

Canadian Group
Inter-Parliamentary Union



Groupe canadien
Union interparlementaire

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the
127th IPU Assembly and Related Meetings
Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
Quebec City, Quebec, Canada
October 21-26, 2012**

Report

1. Background¹

The IPU is the international organization of Parliaments of sovereign states. It was established in 1889. The Union 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. To this end, it:

- Fosters contacts, co-ordination, and the exchange of experience among parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries;
- Considers questions of international interest and concern and expresses its views on such issues in order to bring about action by parliaments and parliamentarians;
- Contributes to the defence and promotion of human rights – an essential factor of parliamentary democracy and development; and
- Contributes to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the strengthening and development of their means of action.

The IPU supports the efforts of the United Nations, whose objectives it shares, and works in close cooperation with it. The IPU also cooperates with regional inter-parliamentary organizations, as well as with international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations which are motivated by the same ideals.

At the close of the 127th Assembly 162 national parliaments were members of the IPU and ten regional parliamentary assemblies were associate members. Most members are affiliated to one of six geopolitical groups that are currently active in the IPU.

2. Agenda for the 127th IPU Assembly

The IPU Assembly is the principal statutory body that expresses the views of the Inter-Parliamentary Union on political issues. Twice a year it brings together parliamentarians to study international problems and make recommendations for action.

The 127th Assembly, which took place in Quebec City, Canada, between 21 and 26 October 2012 was unique in numerous aspects. First, it was held in Canada, rather than in Geneva. Second, it was exceptionally a five-day assembly, rather than the usual three-day event. Third, the two additional days of programming were organized by the Canadian IPU Group; this marked the first time that a host country has been afforded the opportunity to plan substantive additional sessions for an IPU assembly.

The Assembly agenda addressed the following items:

- Special Debate on *Citizenship, identity and linguistic and cultural diversity in a globalized world*
- Panel discussions on the subject items chosen for debate during the 128th Assembly to be held in Quito, Ecuador in March 2013:

¹ Source for this section: <http://www.ipu.org/english/whatipu.htm>

- Enforcing the responsibility to protect: The role of parliament in safeguarding civilians' lives;
 - Fair trade and innovative financing mechanisms for sustainable development;
 - The use of media, including social media, to enhance citizen engagement and democracy.
- Special gender partnership session on gender-sensitive parliaments
 - Report of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs
 - Emergency Item: The situation regarding institutions and security in Mali

A number of panel sessions were organized on the following topics:

- Multilateralism and the role of parliamentary diplomacy
- Peak oil: What prospects for energy security?
- Building peace after conflict
- Creating opportunities for youth in today's global economy
- Parliamentary immunity: benefit or burden?
- Informal panel: Parliamentary and political law
- Workshop on new tools to promote nuclear disarmament

A detailed report on the 127th IPU Assembly and Related Meetings is available online.²

3. The Canadian Delegation

Delegations from the parliaments of 129 countries attended the 127th IPU Assembly. Of the 1,256 delegates who attended, 624 were members of national parliaments, of which 175 were women (28%) and 22 were Canadian parliamentarians. As hosts of the Assembly, the Honourable Noël A. Kinsella, Speaker of the Senate and the Honourable Andrew Scheer, Speaker of the House of Commons held bilateral meetings and hosted many events. The Canadian delegation included:

The Honourable Donald H. Oliver, President of the Canadian IPU Group and President of the 127th IPU Assembly

The Honourable Dennis Dawson, Acting Leader of the delegation

The Honourable Salma Ataullahjan, Senator

The Honourable Suzanne Fortin-Duplessis, Senator

The Honourable Joan Fraser, Senator

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, P.C., M.P.

Scott Armstrong, M.P.

Blaine Calkins, M.P.

Chris Charlton, M.P.

² See: <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/127/results.pdf>

Jean Crowder, M.P.

Russ Hiebert, M.P.

Mathieu Ravignat, M.P.

The Honourable Anne Cools, Senator – Observer

The Honourable Joseph A. Day, Senator – Observer

The Honourable Claudette Tardif, Senator – Observer

Cheryl Gallant, M.P. – Observer

Randy Hoback, M.P. – Observer

Djaouida Sellah, M.P. – Observer

Justin Trudeau, M.P. – Observer

Other Canadian Parliamentarians included:

Hélène Laverdière, M.P. – Panelist

4. Interventions made by the Canadian Delegation during the 127th IPU Assembly

The Honourable Donald Oliver, Speaker pro tempore of the Canadian Senate and President of the Canadian Inter-Parliamentary Group, was elected President of the Assembly by acclamation. In his introductory remarks, Senator Oliver said that it was a great honour for him to have been elected to preside over the Assembly's work, and that he was looking forward to rich and productive deliberations over the coming week.

