

**Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia**



**Report of the Parliamentary Delegation  
to the  
113th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly  
in Geneva  
(16-20 October 2005)  
and a  
Bilateral visit to the Republic of Singapore  
(23-27 October 2005)**

**December 2005**

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# PREFACE

## Membership of the Delegation

Leader                   The Hon. Judi Moylan, MP  
Member for Pearce  
Western Australia  
Liberal Party

Deputy Leader       Mrs Julia Irwin, MP  
Member for Fowler  
New South Wales  
Australian Labor Party

Members               Mrs Kay Hull, MP  
Member for Riverina  
New South Wales  
The Nationals

Ms Annette Ellis, MP  
Member for Canberra  
Australian Capital Territory  
Australian Labor Party

Other delegates  
(IPU only)           Senator Julian McGuaran  
Victoria  
The Nationals

The Delegation was accompanied by:

Mr Neil Bessell, Secretary to the Delegation, Department of the Senate

Mr Jeremy Kruse, Adviser, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and  
and Mr Geoff Irwin (spouse).

## Briefings and assistance

The delegation received a comprehensive and informative briefing from officers of DFAT on its visit to Singapore.

In relation to the IPU, DFAT, AusAID and DIMIA provided comments on the draft resolutions to be considered by the first and second IPU standing committees, and also suggested an amendment to the resolution to be considered by the First Committee.

The delegation thanks Mr Jeremy Kruse and his colleagues at DFAT and the other agencies for providing this useful advice. The delegation also recognises the excellent advice and support of Mr Kruse during the IPU Assembly in Geneva.

The delegation was also grateful for a comprehensive briefing on the draft resolution to be considered by the Third Committee provided by the Parliamentary Library.

The delegation also thanks Mr Andrew Templeton, Parliamentary Relations Office, for his administrative support and assistance, the staff at TG3 Travel, Ms Alison Gray of Qantas, and Mr Tony Styles, Finance Section, Department of the Senate.

# Chapter 1

## Inter-Parliamentary Union

### IPU Council and Assembly

1.1 The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the international organisation that brings together representatives of the Parliaments of sovereign states.

1.2 At its Assemblies, which are held twice a year, members of national delegations participate in the following:

- the Assembly itself, being a focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue on political, economic, social and cultural issues of international significance;
- the Inter-Parliamentary Council, comprising three delegates from each affiliated group; and
- specialist committees established by the IPU and specific meetings such as the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and the Committee on Middle East Questions.

1.3 A 15-member Executive Committee administers the Union and supervises its annual program and budget.

### Geo-political meetings

1.4 The recently amended rules of the IPU specifically recognise the role and function of the geo-political groups. These groups are as follows: Africa, Arab, Asia-Pacific, Eurasia, Latin America and the Twelve Plus.

1.5 The Australian delegation participates in the meetings of the Twelve Plus Group (the geo-political group centred originally on European Union membership but now including several other countries) and also the Asia-Pacific Group. In accordance with the new rules, the Australian Group has resolved that it will seek election to any position in the IPU, including participation on drafting committees and specifically the Executive Committee of the IPU, under the auspices of the Asia-Pacific group.

1.6 Nevertheless, the delegation attends and participates actively in the work of the Twelve Plus Group.

1.7 The meetings of the Twelve Plus and Asia-Pacific foster multilateral contact and provide the delegation with an important opportunity to put its point of view in a relatively informal atmosphere, and to cement friendships with other countries.

## **Membership of the Union**

1.8 The 143 members of the IPU are as follows:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

1.9 There are 7 associate members, namely:

Andean Parliament, Central American Parliament, East African Legislative Assembly, European Parliament, Latin American Parliament, Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

## **Delegation report**

1.10 This report is based on the official *Results of Proceedings of the IPU Meeting in Geneva 2005* produced by the IPU Secretariat.

## **Acknowledgements**

1.11 The delegation records its sincere appreciation of the staff at the Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva and, in particular, His Excellency Mr Michael Smith, and his wife for their warm welcome and generous hospitality and to Mr Mark Sawers, First Secretary, for his excellent organisational and administrative assistance.

## **Highlights of the work of the Australian Delegation at the IPU Assembly**

Mrs Moylan addressed the Assembly on its Emergency Item on:

*Natural disasters: the role of parliaments in prevention, rehabilitation, reconstruction and the protection of vulnerable groups.*

Ms Ellis addressed the First Committee on:

*The respective roles of Parliament and the media in providing the public with impartial, accurate and verifiable information, especially on armed conflicts and the struggle against terrorism*

Mrs Irwin addressed the Second Committee on:

*Migration and Development*

Mrs Hull also addressed the Second Committee on:

*Migration and Development*

and foreshadowed the concerns of the Australian delegation with paragraphs in the draft resolution.

