this status which effectively meant that the amendment would only apply to Palestine, although the situation could change in the future. The amendment would be circulated to IPU members for adoption at the Geneva Assembly.

Given the non-functioning nature of the PLC, the recommendation suggested that the Palestinian National Council (PNC) could "facilitate" Palestine's membership temporarily. This was a difficult point that would be subject to serious debate in Geneva. As only a simple majority was required, it was likely that those who supported Palestinian membership and representation by the PNC would win any vote. The 12+ needed to decide what its position would be.

**Mr Geert Versnick** (Belgium) noted that the Cape Town Assembly had threatened to admit Palestine without any changes to the statutes and that this had been avoided by remitting the matter to the Executive Committee. The Committee had two main aims: to allow entry only to Palestine, but without mentioning Palestine specifically, and to decide which Palestinian body should be admitted to membership. He supported the amendment to the statutes as it was drafted and said that within the Euro-Mediterranean Assembly, Palestine was represented by the PNC as the PLC was not functioning, but its representatives could not stand for office within the organisation. A

similar solution might be possible for the IPU. Much depended on the definition of the word 'facilitate' within the recommendation.

**Ms Asta Möller** (Iceland) agreed that the Committee had reached a sensible conclusion and had put forward a well-drafted amendment to the statutes. The PNC itself claimed to be the legitimate legislative body and had originally submitted the request for membership. The Nordic countries had discussed the matter and agreed that the PLC was the parliament of Palestine. The decision was difficult and might impact on other organisations in a similar situation.

**The Chair** said that there had been an overwhelming political will to admit Palestine to full membership at the Cape Town Assembly. This would have contravened the statutes. Whilst the 12+ Group did not wish to hinder Palestinian aspirations, the IPU needed to abide by the statutes. The Executive Committee had drafted amendments to the statutes very skilfully. Under their provisions, full membership would be open to Palestine only and not to other entities such as South Ossetia or Transnistria. Palestine was a special case as its right to statehood had been recognised by the UN. The difficult question was which body should be admitted to membership. The international community recognised the PLC as the legitimate elected parliament, however, it was not fully functioning. It had a Hamas majority, many of its members were in prison and others were considered by some countries to be associated with terrorism. The PNC argued that it had been declared the Palestinian parliament and represented refugees who had been excluded from Palestine and were thus prevented from voting. It was associated with the PLO. In his view, international law clearly identified the PLC as the legitimate parliament, but it might be necessary to accept a compromise allowing the PNC to represent the PLC temporarily as this was the best deal available.

**Senator Robert del Picchia** (France) said that the application for membership came jointly from the PLC and PNC. Palestinian domestic law referred to the PLC as the single legislative body and this should be respected.

**Mr Roger Berry** (United Kingdom) congratulated the Executive Committee on a well-drafted amendment. He asked whether the PLC and PNC would recognise the political support implied in admission to full IPU membership and, in return, agree that the PLC should be the member body.

**Mr Geert Versnick** (Belgium) replied that this was a clear political statement in support of Palestinian statehood. He noted that the amendment made no reference to an application process so it might be possible for the IPU to decide which entity should be affiliated.

**Mr Finn Martin Vallersnes** (Norway) made a comment in the light of his experience on the Committee on Middle East Questions. He thought there were political implications to the decision. The PNC was effectively the PLO parliament. Hamas was not a member. The PNC represented the diaspora and admitting it to membership could be equated with supporting the right of return. He was not completely content with the resolution but thought it was the least worst option. It would attract majority support in the assembly.

**Mrs Brigitte Gadiet** (Switzerland) congratulated the Executive Committee on its work and highlighted the requirement for the candidate country to have special status at the

UN. This meant it currently only applied to Palestine and was quite a stringent requirement for legitimacy.

**Mr Nigel Evans** (United Kingdom) agreed that the IPU should not open the door to a number of applications from semi-autonomous or disputed entities in the future.