Special debate

During the Special Debate on Citizenship, Identity and Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in a Globalized World, the following members of the Canadian delegation made interventions or played a particular role:

Senator Donald Oliver, as President of the 127th Assembly and as co-rapporteur of the Special Debate's outcome document, chaired the sessions of the Special Debate. He also provided opening and closing remarks. In his opening remarks, he emphasized the general agreement that exists that human societies are diverse not only in terms of culture and language, but also in terms of beliefs and values. However, when ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences determine a country's politics, they can contribute to social and political instability. He noted that no country, including Canada, is safe from the effects of an inflated culture of identity and diversity. Senator Oliver also provided personal reflections on the significance of the topic given his family's history as descendants of slaves in the southern United States and his lifelong commitment to advocate the rights of visible minorities. He remarked that, for the sake of global stability, inter-parliamentary dialogue at fora such as the IPU provide opportunities to remind heads of state and government that globalization must respect the needs and aspirations of the people and that acceptance of the many different cultures and many different languages that exist must be strengthened.

In his concluding remarks, Senator Oliver offered an overview of the interventions from IPU delegates and observers. He noted that they emphasized the wide range of experiences with diversity, from the moderate to the extreme. The interventions also included a range of definitions of culture, diversity, and identity, which emphasized the fluidity of these concepts. Many interventions also stressed diversity as a source of strength for societies. Participants in the debate noted the importance of parliaments in protecting diversity and pluralism, enhancing tolerance, cultural literacy and fostering dialogue, and initiating programs that encourage learning of languages, and in strengthening the link between sustainable development and diversity. Senator Oliver also noted that the interventions during the debate challenged delegates to reflect on the dilemma of how far to go to protect minorities with special rights before social unity is undermined; to think about how to reconcile diversity with citizenship and with freedom of expression; and to put theory into practice.

Senator Suzanne Fortin-Duplessis also participated in the Special Debate. Her intervention highlighted many themes, notably the topic's relevance to the Canadian experience and efforts to strengthen social cohesion out of linguistic and cultural diversity. These efforts include the adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedom and programs to assist in refugee and new immigrant settlement and integration. She also noted that despite these efforts, some groups still face discrimination and are excluded from full and complete participation in Canadian society. She emphasized in particular the role that education can play in promoting civic rights and responsibilities, and encouraging greater participation in society.

Mathieu Ravnat, M.P. also intervened during the Special Debate. In his remarks, he emphasized that the relative consensus Canada enjoys today regarding its diversity was the result of a long and difficult process and subsequently remains fragile despite the efforts and progress achieved. He noted that the tensions between the forces of diversity and the forces of centralization continue to influence Canada's nation-building experience. It remains for parliamentarians to ensure a place for diversity, for minority communities, for the aboriginal peoples in the Canadian nation.

Senator Donald Oliver participated in the meeting of the drafting committee on the special debate topic in his capacity as co-rapporteur of the outcome document.

Emergency Item

Scott Armstrong, M.P. participated in the debate on the Emergency Item addressing "The institutional and security situation in Mali." During the debate, he highlighted the historic cooperation between Canada and Mali, and stressed that recent events have caused a breakdown in the good relations between the two countries. He mentioned concerns regarding the growing radicalism of separatist movements in the north, the displacement of more than 450,000 people, the increase in arms and drugs trafficking in the region and condemned in the strongest terms all human rights abuses and violations against civilians. He also indicated that the coup d'état had been extremely counterproductive with regard to the ongoing efforts in the fight against rebels in the north, and that this security and political situation was only worsening the already precarious humanitarian situation. Mr. Armstrong mentioned the Resolution 2071 of the United Nations that reiterates the demand that "no member of the Malian Armed Forces

should interfere in the work of the Transitional authorities,” and requests the Secretary-General to immediately provide military and security planners to assist ECOWAS and the African Union. He finished his remarks by stressing that the IPU thrives to promote and protect democracy and therefore must be a partner in finding solutions to bring about a reinstatement of democracy and stability in Mali.