The Australian delegation lodged a reservation to the final resolution on *Migration and Development* adopted by the IPU.

Senator McGauran also addressed the Third Committee on:

*The importance of civil society and its interplay with Parliaments and other democratically elected Assemblies for the maturing and development of democracy*

Senator McGauran was also elected to, and participated in, the work of the Third Committee that drafted the final resolution.

Mrs Hull attended the meeting of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians.

Mrs Moylan, Mrs Irwin, Ms Ellis, Mrs Hull and Senator McGauran attended the meeting convened by Women Parliamentarians to hear presentations from the candidates for the Presidency of the IPU.

Mrs Moylan, Mrs Irwin and Senator McGauran voted in the election for the IPU President.

Delegates attended three meetings of the Twelve Plus Group.

Delegates attended the meeting of the Asia/Pacific Group and were invited to conduct the ballot to fill a vacancy from the group on the IPU Executive Committee.

The delegation hosted a lunch for Mr Lu Congmin, Leader, and members of the Chinese delegation.



Following the IPU Assembly, Mrs Moylan, Mrs Irwin, Ms Ellis and Mrs Hull attended an IPU/UN information seminar on implementation of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).



*Members of the Australian delegation preparing for meetings at the IPU Assembly.  
[Mr Jeremy Kruse (Adviser), Mrs Irwin, Mrs Hull, Senator McGauran, Mrs Moylan and Ms Ellis)*

## Chapter 2

### 113th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

#### Agenda

- 2.1 The agenda of the 113<sup>th</sup> Assembly was as follows:
1. Opening of the Proceedings
  2. Consideration of possible requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
  3. The respective roles of parliament and the media in providing the public with objective information, especially on armed conflicts and the struggle against terrorism (*Standing Committee on Peace and International Security*)
  4. Migration and development (*Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade*)
  5. The importance of civil society and its interplay with parliaments and other democratically elected assemblies for the maturing and development of democracy (*Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights*)
  6. Approval of the subject items for the 115th Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs
  7. Natural disasters: The role of parliaments in prevention, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and the protection of vulnerable groups (*Emergency item*)

#### Opening of the proceedings (Agenda item 1)

2.2 The 113th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union opened its proceedings at the Geneva International Conference Centre in the afternoon of Monday, 17 October 2005.

2.3 The President of the IPU, Mr. Sergio Pérez, welcomed the participants and declared the 113th Assembly officially open. He stated that since the start of his mandate, the IPU had gained greater respect in the international system; it had found its political voice and undertaken a much wider range of activities that served to bolster political representation in the world. Since obtaining the status of observer at the United Nations, the IPU had vastly augmented its cooperation with specialised United Nations agencies, thereby setting multilateralism on a firmer footing; it had deployed technical assistance activities to emerging and other parliaments, and promoted democratic values and practices on every continent.

2.4 Following the official opening, the President of the IPU was elected President of the Assembly and the Vice-President of the Executive Committee, Mr. R. Salles, was elected Vice-President.

2.5 After the adoption of an emergency item by the Assembly on the subject of natural disasters, the Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Mr. J.W. Lee, delivered a speech informing the participants about the status of avian flu in the world, and the various measures to be taken in the face of a possible influenza pandemic. Mr. Lee, referring to the probability of a human influenza pandemic, stressed that legislators could play an important role, as the parliamentary community could be directly supportive of preparedness and communication plans.

2.6 Following his speech, the 113th Assembly unanimously adopted the following statement expressing its alarm at the outbreak of avian influenza in various countries and the international propagation of the disease:

#### STATEMENT ON AVIAN INFLUENZA

*Adopted by the 113th IPU Assembly*

*(Geneva, 19 October 2005)*

The 113th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, meeting in Geneva in October 2005, wishes to express its alarm at the outbreak of avian influenza in various countries and the international propagation of the disease. While official estimates of the potential human casualty rates of a pandemic caused by avian influenza may differ, we believe that the realisation of even the most modest predictions would severely disrupt our societies and trigger crises of the utmost gravity. We are aware that this disease has already destroyed many livelihoods in different parts of the world.

In the light of the foregoing, we exhort all parliaments to do everything within their power to ensure that governments treat this new crisis with foresight and resolute action in order to contain its effects while they can still be controlled. We express our support for the endeavours of the Senior United Nations System Coordinator for Avian and Human Influenza and urge our Member Parliaments to play their part in ensuring that the necessary funds are made available and that information and guidance are adequately disseminated among populations.