**Senator Robert del Picchia** (France) responded that this had been the aim of the amendment. He thought that the question of membership for Kosovo might be an issue in the future. Once the statutes had been amended the issue of which body should be affiliated could be addressed. The 12+ Group should not be seen as blocking progress. He suggested that the PLC could be admitted to membership and given six months to see if it was functioning adequately enough to satisfy IPU requirements. The Executive Committee could then return to the question at the Spring Assembly. This would allow Palestine to be admitted whilst respecting the statutes.

**The Chair** agreed that the PLC was the legitimate body, recognised in domestic law, but thought that there would be a majority within the IPU in favour of admitting the PNC. He supported a compromise solution.

**Mrs Karine Petersone** (Latvia) thanked the members of the Executive Committee and supported their views. She preferred to avoid a confrontation on this issue and thought the 12+ Group had done all it could to satisfy the statutes. As long as the resolution clearly expressed the view that the PLC was the legitimate body, she could accept a temporary solution involving the PNC.

**Mr Finn Martin Vallersnes** (Norway) thought the resolution would provoke a strong reaction from Israel. This might even result in changes in the area and in the operational status of the PLC.

**The Chair** concluded that the Steering Committee would recommend that the 12+ Group should support the new wording and ask the Executive Committee to work to find a mechanism by which Palestinian participation could be facilitated, recognising that the PLC was the legitimate parliament. *This was agreed.* He asked whether the Executive Committee had discussed any other issues.

**Senator Donald Oliver** (Canada) said that discussion was ongoing on the visa requirements for hosting IPU assemblies. He noted that Switzerland was about to join the Shengen common visa agreement, subject to approval by the European Council. He wondered whether this would affect the Geneva assemblies. He urged 12+ countries to work together with other geopolitical groups to draft a new text governing the provision of visas that was more appropriate to the current political climate. A previous attempt to do this had not succeeded and a sustained effort was required from the 12+ Group.

**The Chair** thought that Switzerland had protected the status of international organisations within its Shengen membership conditions. He noted that the visa conditions were not contained within the IPU statutes but in the Memorandum of Agreement with host countries, drawn up by the Executive Committee.

**Mr Geert Versnick** (Belgium) supported Senator Oliver's call for the 12+ to take the lead in drafting a new document and said that the previous attempt had failed because it had been rushed. A more considered approach was needed, involving other geopolitical groups.

**Mrs Brigitte Gadiet** (Switzerland) said that Switzerland had taken steps to protect the international status of Geneva. She agreed that a dialogue was needed with other geopolitical groups.

**The Chair** agreed to enter into discussions with other geopolitical groups on this matter and asked members of the Executive Committee to do the same. He thought Canada's previous letter of clarification might provide the basis for a new draft of the relevant provisions. He noted that other Executive Committee matters had been deferred until its meeting in Geneva.

## **6. Report from the Advisory Group on the UN Committee**

**Mr Finn Martin Vallersnes** (Norway) reported on the meeting of the Advisory Group on the UN Committee that took place on 18 July in Geneva. The Advisory Group had begun its work in summer 2007 and the UN Committee held its first meeting in October 2007 in Geneva, however, the Group had only been formalised in April 2008. Its official remit was to undertake investigations and field missions and to report back. Its topics were UN peace building, progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, the use of funds, financing for development, the implementation of human rights treaties and the functions of the human rights council. This was a very wide remit.

At the July meeting, he had been elected Chair of the Group. The previous chair, **Mr Theo-Ben Gurirab** (Namibia) had stepped down as he was standing for IPU President. The Group had decided to undertake a field mission to Tanzania. This had been chosen as it was one of the eight pilot countries in the 'Delivering as One' UN pilot project. The visit had taken place a week ago. Its objectives were to see how the UN worked on the ground, how parliamentarians could provide support and how the spending of donated resources was approved by national parliaments. He had some initial concerns as the UN reform documents did not mention parliaments at all. This might reflect a gap in accountability and transparency.