Mr. Armstrong also served as a member of the drafting committee on the resolution on the emergency item. The resolution, as adopted by the Assembly, is available online.³

Committees

Senator Suzanne Fortin-Duplessis participated in the panel discussion on *The responsibility to protect: the role of parliaments in safeguarding citizens’ lives* that took place in the First Standing Committee on Peace and Security. She highlighted Canada’s commitment to preventing and halting genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, and in supporting efforts to bring those responsible to justice. She also talked about the role of parliamentarians in the protection of civilians. She indicated that parliamentarians can develop best practices to ensure that states have the capacity to protect their populations from crimes against humanity, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and genocide and to ensure that states live up to their responsibilities in this regard. Parliamentarians can play a role in encouraging and assisting other states to fulfill their protection responsibilities as well as supporting domestic efforts to protect vulnerable populations from mass atrocities. Parliamentarians can play a particularly important role in the prevention stage of the responsibility to protect, for example by developing an early warning action plan to prevent mass atrocities or by bringing the concerns of vulnerable populations to the forefront of government policy.

Chris Charlton, M.P. participated in the panel discussion on *The use of media, including social media, to enhance citizen engagement and democracy* that took place in the Third Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights. Ms. Charlton and Ms. M.T. Kubayi (South Africa), as co-rapporteurs on this topic, presented their draft joint report. Ms. Charlton focused her presentation on social media, which have become an important tool for people to keep in touch and exchange ideas. Overall, she argued that social media have the potential for enhancing citizen engagement. However, the extent to which social media are having an impact on our lives is not yet clear. For example, Ms. Charlton observed that while more information is available than ever before, this may exacerbate the divide between those who have the skills to make use of that information and the many citizens who do not. Despite the growing popularity of social media, when parliamentarians engage with citizens, they must consider the existence of such digital divides. She also discussed how people can motivate each other through citizen-to-citizen engagement. Finally, social media’s watchdog function can help ensure that parliaments are transparent, accountable and effective. Ms. Charlton noted that in their draft report, the co-rapporteurs suggest that guidelines be developed that balance the rights of people to freedom of expression and the need to hold participants on social media, as well as the traditional media and journalists, to

³ See: <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/127/res-emrg.htm>

account. Following all of the interventions from delegates, Ms. Charlton and the other presenters provided summary points to wrap-up the panel discussion.

As part of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs, the Roundtable Discussion on Multilateralism and the Role of Parliamentary Diplomacy focused on the strengths and weaknesses of parliamentary assemblies in promoting peace and security. Among the numerous representatives from various parliamentary associations, **Cheryl Gallant, M.P.** spoke in her capacity as head of the Canadian delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. She emphasized that, in the process of undergoing institutional reform, the areas of focus and activities carried out by NATO and the NATO PA have broadened, notably in terms of conflict prevention, reconciliation and peacebuilding. Accordingly, recent projects and studies have been conducted on such topics as the Arab Spring and the uprisings that took place in the Middle East and North Africa, the movement of people across the Mediterranean Sea, strengthening security for Afghanistan after 2014 and the withdrawal of NATO forces, the challenges of piracy, nuclear energy, and the sources and implications of the Euro crisis. She emphasized the role that parliamentary diplomacy plays in developing contacts among future leaders, in managing crises, and in sharing with allies the domestic impact of decisions taken at the national level, such as restrictions on the mandate of troops deployed to an international security force.

Other members of the delegation who attended the Roundtable Discussion include: **Senator Dennis Dawson** as member of the Advisory Group of the IPU Committee on UN Affairs, **Senator Suzanne Fortin-Duplessis**, and **Senator Joan Fraser**.

Gender Partnership Session

As the host parliament, Canada worked to ensure that a Special Gender Partnership Session would be on the Quebec City agenda. These sessions, held during three sittings on 23, 25 and 26 October, focused on the topic of gender-sensitive parliaments. They contributed to the production of a *Plan of Action for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments*. **Senator Salma Atallahjan, Senator Joan Fraser, Senator Suzanne Fortin-Duplessis, Jean Crowder, M.P., Chris Charlton, M.P., Carolyn Bennett, M.P., and Djaouida Sellah, M.P.** actively participated. The first plenary sitting allowed parliamentarians to discuss the key components of gender-sensitive parliaments and to identify objectives, best practices and strategies for the achievement of such institutions. On 25 October, three break-out sessions focused in greater detail on:

- Mainstreaming gender in all of Parliament's work;
 - This group examined the strategies, mechanisms, rules and policies that can be used to mainstream gender in all of a parliament's work. Participants discussed the important role of caucuses and committees in mainstreaming gender; the need for gender-based analysis of all legislation; the creation of policies that promote equal participation of men and women in both politics and parliament; the value of having women in leadership positions; and the need to build gender partnerships with men.