2.7 At the start of the closing sitting of the Assembly, the President of the National Council of Switzerland, Ms T Meyer-Kaelin, delivered a speech in which she reiterated her country's commitment to the IPU, of which her parliament had been a Member for 114 years, and recalled the various recommendations adopted by the IPU which should guide governments in their work. She also referred to the work of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and the Declaration adopted by the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments.

2.8 She highlighted the division of the world between extreme poverty and relative wealth. Significant means must be made available for development assistance, and the plan for Africa, where the urgency was now recognised, must be put into action. Globalization and the market economy had brought the promise of trade and increased wealth, but also unfettered competition and alarming outsourcing, resulting in the primacy of one superpower over all others. Existing institutions - the United Nations for governments and the IPU for parliaments - must be strengthened.

## *Participation*

2.9 Delegations of the parliaments of the following 130 countries took part in the work of the Assembly:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia.

2.10 The following Associate Members also took part in the Assembly:

The Andean Parliament, the Central American Parliament, the European Parliament, the Latin American Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS Parliament).

2.11 Observers included representatives of:

- (i) Palestine;
- (ii) United Nations system: United Nations, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), International Labour Organisation (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organisation (WHO), World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW);
- (iii) International Organisation for Migration (IOM), League of Arab States, African Parliamentary Union (APU), Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), Assembly of the Western European Union (WEU), Confederation of Parliaments of the Americas, European

Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA), Inter-parliamentary Association for the Eurasian Economic Community, Inter-parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and the Russian Federation, Parliamentary Union of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference Members (PUOICM);

- (iv) International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); and
- (v) Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM). Furthermore, delegations from the Central African Republic and from Palau participated as observers with a view to future affiliation.

2.12 Of a total of 1,093 delegates who attended the Assembly, 548 were members of national parliaments. The parliamentarians included 48 presiding officers, 25 deputy presiding officers and 179 women parliamentarians (32.5 per cent).



Mrs Moylan with Mr Lu, the Leader of the Chinese Delegation



Mrs Irwin and Ms Ellis with the newly elected member of the IPU Executive, Ms L Lerksamran from Thailand

### **Choice of an emergency item (Agenda item 2)**

2.13 At the beginning of the consideration of the item on 17 October, the Assembly had before it one consolidated request for the inclusion of an emergency item, presented by the delegation of Pakistan on behalf of the delegations of India, Mexico and Pakistan, under the title

*Natural disasters: The role of parliaments in prevention, rehabilitation, reconstruction and the protection of vulnerable groups.*

2.14 The proposal was adopted unanimously and was added to the agenda as item 7. The delegations of Mexico and India also spoke in support of the proposal.

## **First Standing Committee: Peace and International Security (Agenda item**

**3)** The following item was considered by the First Committee:

*The respective roles of parliament and the media in providing the public with impartial, accurate and verifiable information, especially on armed conflicts and the struggle against terrorism.*

2.16 The Committee held three sittings on 17 and 19 October, with its President, Mr N Al Ghanem (Syrian Arab Republic), in the chair. In addition to a report and a draft resolution prepared by the co-Rapporteurs, Mr Z Szabó (Hungary) and Mr M Salim (India), the Committee had before it amendments and sub-amendments to the draft resolution submitted by the delegations of Algeria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Cuba, Egypt, Finland, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Romania, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Venezuela.

2.17 The sitting began with the presentation of the report and the draft resolution by the two co-Rapporteurs. A total of 63 speakers from 55 countries and 2 organisations took the floor during the debate.

2.18 Ms Annette Ellis participated in the debate and a copy of her speech is attached at Appendix 1.

2.19 Following the debate, the Standing Committee appointed a drafting committee composed of representatives from Algeria, Belgium, Benin, Denmark, Ghana, Israel, Japan, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Venezuela and Zambia. Mr. Szabó and Mr. Salim were also invited to participate in the work of the drafting committee, acting in an advisory capacity.

2.20 The drafting committee met in the morning and afternoon of 18 October. At the beginning of its work, it appointed Mr F X de Donnea (Belgium) as its president and Mr C Achode (Benin) as rapporteur. The committee examined 112 amendments and sub-amendments to the draft resolution, and adopted 68 of them, fully or in part. A number of other amendments were accepted, if not in letter, then in spirit, as many were similar in content to those that were adopted. After a substantive discussion on the title of the resolution, and considering that the term "objective information" was not appropriate, the drafting committee decided to recommend that the title be changed, as reflected in the title shown above.