A full report on the visit would be provided at the Geneva Assembly by the rapporteur from Burkina Faso. Five members had participated. There were some points of concern. The Group had met with the joint steering committee for reform in Tanzania, including the Minister of Finance and the UN country coordinator. The committee had invited others to engage in its activities, for example representatives of civil society, but never any parliamentarians. He had been extremely surprised at the lack of involvement of parliamentarians. He hoped that the IPU had made a difference just by pointing this out. In recent years, there had been growing concern to ensure national ownership of aid and the UN and donor community had been encouraged to use the existing national systems. There were problems with this approach, namely corruption and the quality of those systems. The Group intended to follow up this issue. The process of UN reform involved appointing one overall leader for the different UN agencies and setting up a common programme with the same priorities. These priorities were not set by the national parliaments, however, and a lot of work remained to secure the involvement of parliamentarians.

At its meeting in July, the Group had also discussed carrying out a survey of the relationship between parliaments and the UN. This would include how parliaments handle UN matters, their relationship with the UN General Assembly and participation in



specific meetings and multilaterals. He hoped the survey would be sent out before Christmas. The Group also intended to carry out a mapping exercise of international parliamentary bodies and networks with the aim of creating an online database. This might be difficult as sometimes there were tensions between such groups and the IPU, for example with the World Bank Parliamentary Forum. Preparations had also been made for the autumn UN General Assembly, where a joint report by the UN and IPU Secretary Generals would be presented, concerning the cooperation and strategic partnership between the two organisations. Its conclusions and recommendations would form the basis of a resolution for the UN General Assembly. The IPU had invited parliamentary delegates to the UN General Assembly to a briefing on 26 September. He hoped that some high-ranking delegates would attend. In addition, there would be a parliamentary hearing at the UN on 20-21 November, on effective peacekeeping and the prevention of conflict.

Finally, there was more work to do on prioritisation of the Advisory Group's agenda. Work was progressing slowly and took time, however, the Group was a good team. He had been sceptical about the Group initially but still thought it was worthwhile persevering.

**Senator Donald Oliver** (Canada) asked which UN staff had accompanied the Group during its visit to Tanzania and whether the UN had provided adequate support.

**Mr Finn Martin Vallersnes** (Norway) answered that the top UN country co-ordinator had been present and that he had been very helpful. His job was to work with the UN agencies involved rather than with Tanzania or the donor community. The Group had met his team as well as three parliamentarians from Tanzania, including the Speaker, two Ministers and the head of five or six UN agencies. He thought that the UN had arranged a high quality programme.

**Senator Robert del Picchia** (France) noted that the time allowed for the UN Committee at the Geneva Assembly was being reduced. He asked whether the time available would be sufficient. He also wondered why the Committee had not been involved in the preparation of the joint report by the Secretary Generals of the IPU and UN.

**Mr Finn Martin Vallersnes** (Norway) thought that sufficient time had been allowed for the UN Committee's activities during the Geneva assembly. This could be reviewed in future years. On the question of the joint report, he did not know how it had been handled on the UN side, but agreed that the Committee should have a role in preparing the report and hoped that this would happen in future. As Chair of the Advisory Group, he needed to take the initiative to ensure active participation.

**Ms Asta Möller** (Iceland) was amazed by the lack of involvement of parliamentarians in the UN's work. She wondered whether the IPU was valued in other countries and what its reputation was.

**Mr Finn Martin Vallersnes** (Norway) said that he had experience with the World Bank Parliamentary Forum and thought that they were wary of the IPU because they did not wish to be subsumed by a larger organisation. He was not sure about other similar networks. The idea of a database was a sensible way forward so that information could be shared and confidence built gradually.

**The Chair** agreed that there was some friction with the World Bank Parliamentary Forum, but added that the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO worked well. He thought it was useful to engage with the different groups to build relationships. He thanked **Mr Vallersnes** for his full report.

