



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the International Parliamentary Conference on Climate
Change: Countdown to Copenhagen**

**Canadian Branch of the
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)**

**London, UK
July 5 – 11, 2009**

Report

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE: COUNTDOWN TO COPENHAGEN

Ms. Kirsty Duncan, MP and Mr. Peter Braid, MP represented the Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association at the CPA UK International Parliamentary Conference on Climate Change: Countdown to Copenhagen (IPCCC), at the Houses of Parliament, London, from 5 – 11 July 2009. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's International Parliamentary Conference on Climate Change brought together 70 Parliamentarians from 37 Commonwealth and other countries to discuss and debate critical climate change issues with a wide range of experts and presenters.

The Canadian branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association was represented by Mr. Peter Braid, M.P. and Ms. Kirsty Duncan, M.P.

The objective of the conference was to equip Parliamentarians to seek effective and just responses to climate change, including supporting adaptation and mitigation measures that are fair, realistic, and inclusive. An overarching focus of the conference was the impact of global warming on poor and vulnerable countries, and the responsibility of the international community to assist those communities most affected by climate change. The following summarizes the major themes and lines of discussion and debate throughout the five days of the conference.

Scope:

Climate change is the defining issue of our generation. The global community must collectively rise to the challenge. We have to act immediately. Every 10 year delay adds 0.5 °C warming. Several presenters emphasized the complexity and scale of the global threat of climate change. There is a great deal of uncertainty surrounding issues such as the Gulf Stream, the Amazon basin, and the polar regions. Glacial melting, sea levels, deforestation, changing weather patterns, and effects on agriculture and food supply were all cited as areas of concern.

Impact on vulnerable nations:

The most vulnerable areas of the world are Africa, Asian deltas, small island states, and the Arctic. The most vulnerable sectors include, water systems, agriculture in low latitudes, and human health in poor areas. His Excellency Mohammed Nasheed, the President of the Republic of the Maldives, spoke about the immediate impacts of climate change on his people. As a country that lies only 1.5 m above sea level, the Maldives is already facing hardship as a result of global warming. Sea level is rising, weather patterns are shifting, fishing is poor, and people have already had to relocate.

An increasing focus has become the human rights implications of climate change. Vulnerable nations are disproportionately affected by changes to their way of life, access to food and water supplies, and threats to health and security. Climate change can be seen as a human rights issue: the rights to food, shelter, livelihood, health, and security are all being threatened. In addition, rising sea levels are shrinking some nations,

resulting in forced displacement and migration and the emergence of what some have termed “environmental refugees”. Climate change is a multiplier for instability.

Responsibility to assist vulnerable nations:

There is a tension because the developed countries largely created the climate crisis, and yet, the greatest impacts are in the developing world. The developed countries have a moral obligation to assist vulnerable nations and peoples with adaptation and mitigation strategies. The voice from the front line of climate change must be heard; those impacted by climate change, should be meaningfully involved; those making decisions must be accountable to those impacted.

Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies:

Adaptation and mitigation strategies were examined. Mitigation can create opportunities to increase economic competitiveness. The focus should be renewable energy, nuclear, and carbon capture.

The decarbonisation of the environment and the sustainability of the economy are on the same side of the coin. The corporate world understands that a strong environmental policy pays off on the bottom line. As we look to stimulate the world’s economy, we must also encourage investment in green jobs. This would help with the economic crisis, credit crisis, and climate crisis. If countries can invest in the failing banking system, they should be willing to invest in green stimulus. We must look for a triple win—renewable stimulus, with positive impacts on the economy, and the atmosphere.

Governments might consider cost-effective technologies, cap and trade regimes, regulations and taxes. Governments must also invest in basic science and research and development for viable technologies such as Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS). A carbon market has the opportunity to positively transform the economy and help to flow capital to the developing world.

Action:

Presenters emphasized that action requires clear political leadership. The vision must come from the top of government, and must be long-term. Government needs to regulate and penalize polluters, and reward low-emitters. Government must also unleash academic research and technology, and enhance an entrepreneurial environment. Governments should be challenged to stretch national targets, and then meet them.

We need global action, backed-up by a national plan. We should push for strong action despite tough economic times; we have a collective ethical responsibility. It is important for governments to realize that individuals are making change in their own lives, and that they want change on the national and international stage.

Role of Parliamentarians and the Commonwealth:

Parliamentarians can and ought to have a critical role in addressing the challenges of climate change. They are uniquely placed, both at a grassroots level with constituents, and at the policy level as legislators, to create a just and effective long-term response.

The Commonwealth is seen an important instrument to advance the important objectives of democracy, human rights, good governance and the rule of law. The Commonwealth nations should encourage an on-going and meaningful international dialogue on climate change, and to work towards a fair, comprehensive, inclusive, and effective global agreement on climate change.

Commonwealth Parliamentarians agreed to the following statement at the conclusion of the conference:

CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUÉ

1. We, the 70 Parliamentarians from 37 Parliaments and Legislatures¹ of Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth countries, met at the Houses of Parliament in London 5-11 July 2009 for a timely and unique “International Parliamentary Conference on Climate Change: Countdown to Copenhagen”. The aim of the Conference was to equip Parliamentarians better to hold their Executives to account on effective and just responses to climate change in the lead up to and after the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Copenhagen 7 – 18 December 2009.

Our overarching objective was to consider clear and targeted strategies to contribute as parliamentarians to responding to the challenge of our lifetimes – curbing global warming, keeping it well below the 2°C tipping point², and supporting adaptation and mitigation measures in a manner that respects human rights and is fair, comprehensive, inclusive and effective.

