



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the 33rd meeting of the Board of
Directors**

Canadian Section of ParlAmericas

**Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
March 19-21, 2014**

Report

Introduction

ParlAmericas held its 33rd Meeting of the Board of Directors in the city of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Participants expressed gratitude to the host, Ms. Guadalupe Valdez, for the hospitality shown to them in Santo Domingo. Mr. Randy Hoback, M.P. led a delegation representing the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas, which also included the Hon. Michael L. MacDonald, accompanied by Mrs. Guyanne L. Desforges, Association Secretary to the Canadian Section. Mr. Hoback attended the meeting in his capacity as President of ParlAmericas, and Senator MacDonald attended as the Canadian representative on the Board of Directors.

The main objectives of the meeting were to hear about progress on preparations for the 11th ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly to be held in Chili, to receive various updates from Board members and Secretariat staff, to approve proposals for the themes of the next Gathering of the Group of Women Parliamentarians; to approve the work plan and budget for the coming cycle and to discuss a funding strategy for the organization.

1. Meeting Opening (See Appendix for a complete list of participants)

Mr. Randy Hoback, President and Chair of the meeting, opened the session. He welcomed the meeting participants and thanked Ms. Guadalupe Valdez, for her warm welcome, her support and for hosting this ParlAmericas meeting. He also stated that he was looking forward to getting to know the new Board members. He noted that the Association Secretary of the Canadian section, Mrs. Guyanne Desforges, would be appointed Secretary in Ms. Gina Hill's absence.

Ms. Valdez welcomed the Board members on behalf of the President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Abel Martinez Durán, and the rest of the legislators. Mr. Hoback then invited the participants to introduce themselves, and gave the regrets of those who could not be in attendance. He took the opportunity to thank the outgoing Director General (D.G.), Gina Hill who couldn't attend the meeting. He then introduced the new D.G., Ms. Alisha Todd who has worked in business development and democracy programming. One of her points of focus as new D.G. will be to secure funding.

a) Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Hoback invited members to consider the draft meeting agenda. The Board of Directors members agreed with the proposal, and the agenda was adopted.

b) Approval of the Report of the 32nd Board of Directors Meeting

The meeting proceeded with the consideration of the report of the 32nd ParlAmericas Board of Directors meeting, held in San José, Costa Rica, on August 20 and 24, 2013.

2. President's Report

Mr. Hoback referred to his written report as he updated Board of Directors members on his activities. He highlighted in particular his work with different ambassadors in Canada, and his participation in the opening reception of the Canada-Colombia friendship group. In January, Mr. Hoback was in Veracruz, Mexico, at the Atlantic Basin initiative. He apologized for his absence in Costa Rica due to health reasons.

3. International Secretariat Report

Mr. Hoback then gave the floor to Anabella Zavagno, the Program Manager, in the absence of the outgoing Director General Gina Hill. She provided program and finance updates from the International Secretariat, including the Director General's Report, the work plan, and the budget for approval.

Ms. Zavagno read the Director General's Report prepared by Gina Hill, which summarized her reflections on the recent past, and the near future of ParlAmericas. It was noted that during her mandate the organization underwent a complete rebranding, developed its first strategic plan, and reformulated its regulations; now the priority must be placed on securing funds for the organization.

4. Update on Recent Activities of Board of Directors Members

Mr. Hoback invited other members of the Board to speak to any activities they had undertaken in the name of ParlAmericas since the last meeting. Ms. Simons reported that the workshop in Trinidad and Tobago had been very successful, and on their return the members who participated were very enthusiastic. There were immediate changes to the way they work with the committee of expenditures of the state.

Mr. Buchanan said that the workshop in Trinidad and Tobago on strengthening parliamentary budget oversight had been a great opportunity, and there had been extensive participation from the region. He acknowledged the great work Ms. Hill had done, and asserted that it was a very insightful forum. In his opinion, participants went away with greater knowledge on how to operate in Public Accounts Committees. There might be follow-up workshops in certain countries to continue the dialogue, since the World Bank representative expressed his interest in continuing with this initiative.

Ms. Simons stressed that ParlAmericas should do more of this type of activities which are more direct and aim to tackle practical problems. Mr. Hoback thought it was an excellent point, and must be in line with possibilities of funding. He pointed out the success in regional programs, and encouraged Board members to identify issues of interest. He also noted there would be an upcoming Canadian mission to Peru, involving all parties, which would be looking at the Pacific Alliance, the trade agreement, and the extractive industry. He said he would like to do more bilateral trips, but funding was limited.

