



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the 34th meeting of the
Board of Directors**

Canadian Section of ParlAmericas

**Mexico City, Mexico
June 23, 2014**

Report

Introduction

ParlAmericas held its 34th Meeting of the Board of Directors on June 23, 2014, in the city of Mexico City, Mexico. The delegation was led by Mr. Randy Hoback, M.P., and included the Hon. Michael L. MacDonald, Senator. The delegation was assisted by Mr. Leif-Erik Aune, Secretary to the Delegation.

ParlAmericas (formerly known as the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas) is a hemispheric organization composed of the national legislatures of 35 independent states from North, Central, and South America, and the Caribbean, and serves as an independent discussion forum for parliamentarians of the Americas. Since its founding in 2001, the organization has sought to improve inter-parliamentary dialogue by holding conferences where delegates gather to share experiences and make recommendations for enhancing regional cooperation on important trans-national issues. ParlAmericas also has strong roots in promoting parliamentary participation in the inter-American system of the Organization of American States (OAS).

ParlAmericas is governed by a Board of Directors responsible for the executive oversight of all activities, and is supported by a permanent International Secretariat based in Ottawa, Ontario.

The Board of Directors is made up of 17 elected members, including a President, Vice-President, President of the Group of Women Parliamentarians, and 14 other members representing the four sub-regions of North America, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. Canada has held the Presidency of ParlAmericas since 2011.

The main objectives of the 34th Meeting of the Board of Directors were to continue preparations for the 11th ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly, to be held in Chile from September 25-27, 2014, to receive interim reports on activities, and to provide for financial administration of the organization.

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

Mr. Randy Hoback, President, presided over the meeting as Chair. He welcomed the meeting participants and thanked the meeting host Senator Marcela Guerra for her organization of the meeting, as well as for the hospitality of the Senate of Mexico.

Senator Guerra welcomed the Board members on behalf of herself, the President of the Senate Raúl Cervantes Andrade and all legislators of Mexico. She said she hoped the board members would enjoy their time in the country and the warm welcome of its people.

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 33rd Board of Directors Meeting

The meeting proceeded with the consideration of the report of the 33rd ParlAmericas Board of Directors meeting, held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on March 20 and 21, 2014.

2. President's Report

Mr. Hoback delivered the President's Report, which reviewed recent activities in the period March-June 2014. Among many activities, Mr. Hoback reported on the recent bilateral visit to the National Congress of Peru by a delegation from the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas. As well, Mr. Hoback remarked upon the continued success of the National Congress of Mexico to strengthen inter-American relations. Lastly, Mr. Hoback observed an encouraging increase in inter-parliamentary relations with the United States Congress. Mr. Hoback concluded by advising the Board that, on July 17 and 18, 2014, he would be attending the First Inter-American Meeting of Speakers of Parliaments, in Lima, Peru.

3. 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.

Senator Marcela Guerra of Mexico reported on the 44th General Assembly of the Organization of American States, which was held in Asuncion, Paraguay, on June 3, 2014. Senator Guerra attended the General Assembly on behalf of ParlAmericas, and participated in discussions on the 2010 Declaration of Santo Domingo, which resulted from the Second Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities on Sustainable Development in the Inter-American Council for Integral Development Framework, held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic from November 17-19, 2010. Senator Guerra pointed to recommendations pertaining to gender equality, and to renewed discussions of quota systems as part of electoral reform, and reminded the Board that true democracy calls for the full participation of women in the political sphere.

The Honourable Jennifer Simmons, Speaker of the National Assembly of Surinam, advised the Board of her recent participation at the 2nd World Summit of Legislators, hosted by the Mexican Congress and organised by the Global Legislators Organisation (GLOBE). Speaker Simmons encouraged the Board members to consider engaging with GLOBE in the creation of a Latin American/Caribbean regional group for GLOBE, and to use the forum for increased activity on the issue of climate change.

Senator Cheryl Bazzard of The Bahamas advised the Board of her participation at the Special Call Meeting of The Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP), held in Nassau, Bahamas, on May 22 and 23, 2014. The Special Call Meeting also included discussion of quota systems as a means to increasing the number of elected women.

4. International Secretariat Report

Alisha Todd, Director General of ParlAmericas, presented the Director General's Report to the Board. Ms. Todd advised the Board of the departure of Marcelo Virkel, and thanked him for his service to ParlAmericas.

Ms. Todd briefed the Board on preparations for the ParlAmericas Plenary Assembly, to be held in Chile in September 2014.

Ms. Todd briefed the Board on ongoing work to increase stakeholder engagement as a means to diversify funding to ParlAmericas, to increase the organization's profile, and to place ParlAmericas more centrally on the inter-American agenda. Toward fundraising, Ms. Todd advised that ParlAmericas was working with the Organization of American States to identify and engage non-traditional funding partners. Part of an enhanced relationship with the OAS could include making representatives of the OAS members of the ParlAmericas Board of Directors in some capacity.