2.21 In the morning of 19 October, the First Standing Committee considered the consolidated draft. Several delegations took the floor to express support for the text or to further clarify its provisions. One delegation requested further amendments to the draft resolution, but they were not accepted by the broader membership. The draft resolution as a whole, with its revised title, was subsequently adopted unanimously by the First Standing Committee.

2.22 In the afternoon of 19 October, the draft was submitted to the plenary sitting of the Assembly, which adopted it unanimously. The text of the final resolution appears at Appendix 2.

2.23 The Bureau of the First Standing Committee met on 19 October to examine nine proposals submitted by IPU Members for the subject item to be debated by the First Standing Committee at the 115th Assembly in Geneva in 2006. The Bureau selected a subject item entitled:

*Cooperation between parliaments and the United Nations in promoting world peace, particularly from the perspectives of the fight against terrorism and energy security.*

2.24 This item was subsequently endorsed by the Committee and the Assembly. Upon its recommendation, the Assembly also approved the nomination of Ms H Mgabadeli (South Africa) and Ms A Möller (Iceland) as co-Rapporteurs.

### **Second Standing Committee: Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade (Agenda item 4)**

2.25 The Second Committee considered the following topic:

*Migration and development*

2.26 The Committee held three sittings on 17 and 19 October, with the alternate First Vice-President, Ms. I Udre (Latvia), in the chair. In addition to a report and preliminary draft resolution prepared by the co-Rapporteurs, Ms G Trujillo Zentella (Mexico) and Mr F Schiesser (Switzerland), the Committee had before it amendments to the draft resolution submitted by the delegations of Algeria, Canada, China, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malta, Mexico, the Philippines, Romania, Spain, the Sudan, Sweden, Tunisia, the United Kingdom and Venezuela. A separate set of amendments was submitted by the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians.

2.27 A total of 55 speakers from 46 countries and UNHCR took the floor during the plenary debate.

2.28 Mrs Julia Irwin contributed to this debate and a copy of her speech appears at Appendix 3. Mrs Kay Hull also participated in this debate and foreshadowed concerns that the Australian delegation had with the draft resolution. Mrs Hull's speech appears at Appendix 4.

2.29 Much of the second sitting of the Committee session took the form of a panel discussion focusing on the report entitled *Migration in an interconnected world* prepared by the Global Commission on International Migration. Following presentation of the report by Mr M Ramphela, co-chair of the Commission, and Mr R Jenny, Executive Director, a stimulating exchange of views took place.

2.30 Following the debate, the Standing Committee appointed a drafting committee composed of representatives from Cameroon, Chile, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Romania, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

2.31 The drafting committee met in the morning and afternoon of 18 October. At the beginning of its work, it appointed Lord Jopling (United Kingdom) as its president

and Ms Z Bouayad (Morocco) as rapporteur. The committee examined 96 amendments to the preliminary draft resolution and adopted 40 of them, fully or in part. A number of other amendments were accepted, if not in letter, then in spirit, as many were similar in content to those that were adopted. In view of the political sensitivity of the subject of migration and development, the drafting committee had to resort to voting some 10 times. Moreover, one member of the drafting committee announced at the end of the meeting that he was not in a position to support the amended version of the draft resolution and, therefore, wished to dissociate himself from the consolidated draft.

2.32 On the morning of 19 October, the Second Standing Committee considered the consolidated draft. While most paragraphs of the draft were adopted without debate, others could not be agreed on the basis of consensus, and the Committee resorted to voting on two occasions. As a result, three further changes were made to the text. Following subsequent adoption of the amended draft as a whole, a number of delegations expressed their reservations about the draft resolution, which they also repeated during the final plenary session of the Assembly.

2.33 In the afternoon of 19 October, the draft was submitted to the plenary sitting of the Assembly, which adopted it by consensus.

2.34 Following the adoption of the resolution, the delegation of Australia expressed reservations on the tenth preambular paragraph and on operative paragraph 5.

2.35 The delegations of South Africa and Suriname expressed reservations on the twenty-second preambular paragraph with regard to the spread of HIV/AIDS. In addition, the delegation of South Africa expressed a reservation on operative paragraph 16. The delegations of Iceland, Luxembourg and New Zealand expressed reservations on the second part of operative paragraph 5. The delegation of Sweden expressed a reservation on operative paragraph 5, and regretted that the paragraph had not been amended as it had proposed. The delegations of Latvia and Georgia expressed reservations on operative paragraph 4 with regard to the establishment of mechanisms for financial compensation. The delegation of Japan expressed a reservation on operative paragraph 21. Lastly, the delegation of Thailand expressed reservations on operative paragraphs 27 and 28, citing the need to establish action plans on migration and development in all countries, with the active involvement of parliaments, and with the sponsorship of the United Nations.