- **Senator Joan Fraser** and **Senator Suzanne Fortin-Duplessis** participated.
- Building a gender-sensitive culture and infrastructure in Parliament;
 - This group discussed strategies and best practices in building an enabling culture for gender equality and introducing gender-sensitive facilities in parliament. Participants addressed the internal culture of parliament, in terms of norms, practices and language; steps that can be taken to eliminate negative stereotypes of women in parliament; steps that can increase the visibility of gender equality issues and the work of women parliamentarians; work/family balance; and, internal policies to eliminate harassment and discrimination of women and men parliamentarians and staff.
 - **Senator Salma Atallahjan** was the chair of this session; **Chris Charlton, M.P.**, **Carolyn Bennett, M.P.**, and **Djaouida Sellah, M.P.** participated.
- Building the capacity of Parliaments to address gender issues.
 - This group discussed the capacity of parliaments and tools required to conduct internal gender-sensitive evaluations. Participants spoke of the expertise, training, and monitoring mechanisms needed to carry out a gender-sensitive evaluation; the strong role that specific gender equality committees can play in promoting such evaluations; and how to promote gender-sensitivity among the next generation of politicians.
 - **Jean Crowder, M.P.** participated.

Senator Salma Atallahjan also participated in the expanded meeting of the IPU's Gender Partnership Group on the draft Plan of Action on Gender-Sensitive Parliaments. This drafting committee comprised members of the Gender Partnership Group, members of the Bureau of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, and the Chairs of the Special Session's break-out groups. The Canadian delegation was very active throughout the production of the draft plan of action, submitting a number of suggestions and amendments to the document as it evolved and at the drafting meeting.

The final plenary sitting of the special session on 26 October included reports from the break-out groups on the results of their discussions. Delegates also considered needed parliamentary reforms and self-assessment tools that are being developed by the IPU. During those discussions, **Senator Joan Fraser** and **Jean Crowder, M.P.** both commented on the draft Plan of Action, the IPU's role in promoting gender equality, and

the steps needed to move forward. The draft Plan of Action was endorsed by parliamentarians during this sitting and was submitted to the Assembly for adoption.

The *Plan of Action for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments* was adopted unanimously by the Assembly at its closing session on 26 October.⁴

Closing Sitting

As President of the 127th Assembly of the IPU, **Senator Donald Oliver** chaired the closing sitting. Accordingly, he presided over the unanimous adoption of the *Quebec City Declaration*.⁵ In his closing remarks, he noted the 127th Assembly to be highly successful. He summarized the Special Debate based on his closing remarks, adding that as much progress as has been achieved, the work of parliamentarians in protecting diversity as a global value is as yet incomplete and the efforts must be sustained. He emphasized that the discussions and exchanges at the various sessions and meetings of the Assembly reinforced the value of the IPU's mandate to serve as a focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue, for the promotion of peace and co-operation among peoples, and for the firm establishment of representative democracy. In this context, he concluded that the deliberations – which were sometimes quite pointed, but overall frank and respectful - emphasized the importance of parliamentary diplomacy and dialogue, which should be nurtured and encouraged at every opportunity.

5. Participation by Canadian Delegates in Related Meetings and Activities

Inaugural Ceremony

The inaugural ceremony of the 127th Assembly took place on 21 October at the Quebec City Convention Centre, with His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, the Governor General of Canada, in attendance.

Speeches were given by the Governor General,⁶ the Honourable Noël Kinsella, Speaker of the Senate of Canada,⁷ Mr. Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations (on behalf of the UN Secretary-General),⁸ and Mr. Abdelwahad Radi, President of the IPU.⁹

The **Honourable Noël Kinsella**, Speaker of the Senate of Canada, welcomed all delegates to the 127th IPU Assembly in Quebec City. The Speaker began his remarks by noting that this Assembly marked the fourth time that Canada has been the host of an IPU Assembly, and that 2012 marks the 100th anniversary of Canada's official affiliation with the IPU.