5. Program Report, Financial Presentation, Work Plan - April 2014 to March 2015

a) Program Report

Ms. Zavagno was again invited to speak, to go over the major activities of the International Secretariat, corresponding to the six streams of CIDA funding. She mentioned the organization and delivery of the training for Caribbean countries on Parliamentary Budget Oversight; the preparation and distribution of the 10th Plenary Assembly Report and three editions of the newsletter *ParlAmericas Express*; the efforts to secure a host country for the Gathering of the Group of Women Parliamentarians; the work to increase ParlAmericas presence in social media and to review the website; the preparation of the Corporation Bylaws and CIDA reports; and the coordination of the transition of two senior roles at the International Secretariat office. Then, Ms. Zavagno invited questions from the Board.

b) Financial Presentation

Ms. Zavagno turned to the financial presentation to report on the budget forecast compared to actuals for the period from October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013. She walked the board through the document, pointing out the three streams of income: membership dues, the CIDA project, and other projects and revenues.

Ms. Zavagno drew the board's attention to the membership dues column that showed that ParlAmericas received more income than was forecast, and said this was because it included both current and outstanding dues from previous years. She also explained that under the other projects and revenues column, the amount forecast was larger than the actuals, as ParlAmericas had been expecting to carry out another joint project with the World Trade Organization that unfortunately had fallen through. Nevertheless, there was revenue due mainly to favourable exchange rates. Ms. Zavagno also pointed out that as the CIDA project was coming to an end, a higher percentage of the International Secretariat staff salaries would be absorbed by membership dues revenue.

Mr. Urrutia asked for clarification regarding the income from membership dues as he saw a great disparity between the forecast and the actual income. He wanted to know where the estimated amount came from. Mr. Hoback understood Mr. Urrutia's concern, and explained that as more countries were getting involved it was expected to have more membership dues collected. He stressed that ParlAmericas would have to be aggressive to survive.

The Director General took the floor to say that the forecasted amount included past dues that had not yet been paid, and might appear in the bank account should these members regularize their situation. Ms. Todd considered that a change in the way in which the figures are presented would help to avoid confusion.

Mr. Blanco agreed with Ms. Valdez's point to include the in-kind investments / contributions of countries, especially when they host events, in the budget. Mr. Urrutia raised his concern about members that had never paid their membership dues. He considered that those parliaments should not have the same right to a seat on the board as the parliaments that have always paid. Mr. Urrutia was aware that this issue is a matter of Regulations, but thought that the Board could pass a resolution to prevent a member to run for a seat if said member has not paid at least the last membership dues.

Mr. Hoback returned to the financial statement, and there being no further questions, the Board of Directors approved, the budget for the period October 1, 2012, to September 30, 2013.

c) Work Plan

Ms. Zavagno continued with the Work Plan for April 2014 to March 2015. She reminded the board that the CIDA Project will end in December of this year, and the activities in the Work Plan reflected ParlAmericas' commitments under the project until then. Ms. Zavagno listed the following planned activities: preparation and distribution of the report on the workshop *Strengthening Parliamentary Budget Oversight in the Caribbean - Phase 2*; conversations with the OAS regarding an ongoing project in Central America, Mexico and the Dominican Republic; preparations for the Plenary Assembly in Chile; publication of another edition of the newsletter *ParlAmericas Express*; preparations for the Gathering of the Group of Women Parliamentarians; revision and updates of the website and updates to the database; coordination of board meetings; and implementation of the financing strategy.

Mr. Hoback wanted the board to be aware of some ideas that had come up during different conversations. One was including on the board an associate member from the OAS; other idea was conducting the Plenary Assembly in conjunction with the OAS General Assembly in future years. He also talked about attending the OAS General Assembly in Paraguay, for which board members would have to cover their costs since there was budget only for the President.

There being no further questions, the Board of Directors approved, the proposed Work Plan for the year 2014-2015, as presented.

6. Meetings of ParlAmericas Corporation Board

Senator MacDonald chaired three sessions/meetings of the ParlAmericas Corporation (Board of Directors/Executive Members). He reminded Members the need to conduct some ParlAmericas Corporation business in order to comply with Canadian legal requirement for not-for-profit organizations, where ParlAmericas is officially registered. It covered approval of minutes of the annual meeting, financial statement and election of Board of Directors of ParlAmericas Corporation.