2.36 The final resolution which records the reservation of the Australian delegation is at Appendix 5.

2.37 The Bureau of the Second Standing Committee met on 19 October with the Committee's alternate First Vice-President, Ms I Udre, in the chair. It examined proposals submitted by IPU Members for the items to be debated by the Second Standing Committee at the 115th Assembly in Geneva in October 2006. The Bureau approved the subject item entitled:



*The role of parliaments in overseeing the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular with regard to the problem of debt and the eradication of poverty and corruption.*

2.38 The Committee agreed to propose this subject item to the Assembly for its inclusion on the agenda of the 115th Assembly, and recommended that the IPU President and the President of the Second Standing Committee be mandated to carry out consultations with the geopolitical groups with a view to appointing the co-Rapporteurs on the item as soon as possible. The item and the recommendation concerning the co-Rapporteurs were subsequently approved by the Assembly.

### **Third Standing Committee: Democracy and Human Rights (Agenda item 5)**

2.39 The Third Committee considered the following topic:

*The importance of civil society and its interplay with parliaments and other democratically elected assemblies for the maturing and development of democracy.*

2.40 The Committee held three sittings on 17 and 19 October, with its President, Mr. J.-K. Yoo (Republic of Korea), in the chair. The Committee had before it a report and a draft resolution drawn up by the co-Rapporteurs, Mr S J Njikelana (South Africa) and Ms A M Narti (Sweden), along with amendments to the draft resolution proposed by the delegations of the parliaments of the following countries: Algeria, Canada, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, the Philippines, Romania, Sweden and Venezuela.

2.41 In all, 60 speakers took part in the debate. Senator Julian McGauran participated in this debate and a copy of his speech appears at Appendix 6.

2.42 After the debate, the Committee designated a drafting committee composed of representatives of the parliaments of the following countries: Algeria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Egypt, Japan, Kenya, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Panama, the Russian Federation and Uruguay.

2.43 Senator McGauran was elected to the drafting committee from the Asia-Pacific geo-political group and participated in its work to prepare a final resolution for adoption.

2.44 The drafting committee met on 18 October. It began its work by naming Mr N Kinsella (Canada) as its president and Ms M De Meyer (Belgium) as its rapporteur. It considered in detail the draft resolution drawn up by the co-Rapporteurs and improved the text, incorporating some of the proposed amendments.

2.45 On 19 October, the Committee considered the consolidated text of the draft resolution, having adopted further amendments to it which had been proposed by the delegations of India and Morocco. The draft resolution as a whole was subsequently adopted unanimously. The Committee took note of the proposal made by the

delegation of South Africa that the IPU ensure closer cooperation with the World Social Forum.

2.46 In the afternoon of 19 October, the Assembly, meeting in plenary, adopted the resolution unanimously. The final resolution is included in this report at Appendix 7.

2.47 The Bureau of the Third Standing Committee met on 19 October to examine a number of proposals submitted by IPU Members for the subject item to be debated by the Third Standing Committee at the 115th Assembly in Geneva in October 2006.

2.48 The Bureau selected a subject item entitled:

*Missing persons*

2.49 This topic was subsequently endorsed by the Committee and the Assembly. Upon its recommendation, the Assembly also approved the nomination of Ms B Gadiant (Switzerland) and Mr L Nicolini (Uruguay) as co-Rapporteurs.

### **Natural Disasters – Emergency Item (Agenda item 7)**

2.50 The debate on the emergency item took place in the morning of Tuesday, 18 October and began with a presentation by Mr T Peter, Deputy Chief, Emergency Services Branch, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). A total of 17 speakers from 14 parliamentary delegations and one observer took part in the debate, which was opened by the President of the Assembly. He subsequently invited the Vice-President to chair the sitting.

2.51 Mrs Moylan participated in this debate and a copy of her speech appears at Appendix 8.

2.52 The Assembly referred the item to a working group composed of representatives of the delegations of India, Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan, South Africa and Switzerland. The working group appointed Ms B Gadiant (Switzerland) as its president and rapporteur. The working group met on Tuesday, 18 October in the afternoon. It adopted a draft resolution by consensus.

2.53 On Wednesday, 19 October, the draft resolution was adopted unanimously by the Assembly. This resolution is at Appendix 9 to this report.