The Speaker noted that the IPU is an organization that assists parliamentarians to respond effectively to the needs of citizens in realizing their aspirations with respect to peace, human rights, gender equality and development. Canadians and Canadian parliamentarians accord significant importance to such objectives. The Speaker also

⁴ See: <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/127/res-plan.htm>.

⁵ See: <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/127/res-quebec.htm>

⁶ See: <http://www.gg.ca/document.aspx?id=14791>.

⁷ See: <http://www.ipu.org/conf-f/127/kinsella.pdf>.

⁸ See: <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/127/unsg.pdf>.

⁹ See: <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/127/radi.pdf>.

noted that the theme of the Assembly's Special Debate – Citizenship, Identity, and Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in a Globalized World – provided the Parliament of Canada with the opportunity to address a subject that is at the heart of the Canadian experience.

The Speaker commented that the Canadian Parliament and the IPU share the objectives of promoting and defending the fundamental values of parliamentary diplomacy and democracy. In a world of interdependence, democratization, globalization, and mass communication, interparliamentary relations assume even greater importance. Parliamentary diplomacy is a complementary tool to governmental diplomacy. The capacity of parliamentarians to discuss issues freely with counterparts from other countries contributes to mutual understanding and better relations.

The Speaker stated that the IPU is essential to parliamentary diplomacy. It is a forum that facilitates dialogue and the exchange of points of view and perspectives between parliamentarians from diverse parliaments representing all geopolitical regions. The Speaker concluded his remarks to delegates by stating his confidence that the 127th IPU Assembly would reinforce the value of parliamentary diplomacy.

Chris Charlton, M.P. and Vice-President of the Canadian IPU Group welcomed all delegates to Quebec City on behalf of the Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada, the Honourable Andrew Scheer.¹⁰ In her remarks, Ms. Charlton noted that the 127th IPU Assembly was special for Canada as it not only marked the fourth time since 1925 that Canada was hosting the IPU, but the first time an Assembly was being held outside of the nation's capital. She highlighted Quebec City's more than 400 years of exceptional history, noting that the city – “the cradle and heart of French-speaking North America” – is central to Canadian history. With this in mind, she stated that Quebec City's qualities made it a fitting choice for the Assembly, during which a special debate would be addressing *Citizenship, identity, and linguistic and cultural diversity in a globalized world*.

Ms. Charlton underscored that the Canadian IPU Group and the IPU Secretariat had been working closely to prepare the Assembly's dynamic program. The program elements covered issues of direct relevance to the objectives of the IPU, which Canada strongly shares: the promotion and advancement of the core values of parliamentary democracy, human rights and gender equality. Ms. Charlton also emphasized that the program of the Assembly would not only be addressing the core tenets of parliamentary work, but would tackle directly some of the most challenging issues facing policy-makers and citizens. For examples of such work, she cited the panel and standing committee sessions on protecting civilians in situations of armed conflict, creating opportunities for youth in today's global economy, and building peace after conflict. Ms. Charlton noted that each of these topics would showcase the relevance of the IPU. She closed her remarks by recalling that, twice a year, parliamentarians from countries spanning the globe come together for IPU assemblies. It is a forum that allows parliamentarians to address complex global problems, as well as sensitive societal issues such as reconciliation and inclusion.

¹⁰ See: <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/127/charlton.pdf>.

The 265th Session of the IPU Executive Committee

The IPU Executive Committee held its Meetings on 19, 20, 23, and 25 October. **Senator Donald Oliver**, who was elected to the Executive for a four year term in October 2012, participated in these meetings. The proceedings of the Executive Committee were devoted to discussing and making recommendations on agenda items to be addressed and ratified by the IPU's Governing Council. A summary of its decisions may be found online.¹¹

The 191st Session of the IPU Governing Council

The Governing Council is the plenary policy-making body of the IPU. Several committees and working groups are subordinated to it and report to the Council on their work. Meetings of the 191st Session of the IPU Governing Council were held on 22 and 24 October. **Senators Donald Oliver, Dennis Dawson, Suzanne Fortin Duplessis, Joan Fraser, and Claudette Tardif, and M.P. Chris Charlton, and M.P. Jean Crowder**, attended at least one session of the Governing Council. A detailed report on the work and decisions of the Governing Council is available online.¹²

Geopolitical Groups Meetings

Article 25 of the Statutes and Rules of the IPU permits members of the IPU to form geopolitical groups. These groups play an important role in the functioning and activities of the IPU.