7. Funding Beyond December 2014 – Part I – Presentation by Consultant

Mr. Hoback explained that, as agreed at a previous board meeting, and in keeping with the Funding Strategy, the International Secretariat hired a consultant to work on seeking and securing funds for the organization. He introduced Andrés López-Hoyos who had a solid experience drafting reports and proposals and also had interesting international experience including numerous observation missions with the OAS.

Mr. López-Hoyos informed the Board Members that he had been hired to work on two key recommendations from the funding strategy of the organization: 1) diversifying funding sources to secure long-term funding, and 2) engaging member parliamentarians and expanding membership. He noted that his presentation would be focused on the first

objective: developing a portfolio of potential funding sources and mechanisms to allow ParlAmericas to operate with the necessary funds for the next 3-5 years.

Mr. López-Hoyos then stated that he reviewed funding mechanisms in similar agencies; researched online organizations working on projects and initiatives in sectors related to the work of ParlAmericas; and interviewed key stakeholders.

He presented a list of organizations that could potentially fund ParlAmericas, divided in four groups: governments, foundations, international funding agencies, and private companies. Mr. López-Hoyos stressed that the time-frame for approving funding inquiries could take many months, which was extremely relevant in this case because ParlAmericas only had until December 2014 to obtain funding.

The floor was open for discussion, and Mr. Blanco mentioned the importance of reaching out to the Inter-American Development Bank. Mr. López-Hoyos agreed, and said that they have two projects that align with what ParlAmericas does. However, he was concerned about the time it might take for a proposal to be approved. It was noted that CIDA was listed as a potential source even though they already stated that this project would not be renewed and the consultant mentioned that CIDA might review its position not only because there were new people in the organization, but also because there was a renewed interest in the region, especially in security and capacity building.

It was also expressed that funding could be sought on a case by case basis, depending on the project. This way, specific organizations would be asked to fund events they are interested in, such as regional security, the prevention of organized crime and cyber-crime could be invoked to request funding.

It was noted that the fundraising approach should consider strategic alliances with the private sector as a possibility, but it should go hand in hand with the company's corporate social responsibility, especially in terms of environment, social justice, and human rights. The approach could also consider international institutions, especially those interested in women issues, small and medium enterprises, security, and the environment. Finally, it was suggested that ParlAmericas could also work with local parliaments.

8. Preparation for the 11th Plenary Assembly

a) Host country and Topics

The Plenary Assembly will be held in Santiago, Chile, on September 25-27, 2014. Mr. Urrutia commented on some details regarding the preparations and logistics with respect to the event. Mr. Hoback encouraged the members to express their thoughts with the proposed themes. An animated conversation followed, and the Members agreed and adopted that the overarching theme of the 11th Plenary Assembly be Mainstreaming Sustainability, and that the sub-topics be 1) Post-2015 Legislative Agenda in the Americas, 2) Access to Information and the Digital Economy, 3) Meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians: Women's Healthcare.

It was further resolved that the Chairs of the Working Groups be as follows:

1) Post-2015 Legislative Agenda in the Americas: Guadalupe Valdez (Dominican Republic)

- 2) Access to Information and the Digital Economy: Humberto Costa (Brazil)
- 3) Meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians: Marcela Guerra (Mexico)

b) Review of Board Seats for Election

The seats that will be up for election at the next Plenary Assembly were reviewed. Mr. Hoback reminded the board members that in the last Plenary Assembly it was agreed to add an additional seat for each the Caribbean and South America. It was reiterated that it was advisable that the Board make a decision regarding which legislatures are able to run for a seat on the Board; especially for those Parliaments who did not pay their dues for several years. It was noted that the Parliaments who make the effort to pay their dues should be compensated with the possibility of earning a seat on the board. It was suggested to request additional information regarding the participation of each member (payment of dues, hosting of events, attendance, etc.) to enable a possible decision on the issue at the next board meeting.

9. Gathering of the Group of Women Parliamentarians 2014

Ms. Simons updated the board on the conversations she had been having regarding the main theme for the Gathering of the Group of Women Parliamentarians. She said that the overarching theme would be “Moving from Formal to Substantive Equality”. Session 1 would be “Breaching the Gap between Written Law and Practice”; Session 2 would be “Education and Training for Equality”; and Session 3 would be “Budgeting to Achieve Gender Equality”. There was some discussion about which week would be the best to hold the event, and Ms. Guerra offered to consult with the Senate of Mexico and send the proposed dates to the President of ParlAmericas and to the President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians.