# Chapter 3

## 177th Session of the Governing Council

### Agenda

- 3.1 The agenda for the 177<sup>th</sup> session of the governing Council was as follows:
1. Membership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
  2. Financial situation
  3. Program and budget for 2006
  4. Cooperation with the United Nations system
  5. Recent specialised conferences and meetings
  6. Reports of Committees and other bodies
  7. Future Inter-Parliamentary Meetings
  8. Election of the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and other elections
  9. Amendment to the Financial Regulations

### Membership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

3.2 At its sitting on 18 October, the Governing Council approved a request for affiliation from the parliament of Maldives and requests for re-affiliation from the parliaments of the Dominican Republic and Madagascar. It suspended the affiliation of Mauritania following a military coup d'état in that country. The Union currently comprises 143 member parliaments and seven international parliamentary associations as Associate Members.

3.3 The Governing Council also approved a request for observer status from the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

### Financial situation

3.4 The Governing Council received a comprehensive written report on the financial situation of the IPU as at 30 June 2005, and a list of Members' arrears at 30 September 2005. The Secretary General gave the Council updated information on the situation as at the end of September, confirming that although the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments had cost more than budgeted, the Union would end the year with a small operating surplus thanks to savings elsewhere. The Council also noted that the actuarial deficit associated with staff pensions had been fully eliminated as a result of the Governing Council's decision for the IPU to join the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund at the start of the year. The Union remained responsible for the payment of existing retirees' pensions, but the liability was negligible.

## **Program and budget for 2006**

3.5 The Governing Council heard a report by the Executive Committee rapporteur, Ms K Komi (Finland), on the draft programme and budget for 2006.

3.6 On the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Governing Council approved the budget as submitted by the Secretary General with gross operating expenditures of 10,545,500 Swiss francs and capital expenditures of 50,000 Swiss francs. The Council approved a 3 per cent increase in assessed contributions and the addition of the new Members, the parliaments of the Dominican Republic, Madagascar and Maldives, to the scale of assessments.

3.7 The Governing Council noted the discussions of the Working Group established by the Executive Committee to review the scale of assessments that had been in effect for the last 14 years. Since 1991, the Executive Committee had often considered the need to make membership more affordable for parliaments from the least developed countries and to take account of the many changes that had taken place in recent years in the economic situations of various countries. The Working Group had met on three occasions over two years, and now recommended a new scale that would reflect contemporary economic realities. The Executive Committee had requested that the recommended revised scale be circulated to all Members, with a view to its adoption at the Nairobi Assembly in May 2006.

3.8 The Governing Council amended the financial regulations to enable it in exceptional cases to consider the cancellation of all or part of the debt of a former Member wishing to return to the Union. The Council noted that when considering requests from potential Members for forgiveness, particular consideration should be given to whether the parliament in question had relinquished a single-party system in favour of a multiparty one, the amount of time that had elapsed since previous membership of the Union, the severity of the economic circumstances prompting the request, and the external factors causing those circumstances, such as recent civil strife.

## **Cooperation with the United Nations system**

3.9 The Governing Council was given an overview of all the IPU activities carried out in cooperation with the United Nations.

3.10 The Governing Council received a report on the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments. One hundred and fifty Speakers of national parliaments had attended the Conference at United Nations Headquarters from 7 to 9 September. The objectives of the Conference had been to air the views of parliamentarians from all regions of the world, take stock of parliamentary action in international relations in the past five years and examine how to provide more support for international cooperation and for the United Nations. The Conference had adopted a declaration at the conclusion of its proceedings, setting out its vision on how parliaments could fill the democracy gap in international relations. One Speaker did not join the consensus, and expressed a general reservation.

3.11 Alongside the plenary debates, two panel discussions had been held. The panel entitled *Parliament's contribution to democracy* had been chaired by Ms B Mbete, Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, and the panel entitled *Role and responsibilities of parliaments vis-à-vis the United Nations* by ILO Director-General, Mr. J. Somavia. The Conference had also adopted a statement expressing outrage at the denial of visas to one delegation, and delays in granting visas to another, that had prevented them from attending the event.

3.12 Building on the IPU Speakers' Conference, the Heads of State and Government meeting in New York the following week adopted an outcome document that included a paragraph entitled *Cooperation between the United Nations and Parliaments*, which read as follows:

3.13 *"We call for strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and national and regional parliaments, in particular through the Inter-Parliamentary Union, with a view to furthering all aspects of the Millennium Declaration in all fields of the work of the United Nations and ensuring the effective implementation of United Nations reform."*

3.14 In the light of the Speakers' Declaration and the Summit outcome document, and the patent need for the Union to increase the momentum of its relations with the United Nations by holding more meetings at its Headquarters in New York, the Council agreed that every effort should be made to consolidate the status of IPU meetings in New York and thus ensure that all parliaments could be represented at such events. A draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU had been prepared to that effect for adoption by the General Assembly. All parliaments were urged to enlist the full support of their countries' permanent representatives in New York to ensure that negotiations on the resolution were brought to a successful conclusion.