## **7. IPU Reform**

**The Chair** informed the Steering Committee that **Mr Rudy Salles** was unable to be present, but that there was little to report on this matter. It was agreed to place the matter on the agenda for general discussion at the 12+ Group meetings in Geneva.

## **8. Preparation of the 119<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Geneva**

### **a. Panel discussions on the subject items chosen for debate during the 120<sup>th</sup> Assembly in 2009**

**The Chair** informed members that a list of subjects and 12+ co-rapporteurs had been circulated.

### **b. IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs**

**Mr Finn Martin Vallersnes** (Norway) said that the agenda for the Committee was to be drawn up by the Advisory Group. It was likely to include a report from the IPU Secretary General on the UN resolution regarding the strategic partnership; a report on the Advisory Group's activities, including the field mission to Tanzania; a report on the Global Forum on HIV/Aids in Mexico; a thematic discussion on food security and its health implications, including an address by the Head of the World Food Programme and the Director General of the WHO with a question and answer session; and a one-hour hearing with the Director General of the International Organisation for Migration.

### **c. Emergency item**

**The Chair** informed members that no emergency items had yet been tabled.

## **9. Election of the President**

**The Chair** reminded members that, with the exception of Australia, the 12+ Group had agreed to support **Mr Theo-Ben Gurirab** after hearing from both candidates at the Cape Town Assembly. Both candidates would be invited to the 12+ Group's reception on 13 October.

## **10. Appointment of Secretary General**

**The Chair** said that a document on the appointment of the Secretary General had been circulated. It addressed the major concern of the 12+ Group that there should be a proper process. A further report could be expected in Geneva.

## 11. Vacancies

**The Chair** returned to the issue of the composition of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, decided in Cape Town. The 12+ Group had elected **Gisele Gautier** (France) to the two year Substitute position and **Monika Griefahn** (Germany) to the four year Substitute position. Confirmation from the IPU Secretariat had been received that this was in order and all the nominations were duly published in the *Journal*. The Secretary General later wrote to the 12+ Secretariat to say that Monika Griefahn was not in fact entitled to the four year position as she had already occupied that post for the past two years. It was therefore suggested that the two candidates swap positions, **Monika Griefahn** serving for another two years and Gisele Gautier for another four. He had written to each candidate suggesting this solution and had heard from Gisele Gautier that she was content. A reply was awaited from Monika Griefahn. Assuming both candidates were happy with the proposed solution, he asked whether the Steering Committee would agree to proceed in this manner. *It was agreed.*

There were two possible positions available to the 12+ during the coming Assembly: a titular member on the Committee on Middle East Questions and positions for two IPU Internal Auditors. He reminded members that the 12+ Group already had three titular members on the Committee on Middle East Questions, although the Committee was not subject to regional quotas. Any nominations should be submitted to the 12+ Secretariat in advance, for circulation before the Geneva assembly.

## 12. Budget

**Mr Geert Versnick** (Belgium) gave an analysis of the IPU budget for 2009. He had identified six significant improvements and three points where further action was needed.

On the positive side, the programme of work was more detailed and documented. Members' contributions were to rise by only 2.5%, below the agreed average of 3% and below inflation. Core income and expenditure had been disaggregated from voluntary funding. More realistic targets had been set for levels of voluntary funding, although he thought that the IPU would still struggle to meet its objective. A number of project managers had been employed to try to resolve the problem of underspend in the voluntary budget. Finally, more activities were funded for the Middle East Committee and the Human Rights Committee, although the budget was still modest. He understood that the Middle East Committee had recently undertaken a field mission.

There were some negatives. There was no prioritisation of the projects outside the core budget, although this was affected by the fact that those offering voluntary funding could set criteria for the projects. There was little discussion of fluctuations in budget allocations. The reader had to compare this year's figures with those from last year to see where the changes were. Finally, there was a liability in the residual pension fund. This was due to the state of the financial markets and was a medium term risk, but he did not think that enough was being set aside in 2009/10. He concluded by reminding members that the 12+ Group had suggested that one of the IPU Vice-Presidents should have oversight of the budget.