In addition, Ms. Todd advised that ParlAmericas would be negotiating with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development on a new funding agreement, which will begin with an independent evaluation of ParlAmericas, which will hopefully be in place by September 2014. The fundraising goals of ParlAmericas will be linked to the organization's ability to tangibly demonstrate contributions to development goals. These objectives were outlined in the ParlAmericas Funding Strategy, approved by the Board in May 2013.

Ms. Todd expressed an interest in maintaining contact with past ParlAmericas parliamentarians, particularly those with Board experience, and reiterated the importance of demonstrating success through comprehensive reporting on outputs and outcomes.

5. Financing Strategy and Projects

Ms. Todd briefed the members on the list of current financial donors to ParlAmericas, and outlined a list of sought donors to both meet the needs of the organization for working capital, and to complement enhanced engagement with international organizations and non-state organizations on collaborative projects and programmes.

Members discussed changing financial challenges, and considered the annual financial contributions of member countries. Some members discussed the challenge of compelling parliaments to make financial commitments in light of political realities, which can constrain budgets, despite the value and importance of participating in parliamentary diplomacy in the Americas.

6. 11th Plenary Assembly

Ignacio Urutia Bonilla, Representative of the Host Country of the 11th Plenary Assembly, briefed the Board on detailed preparations for the next Plenary Assembly, which will be held in Santiago, Chile, from May 25-27, 2014, and the theme will be "Mainstreaming Sustainability".

Board members discussed prospective key-note speakers and experts for the Plenary Assembly, as well as including summaries of regional work done on the issue of poverty reduction over the past 25 years, with particular focus on Millennium Development Goals.

Members reviewed plans for the proposed agenda of the 11th Plenary Assembly, which will include two working groups, addressing both the topics of a “post-2015 legislative agenda in the Americas”, and “access to information and the digital sharing economy”. In addition, the Group of Women Parliamentarians will meet during the Plenary Assembly to discuss women’s healthcare.

The Plenary Assembly will also hold elections for 9 positions on the Board of Directors, including that of the presidency, which is presently held by Canada.

7. Group of Women`s Gathering

Speaker Simmons briefed the Board members on the Meeting of the Group of Women Parliamentarians, which was also being hosted by the Senate of Mexico, in Mexico City on June 24 and 25, 2014. Board members expressed their gratitude to the Senate of Mexico for hosting the event, and were looking forward to attending the meetings.

The theme of this year’s Group of Women Parliamentarians meeting is “From Formal to Substantive Equality”, which includes working group sessions on achievements in guaranteeing equality, and on barriers to real equality.

8. 35th Board of Directors Meeting

It was agreed that the 35th meeting of the Board of Directors would be hosted by the Congress of Chile, and will be held the day before the opening ceremonies of the 11th Plenary Assembly.

9. Close of Meeting

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

There being no further business, 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

- Mirma Figueroa, Member of Congress (GUATEMALA)

Caribbean

- Cheryl Bazard, Senator (THE BAHAMAS)
- Hugh Buchanan, Member of Parliament (JAMAICA)
- Guadalupe Valdez, Member of the Chamber of Deputies (DOMINICAN REPUBLIC)

Host of the 11th Plenary Assembly

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

Absentees

- Victor Juliao III, Member of the National Assembly (PANAMA)
- Germán Alcides Blanco Álvarez, Representative (COLOMBIA)
- Alicia Comelli, Member of the Chamber of Deputies (ARGENTINA)
- Humberto Costa, Senator (BRAZIL)
- Luiz Carlos Hauly, Member of the Chamber of Deputies (BRAZIL)
- Michel Rathier, Associate (PARLAMERICAS)
- Vacant (COSTA RICA)

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF PARLAMERICAS

- Alisha Tood, Director General
- Anabella Zavagno, Program Manager
- Lisane Thirsk, Consultant to the Group of Women Parliamentarians

Other Guests and Observers

- Salma Cabenda, Head of Secretariat (SURINAM)
- Reshma Alladin, Human Rights Expert (SURINAM)
- Leif-Erik Aune, Acting Secretary to the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas, Parliament of Canada

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Section of ParlAmericas
ACTIVITY	34 th Meeting of the Board of Directors
DESTINATION	Mexico City, Mexico
DATES	June 23, 2014
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Michael L. MacDonald, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Randy Hoback, M.P.
STAFF	Mr. Leif-Erik Aune, Secretary to the Delegation
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 6,196.08
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 1,783.74
HOSPITALITY	\$ 253.90
PER DIEMS	\$ 563.15
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$ 43.98
TOTAL	\$ 8,840.85