### **Recent specialised conferences and meetings**

3.15 The Governing Council took note of the results of the seminar on freedom of expression, the preparatory meeting of the Inaugural Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, the regional seminar for Latin American parliaments on parliamentary oversight of the security sector, the seminar on the implementation of legislation on indigenous peoples' rights and the seminar for Latin American parliaments on parliament, the budget and gender.

### **Reports of Committees and other bodies**

3.16 At its sitting on 18 October, the Governing Council took note of the reports on the activities of the following:

- Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians:
- Coordinating Committee of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians; and
- Gender Partnership Group.

3.17 Given the importance placed on the work of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians by successive Australian delegations, the full report of the committee is attached as Appendix 10.

### **Future Inter-Parliamentary Meetings**

3.18 The Governing Council approved the dates for the 115th and 116th Assemblies, to be held respectively in Geneva and Bangkok. In addition to the meetings listed as previously approved, the Council approved the following events:

- Regional seminar for Asian parliaments on child protection issues, to be held in Vietnam in January/February 2006;
- Meeting of women parliamentarians on women in politics, to be held on the occasion of the session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, in New York in March 2006;
- Meeting for members of parliamentary human rights bodies, to be held in Geneva in late March 2006;
- Regional conference for women parliamentarians in the Gulf States, to be held on April 2006, at a venue to be decided;
- Regional seminar for South-East Asian parliaments on security sector reform in the national and regional context, organised jointly by the IPU and the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), to be held in South-East Asia in late May/early June 2006;
- Seminar on international provisions regarding prison conditions and the treatment of prisoners, to held at a date and venue to be decided;
- Regional seminar on parliament and the budgetary process, including from a gender perspective, for Europe and Central Asia, to be held in June 2006 at a venue to be decided;
- Parliamentary forum on the occasion of the sixth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, to be held in Doha (Qatar) from 29 October to 1 November 2006; and
- Regional seminar on the role of parliaments in the national reconciliation process in Latin America, in partnership with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), to be held in Latin America in early November 2006.

### **Election of the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**

3.19 The Governing Council elected Mr Pier Ferdinando Casini (Italy) as President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for a three-year term ending on October 2008. Mr Casini received 230 votes, and the other candidate, Mr G Versnick (Belgium), received 107. There were three invalid ballots.



Members of the delegation with the Speaker of the Italian Parliament and newly-elected President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr Casini.

## **Other elections**

### ***Executive Committee***

3.20 The Governing Council elected Ms E Papadimitriou (Greece) and Mr A Kozlovskiy (Russian Federation) for terms of office ending in October 2009, and Ms L Lerksamran (Thailand) to replace Mr. S. Vejjajiva (Thailand), who was no longer a parliamentarian, until October 2007.

3.21 The Executive Committee elected Ms M Mensah-Williams (Namibia) to the post of Vice-President for a one-year term.

### ***Rapporteurs of the Standing Committees for the 115th Assembly***

*Standing Committee on Peace and International Security* - Ms H Mgabadeli (South Africa), Ms Á Möller (Iceland)

*Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade* - [to be appointed]

*Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights* - Ms B Gadiant (Switzerland)  
Mr L Nicolini (Uruguay)

3.22 Appointments to fill remaining vacancies for the 115th Assembly will be done by the President of the IPU acting in consultation with the Presidents of the Standing Committees.

*Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians* - Mr K Jalali (Islamic Republic of Iran) was elected substitute member for a five-year term of office ending in October 2010.

*Committee on Middle East Questions* - Mr K Sairaan (Mongolia) was elected titular member for a four-year term of office ending in October 2009.

*Auditors for the 2005 accounts* - The Governing Council appointed Mr I Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso) and Ms A Ben Daly (Tunisia) as auditors for the 2005 financial year, and Senator D Oliver (Canada) and Mr A Quawas (Jordan) as auditors for the 2006 financial year.

*External auditor for the 2005 to 2007 accounts* - The Governing Council appointed Mr L C Møller, Deputy Director General of the Auditor General of Norway, to the office of external auditor for the 2005 to 2007 accounts.