It was agreed that the 2014 Gathering of the Group of Women Parliamentarians will be held in Mexico City, in June.

10. Funding Beyond December 2014 – Part II

The Chair invited Mr. López-Hoyos, the consultant, to continue the discussion on fund raising with the Board members. Amongst suggestions, one included allowing hardware and software companies to come to the Plenary Assembly venue and set up booths where they could show their products. It was further stressed that ParlAmericas would not be endorsing any particular vendor, but would give them access to all the parliamentarians in attendance. Other ideas were debated such as electoral observation and it was suggested to establish a “dos” and “don’ts” document.

Mr. Hoback warned that the current model would not sustain itself, and therefore they should be willing to take on other projects. He said that ParlAmericas could be revolutionary in the delivery of services. Mr. López-Hoyos let the Board Members know that all discussions and input would be taken into account in the preparation of the funding proposals. He also said that he would keep them informed of which institutions were approached, so that each member could reach out to his/her contacts. Finally, he thanked everyone and declared he felt positive about obtaining funds for ParlAmericas.

11. Future Meetings and Close of Meeting

The 34th Board of Directors meeting will take place in Mexico City, Mexico, immediately prior to the Gathering of the Group of Women Parliamentarians.

Mr. Hoback acknowledged that this had been Ms. Ruiz's last board meeting and thanked her for all her work on the Board of Directors of ParlAmericas. He also expressed his appreciation to Ms. Valdez and her team for having hosted such a great meeting. Mr. Hoback presented both Ms. Ruiz and Ms. Valdez with tokens of appreciation.

The Chair thanked everyone for their participation, recognized the good job of the interpreters, and wished everyone safe travels home.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Hoback adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Randy Hoback, M.P.
Chair,
Canadian Section of ParlAmericas

APPENDIX

MEMBERS OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS PRESENT

President

- Randy Hoback, Member of Parliament (CANADA)

Second Vice-President, President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians

- Jennifer Simons, Speaker of the National Assembly of Suriname

North America

- Michael L. MacDonald, Senator (CANADA)
- Marcela Guerra, Senator (MEXICO)

Central America

- María Jeannette Ruiz Delgado, Member of the Legislative Assembly (COSTA RICA)
- Mirma Figueroa de Coro, Member of Congress (GUATEMALA)

Caribbean

- Hugh Buchanan, Member of Parliament (JAMAICA)
- Guadalupe Valdez, Member of the Chamber of Deputies (DOMINICAN REPUBLIC)

South America

- Germán Blanco Álvarez, Representative (COLOMBIA)
- Alicia Comelli, Member of the Chamber of Deputies (ARGENTINA)
- Humberto Costa, Senator (BRAZIL)

Host of the 11th Plenary Assembly

- Ignacio Urrutia Bonilla, Member of Chamber of Deputies (CHILE)

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT of ParlAmericas

- Alisha Tood, Director General
- Anabella Zavagno, Program Manager
- Marcelo Virkel, Project Coordinator
- Lisane Thirsk, Communications Officer
- Andrés López-Hoyos, Fundraising & Membership Engagement Consultant

OTHER GUESTS and OBSERVERS

- Reshma Alladin, Human Rights Expert, Suriname
- Guyanne Desforges, Parliament of Canada, Canadian Section of ParlAmericas
- María Mercedes, Director of the Department of International Relations, Dominican Republic

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBERS ABSENT

First Vice President

- Víctor Juliao III, Member of the National Assembly (PANAMA)

Caribbean

- Cheryl Bazard, Senator (THE BAHAMAS)

Immediate past President

- Luiz Carlos Hauly, Member of the Chamber of Deputies (BRAZIL)

Outgoing Director General

- Gina Hill

Associate member

- Michel Rathier

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Section of ParlAmericas
ACTIVITY	33 rd Meeting of the Board of Directors
DESTINATION	Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
DATES	March 19-21, 2014
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Michael L. MacDonald
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Randy Hoback
STAFF	Mrs. Guyanne L. Desforges, Association Secretary
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 8,849.06
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 2,344.69
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0
PER DIEMS	\$ 1,289.86
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 75.50
MISCELLANEOUS REGISTRATION FEES	/\$ 0
TOTAL	\$ 12,559.11