**The Chair** agreed that there should be a Vice-President with responsibility for overseeing the budget and that the bureau of Vice-Presidents should take on financial oversight more generally. He asked members of the Executive Committee to look at the carbon offsetting scheme that was being used by the IPU as the benefits of some schemes were minimal.

**Senator Donald Oliver** (Canada) asked whether the budget could be circulated at an earlier stage as he had not received it in time to examine it in detail.

**The Chair** said that the budget was sent out by Geneva and was circulated to members as soon as it was received.

### **13. IPU Membership**

**The Chair** indicated that documents on the current requests for affiliation, suspensions, etc. had been distributed.

### **14. Specialised IPU meetings held since the 118<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Cape Town**

**The Chair** said that a list of specialised meetings since the Cape Town Assembly had been distributed. There would be a fuller report in Geneva.

**Mr Geert Versnick** (Belgium) reported from the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO. This had been a successful conference. The outcome document was a strong statement of parliamentarians' belief in multilateralism as the best way to protect developing countries. Engaging with the European Parliament had proved difficult as its representatives changed so often, but he hoped that the ministerial in the coming year would be productive. There had been a very good contribution from the IPU.

### **15. Other matters relating to the IPU: Committee on Middle East Questions**

**The Chair** said that the Committee on Middle East Questions had undertaken its first mission this summer. **Ann Clwyd** (United Kingdom), **John Carter** (New Zealand) and Anders Johnsson (IPU Secretary General) visited Palestine and Israel.

## **12+ Matters**

### **16. Programme of activities and timetable of meetings for the 119<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly**

**The Chair** informed members that a list of meetings and details of the 12+ social event had been circulated. Instead of a dinner, the Group had arranged a reception on Monday 13 October. This was only for the Geneva Assembly – a dinner would be arranged for the spring assembly. The reasons for the change were the expense and difficulty of finding a new dinner venue each year and a desire to encourage more networking, which was difficult in a formal dining setting. Other geopolitical groups would be invited and the arrangements would be reviewed in the light of experience.

### **17. Membership**

**The Chair** reported that Montenegro had not yet responded to invitations to affiliate to the 12+ Group.

### **18. 12+ Chairmanship**

**The Chair** reminded members that he had agreed to stand for a further two-year term as Chair of the 12+ Group and this had been supported by the British Group of the IPU.

Since then, he had taken the decision to retire as a Member of Parliament at the next general election, which would occur at the latest in May 2010. This would mean that he would be unable to act as Chair for the Autumn Assembly in 2010 and might lose his mandate earlier if the election was brought forward. He asked whether the Steering Committee would still support his candidature under these circumstances or whether he should stand for a limited term of one year.

**Senator Robert del Picchia** (France) said that he would not support a limited term – the term for the Chairmanship was two years. Elections were always unpredictable and could happen at any time. He supported the Chair's candidature.

**Mr Geert Versnick** (Belgium) agreed and thought that the reason for choosing a Vice-Chair was to stand in for the Chair and act as a bridge where necessary. He felt that the Group had elected a very good Chair and Vice-Chair.

### **19. Financial Matters**

**Mr Kenneth Courtenay** (12+ Secretary) reported that the 12+ budget was in surplus by approximately £4,000, although the accounts only ran to the end of August. There was therefore no need to change the subscription rate for the coming year. *This was agreed.*

### **20. Any other business**

There was none.

### **21. Date of next meeting**

**The Chair** said that the next meeting of the Steering Committee would take place in early March 2009. The Secretariat would circulate a proposed date in due course. He thanked the Secretariat for its work and declared the meeting closed.

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Meeting of the Twelve Plus Steering Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
<b>DESTINATION</b>	London, United Kingdom
<b>DATES</b>	September 15, 2008
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	The Honourable Donald H. Oliver, Q.C.
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	Mr. Joseph Jackson, Advisor
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$2,949.53</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$2,107.47</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$ 555.41</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,612.23</b>