There are six geopolitical groups formally recognized by the IPU: the African Group (46 members), the Arab Group (19 members), the Asia-Pacific Group (30 members), the Eurasia Group (7 members), the Latin American Group (22 members) and the Twelve Plus Group (46 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. Since Canada belongs to more than one geopolitical group, it submits candidatures for vacant positions within the Union through the Twelve Plus Group.¹³

A meeting of the Asia-Pacific Group (APG) was held on 21 October. **Senator Salma Ataullahjan, and Jean Crowder, M.P.** attended the meeting. Agenda items included:

- Briefing by the Group's representatives on the work of the Executive Committee of the IPU
- Report from ASEAN+3 Group
- Emergency Item in the Assembly Agenda
- Vacancies to be filled during the 127th IPU Assembly
- Nominations to the Drafting Committee (on emergency item)

¹¹ See: <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/127/results.pdf>

¹² See: <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/127/results.pdf>

¹³ Minutes of the meetings of the Asia Pacific Group and the Twelve Plus Group are available from the Canadian IPU Secretariat upon request.

- Presentation of the 127th IPU Assembly
- Preview of the Special Session on Gender Partnership

During the meeting, **Senator Salma Ataullahjan** proposed the addition of the two agenda items: presentation of the 127th IPU Assembly, and preview of the Special Session on Gender Partnership. Under those items, the Senator provided an overview of the Assembly program, including the Special Debate and various panel sessions. The Senator also noted that the special session on gender partnership would provide delegates with a forum to discuss what constitutes a gender-sensitive parliament, and to identify objectives and concrete strategies for the achievement of such institutions.

Meetings of the Twelve Plus Group were held on 21, 22, 24, and 26 October. **Senator Donald Oliver, Senator Denis Dawson, Senator Suzanne Fortin Duplessis, Senator Joan Fraser, Blaine Calkins, M.P., Scott Armstrong, M.P., Chris Charlton, M.P., Carolyn Bennett, M.P., and Jean Crowder, M.P.** attended the different meetings. Agenda items considered included:

- Presentation of the 127th IPU Assembly, Québec City
 - As President of the 127th Assembly, **Senator Oliver** provided an overview of the Assembly's organization and key program elements.
- Report from Group representatives on the work of the Sub-committee on Finance and the IPU Executive Committee
 - As a member of Executive Committee, **Senator Oliver** provided an overview of the key outcomes and discussions that took place during the meetings of October 19th and 20th, including: the issue of visas, the activities of the IPU President, the activities of the IPU Secretary-General, questions related to IPU membership, implementation of the IPU Strategy, cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations, cooperation between the IPU and the ASGP, future IPU meetings, preparations for the 128th Assembly, and questions related to the Secretariat of the IPU.
- Draft of the "Quebec Declaration" on Citizenship, identity and linguistic and cultural diversity in a globalized world; review of the topics of the panel sessions
 - **Senator Oliver** provided an overview of the modalities of the Special Debate and the content of the draft "Quebec City Declaration."
- Subject items of the Standing Committees
 - As a co-rapporteur for the IPU's Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, **Chris Charlton, M.P.**, presented the key messages and points from the draft report prepared by the co-rapporteurs for the Assembly.
- Special gender partnership session – "Gender sensitive Parliaments"
 - **Senator Oliver** provided an overview of the modalities of the Assembly's special session on gender partnership, and the draft plan of action on gender sensitive parliaments that would be debated during the Assembly.

- IPU Committee on UN Affairs
 - As a member of the IPU’s Advisory Committee on UN Affairs, **Senator Dawson** summarized the objectives and format of the roundtable discussion on “Multilateralism and the role of parliamentary diplomacy” that would take place during the Assembly.
- Vacancies to be filled
- Emergency item
- Matters relating to the IPU – draft amendment to the IPU Statutes, IPU communication strategy
- Matters relating to the Group of twelve Plus – Chairmanship of the Group, applications of the Parliament of Ukraine and of the Parliament of Azerbaijan; Financial matters

Advisory Group of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs

As a member of the Advisory Group, **Senator Dennis Dawson** participated in this meeting. During discussion of the agenda item on Interaction between the United Nations, parliaments and the IPU, in the context of some remarks suggesting the weak relationship between the UN and the IPU reflects poor relations between the executive and legislature in many countries, Senator Dawson referred to the Canadian International Development Agency’s program on democratic development and the role that parliamentarians play in its execution. During the agenda item on Reform of the IPU Committee on UN Affairs, Senator Dawson strongly suggested that the meetings take on a format that encourages discussion and exchange of views, and possibly even be held more frequently at both the spring and fall meetings of the IPU, but over fewer number of days.