2. We recognise the forthcoming UNFCCC COP meeting in Copenhagen, as a critical moment in global negotiations on climate change. Climate scientists and projections show that the time for effective public policy to curb climate change from dangerous levels is running out; economists have highlighted that the longer climate change is left unchecked the more costly it will be to mitigate and adapt to its consequences; and the poorest and most vulnerable groups and communities around the world are already struggling to survive the impacts of climate change.

3. We recognise that current efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions into the Earth’s atmosphere are insufficient given the scale of action required; that GHG emissions need to be reduced radically if global warming rates are to be kept well below the 2°C tipping point; that emission caps need to reflect responsibility for historic emissions into the atmosphere by industrialised countries; that adequate resources need to be mobilised for mitigation initiatives and technologies to be developed, shared and employed to curb effectively the current path towards dangerous global warming; and that the inclusion of mechanisms for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) and payment for environmental services (PES) in a post-2012 climate regime represent significant opportunities for forest-rich countries to contribute to the achievement of this goal whilst also securing important benefits for their citizens.

1 Australia, New South Wales, Bahrain, Bangladesh, British Virgin Islands, Cameroon, Canada, East African Legislative Assembly, Germany, Ghana, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Pan African

Parliament, Portugal, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Scotland, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, The Gambia, Tonga, Tuvalu, Uganda, Vietnam.

2 The 2°C tipping point refers to what scientists agree is the level of global warming beyond which the process and effects of global warming would be irreversible and catastrophic for ecosystems and human society on the planet.

4. We recognise that climate change is already happening; that current GHG emissions already commit the planet to further global warming; that despite being the least responsible for current and historic global GHG emissions, developing countries are already the worst affected by global warming and will continue to be so in the future; that developing countries, the most vulnerable, are also the least well equipped to respond to the predicted and increasingly frequent and severe humanitarian crises and adaptation challenges posed by climate change; and that the industrialised countries have an historic responsibility for climate change which places upon them an obligation - to provide sufficient adaptation funding, in the form of grants; to ensure these are available quickly and efficiently, and in addition to existing overseas development aid.

5. We recognise that effective mitigation and adaptation depends on the urgent development and transfer of appropriate technologies, especially to the poor, and that both developed and developing countries have expertise to offer.

6. We recognise that rising sea levels, floods, droughts and desertification caused by escalating climate change result in forced displacement and migration and we call for a global mechanism or protocol recognising the rights of environmental migrants and global responsibilities due to them.

7. We welcome and encourage the UNFCCC Secretariat's continuing coordination of regular high-level international meetings on climate change and we call on developed countries to support more inclusive processes, structures and systems of engagement to ensure that the voices of developing countries are heard equally in negotiating processes.

8. We recognise that equity and justice must be guiding principles, not only between, but also within countries. More attention must be given to social, economic and human rights issues in the negotiations and their outcomes. In particular, principles of gender equity and justice must be taken into consideration at all stages of international, regional and national climate policy-making. The human rights of marginalised groups including rights to land and rights to shape the measures that will affect their lives must be respected.

9. As representatives of 37 Parliaments and Legislatures, we strongly urge our Governments to:

a. Seize this moment in history and work collectively, creatively and urgently towards a fair, comprehensive, inclusive and effective global agreement on climate change.

b. Encourage and support our COP negotiators to facilitate reaching such an agreement at Copenhagen and before the expiry of the Kyoto Protocol in 2012.

c. Press for a global emission target of 40% reduction below the 1990 level by 2020, and rigorous and sustainable investment in the realisation of this target.

- d. Ensure climate change mitigation policies and strategies go hand in hand with support for adaptation policies and strategies.
- e. Close the gap between estimates of adaptation funding required and funding already committed, and make this quickly and easily available for urgent action on adaptation.
- f. Adopt a strategy of early action on disaster preparedness and adaptation as a cost effective response to climate change and protecting past, current and future poverty reduction investments and successes - assuring policy coherence and the efficient use of public funds.
- g. Mainstream climate change analysis across all public policy from health and education to immigration and defence assuring policy coherence and the efficient use of public funds.
- h. Take into account human rights and responsibilities under international agreements, including commitments to women's rights and the consideration of gender differences in behaviour, across all mitigation and adaptation policies and interventions.
- i. Take into account the needs and interests of ALL stakeholders via active consultation with groups including women, men, children, minority and indigenous groups as well as civil society, NGOs, business and industry.
- j. Engage in national, regional and international level cooperation and action to explore openly all opportunities to tackle the emerging, diverse, inter-connected, cross-border causes and consequences of climate change.

10. We Parliamentarians pledge to:

- a. Build on this conference by using our influence at local, national, regional and international levels around the world to press for a fair, comprehensive, inclusive and effective agreement at Copenhagen and for its effective, efficient and timely implementation.
- b. Initiate and encourage scrutiny and debate of climate legislation in our countries.
- c. Build and strengthen solidarity between Parliamentarians and forge cross-party alliances at local, national, regional and international levels, including the formation of relevant committees, associations and networks, this conference being an initial step.
- d. Sensitise and educate our constituents and the broader public to build a groundswell of support for urgent political action to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Russ Hiebert, M.P., Chair
Canadian Branch
of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)
ACTIVITY	International Parliamentary Conference on Climate Change: Countdown to Copenhagen
DESTINATION	London, United Kingdom
DATES	July 5 – 11, 2009
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Peter Braid, MP Kirsty Duncan, MP
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 5,492.51
ACCOMMODATION	
HOSPITALITY	
PER DIEMS	\$ 620.92
OFFICIAL GIFTS	
MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES	
TOTAL	\$ 6,113.43