Panel session on Creating Opportunities for Youth in Today’s Global Economy

The panel session on *Creating Opportunities for Youth in Today’s Global Economy*, which was jointly organized by the Canadian IPU Group and the IPU, focused on the global youth employment crisis. It also concentrated on strategies to increase access to high-quality education and skills training, to create employment opportunities for youth and to facilitate effective youth transitions from education to work.

Scott Armstrong, M.P. was the chair of the panel session. He introduced the panelists, posed questions to them, and moderated the discussion and questions from the floor. Questions, for example, pertained to how parliamentarians can ensure that young people themselves are engaged in debates about the best approaches to ensuring opportunities for young people, that the voices of young people are being heard, and that their rights and desires are being respected.

Panel session on Building Peace after Conflict

The panel session on *Building Peace after Conflict*, which was jointly organized by the Canadian IPU Group and the IPU, gave parliamentarians the opportunity to address the considerable undertakings needed to ensure that the opportunity created by the end of

armed conflict is consolidated into durable peace. Expert panelists and parliamentarians discussed peacebuilding from political, security, gender, rule of law, economic and development perspectives, drawing on recent experiences from post-conflict countries.

During the panel session, **Blaine Calkins, M. P.** discussed Canada's participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) mission in Afghanistan. He also asked the panellists to comment on what can be done to reconcile the long-term nature of peacebuilding needs with short term political realities. He also inquired about how the international community and countries emerging from conflict can build new economic futures, noting that people in post-conflict states need jobs and something to go back to. He asked the panellists whether there are any examples of national success stories – economic models – that can be applied in other cases.

Meeting of Young Parliamentarians

A meeting of young parliamentarians was held during the 127th Assembly and attended by up to 50 parliamentarians. The agenda focused on the mandate and ongoing work of the task force of young parliamentarians that had been established at the 126th Assembly in Kampala. This item included consideration of the proposal prepared by the task force identifying specific objectives related to formalizing the contribution of young parliamentarians at the IPU. The agenda also discussed how to include a youth perspective in the work of the 127th and 128th Assemblies.

Scott Armstrong, M.P. participated, and invited all young parliamentarians to take place in the panel session being jointly organized by the Canadian Group and the IPU: *Creating Opportunities for Youth in Today's Global Economy*. Mr. Armstrong outlined the objectives and format of the session, noting that it offered an ideal opportunity for young parliamentarians to provide a youth perspective on IPU deliberations in the critical areas of employment and education. He also highlighted such issues as assistance with youth business creation.

Joint IPU-ASGP session on Parliamentary representation and communication, and the role of social media

This session focused on parliamentary representation and communication, and the role of social media. Mr. Marc Bosc, Deputy Clerk of the House of Commons and President of the ASGP, spoke at the opening of the session. **Blaine Calkins, M.P.** participated as a panellist during the first discussion entitled *Social media and parliamentarians: what risks, what benefits for representation?* In his remarks, he discussed his personal experience as a parliamentarian using social media. As an early adopter, he finds social media useful to communicate information about policies and activities to targeted group of people. He cautioned about engaging in debate through social media. He mentioned that parliamentarians always need to consider the source of the information coming from social media, and indicated that when a legitimate concern can be traced back to an identifiable source, he prefers to engage in more traditional forms of communication. The use of social media by parliamentarians during their activities in the Chamber or in committees also poses a number of questions regarding parliamentary privilege.

This discussion was followed by a workshop on the use of social media, a fair on how parliaments are using websites and social media for participation, and a discussion on

guidelines and key questions on the use of social media in parliaments.¹⁴ **Carolyn Bennett, M.P.** also attended this session.

Informal Panel on Parliamentary and Political Law

Senator Donald Oliver moderated an informal panel on parliamentary and political law. In his introductory remarks, he indicated that this session offered an opportunity to engage in a preliminary exploration of law as a component, guide and support for the work of parliamentarians, and that it would shed light on the utility of discussions on parliamentary and political law in the inter-parliamentary context. He then introduced the speakers: Ms. Julie Skovsby, a member of the Danish Parliament, Ms. Kubayi Mmamoloko Tryphosa, Member of the South African Parliament, Mr. Anders Johnsson, Secretary General of the IPU, and Mr. Rob Walsh, former Law Clerk with Canada's House of Commons. Participants discussed how the law guides parliament's work and the influence of the law on the work of parliamentarians. Speakers addressed issues related to the legislative process, parliamentary privilege and its relationship to the general law, and the influence of international law on parliamentary work.

Informal Meeting of Parliamentary Whips

A small group of delegates discussed the opportunity to create, under the auspices of the IPU, a network of members who perform duties as parliamentary whips or have similar roles within their parliaments.

During this meeting, **Chris Charlton, M.P.** noted that there was an absence of opportunities for whips to share experiences and develop skills, as much of what they did was behind the scenes and not easily discussed openly. At a practical level, she indicated that the whips may find it difficult to attend IPU meetings because of the clashes with the sittings of their Houses.

It was agreed that a further meeting should be scheduled to coincide with the 128th IPU Assembly in Quito, Ecuador, notably to discuss a possible workshop to be held in 2014. Minutes of this meeting are available online.¹⁵

Bilateral meetings

Members of the Canadian delegation held bilateral meetings with delegates from the following countries and organizations:

- Argentina
- Azerbaijan
- Belgium
- France
- Indonesia
- Iraq
- Mongolia

¹⁴ See: <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/127/results.pdf>

¹⁵ See: <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/128/whips.pdf>

- Myanmar
- Namibia
- Uganda
- South Korea
- Tunisia
- United Arab Emirates
- The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)

Launch of the Commemorative Book Celebrating a Century of Canada–IPU Collaboration

The Canadian IPU Group formally joined the IPU in 1912. To mark the centenary of this affiliation, a book commemorating the collaboration between Canada and the IPU was launched during the Assembly. This commemorative book chronicles Canada's long history with the Union and showcases key areas in which Canadian parliamentarians have taken an active role in IPU initiatives.¹⁶

Ms. Sonia L'Heureux, Parliamentary Librarian of Canada, welcomed the guests and highlighted the role of the Library of Parliament in leading this project that captured Canada's parliamentary heritage as it was experienced by the Canadian Group of the IPU. **Senator Noël A. Kinsella**, Speaker of the Senate, **Senator Donald Oliver**, and **Chris Charlton, M.P.** on behalf of the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Honorable Andrew Scheer, all spoke about the importance of the IPU in promoting and advancing the core values of democracy, and highlighted Canadian parliamentarians commitment to the success of the IPU as an effective international body.

6. Follow-up

Following each statutory IPU Assembly the Canadian IPU Group prepares this report, which is tabled in the House of Commons and the Senate. It also forwards relevant IPU reports and resolutions to parliamentary committees and government departments and sends letters to Ottawa-based diplomatic missions concerning the IPU's report and recommendations on the human rights violations of former or serving parliamentarians.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Salma Atallahjan, Senator
President, Canadian Group of the IPU

¹⁶ The book is available online. See: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/IPU/index-e.html>.

Travel Costs

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| ASSOCIATION | Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) |
| ACTIVITY | 127th IPU Assembly and Related Meetings |
| DESTINATION | Quebec City, Quebec, Canada |
| DATES | October 21-26, 2012 |
| DELEGATION | |
| SENATE | Hon. Donald H. Oliver, Q.C. Hon. Salma Ataullahjan Hon. Dennis Dawson Hon. Suzanne Fortin-Duplessis Hon. Joan Fraser |
| HOUSE OF COMMONS | Mr. Scott Armstrong Hon. Carolyn Bennett, P.C. Mr. Blaine Calkins Ms. Chris Charlton Ms. Jean Crowder Mr. Russ Hiebert Mr. Mathieu Ravignat |
| STAFF | Ms. Line Gravel, Secretary to the Delegation Mr. Frédéric Forge, Advisor |
| TRANSPORTATION | \$ 1,863.83 |
| ACCOMMODATION | \$ 13,789.17 |
| HOSPITALITY | \$ 1,016.25 |
| PER DIEMS | \$ 4,771.80 |
| OFFICIAL GIFTS | \$ 789.63 |
| MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES | \$ 44.86 |
| TOTAL | \$ 22,275.54 |