### **Amendment to the Financial Regulations**

3.23 The Governing Council approved the following new rule to be added to the Financial Regulations:

11. Notwithstanding the terms of the foregoing paragraph, a former Member of the Union that has been suspended from membership of the Union for non-payment of its contributions and which requests re-affiliation to the Union may in special extenuating circumstances be forgiven a part or all of its previous debt. The Governing Council shall decide on each case on an individual basis after receiving the detailed report of the Executive Committee.



# Chapter 4

## 245th Session of the Executive Committee

### Work of the Executive

4.1 The Executive Committee held its 245th session in Geneva on 14, 15, and 19 October. The President of the IPU chaired the meetings. The following members and substitutes took part in the session: Mr J Jorge (Brazil), Ms J.Fraser (Canada), Mr Lü Congmin (China), Ms K Serrano Puig (Cuba) Ms K Komi (Finland), Mr R Salles (France), Ms A Vadai (Hungary), replaced by Mr Z Rockenbauer on 15 and 19 October, Mr Y Yatsu (Japan), substituting for Mr T Kawara, Mr F Ole Kaparo (Kenya), replaced by Mr A Ligale on 19 October, Mr H Al-Hadi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr A Radi (Morocco), replaced by Ms R Benmassaoud on 14 and 15 October, Ms M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia), Ms L Lerksamran, substituting for Mr S Vejjajiva (Thailand), Mr O Natchaba (Togo), Mr I Ostash (Ukraine) and Mr J Austin (United Kingdom).

4.2 The proceedings of the Executive Committee were devoted to discussing and making recommendations on agenda items to be addressed by the Governing Council. The other matters considered by the Committee are summarised below.

4.3 The Committee reviewed the situation of the transitional parliaments in Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Somalia. It also discussed the situations of the parliaments of Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Iraq and Nepal. The Committee heard a report on parliaments and modern information and communication technology (ICT). It was appraised of two United Nations initiatives in the area of parliaments and ICT, one launched by UNDP and the other by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). It mandated the IPU President to investigate the reason for the existence of two overlapping projects, and to take action to bring about further IPU involvement in United Nations work in that area.

4.4 The Executive Committee debated a document on IPU reforms. While the reforms of the Union that had been underway for a number of years had led to the emergence of a new structure for the IPU Assemblies, there was still room for further improvement. Greater expertise had to be enlisted from among the parliamentary standing and select committees when it came to drafting the reports, and there might be a case for holding more specialised meetings during the year, and a single Assembly rather than two. The Executive Committee debated the proposals at length, considering that - while the document might have exaggerated the shortcomings of the current system - some of the proposals were pertinent to building a stronger organisation. It mandated the new IPU President to set up a small working group to review the situation and prepare practical suggestions for further action.

4.5 The Secretary General informed the Committee that he had completed the reorganisation of the Union's Secretariat, and that job descriptions had been drawn up

for all posts, and had been classified with the assistance of the United Nations. He had appointed three new staff members: a Programme Officer in the Programme for Partnership between Men and Women, an Administrative Assistant to work at Headquarters, and a Building Superintendent. The Executive Committee reviewed the Staff Regulations and their Rules, which had been updated since the Union had joined the United Nations Common System of Salaries, Allowances and Benefits, in January 2005. It also held a debate on the issue of taxation of the incomes of staff members residing in France.

4.6 The Executive Committee was also informed of the deliberations of the Board of the Global Parliamentary Foundation for Democracy. The Board met on Sunday, 16 October. The meeting was chaired by Senator D Oliver (Canada) and attended by Mr R Salles (France), Ms I Udre (Latvia), Senator F Margáin (Mexico), Dr M. Tjitendero (Namibia) and the Secretary General of the IPU. Senator G Chapman (Australia) participated by conference call. The Board reviewed progress achieved since its last meeting, which included finalisation of the registration process of the Foundation and the printing of a brochure presenting the Foundation. The Board was informed of the newly established Democracy Fund of the United Nations. It also examined a proposal from a professional fund raising firm and requested the Secretariat to obtain two further bids. The Board members agreed to hold a conference call later in the year to decide on the future direction of the Foundation.

4.7 Lastly, and in keeping with established practice, the Committee heard the annual report by the President of the ASGP, Mr Ian Harris.

# Chapter 5

## Co-ordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians

### Work of the committee

5.1 Mrs Kay Hull attended the meetings of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, having been elected to this committee in Manila in April 2005.

5.2 The Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians met on 16 October 2005, with its President, Ms J Fraser (Canada), in the chair. The session reviewed action taken to follow up on the eleventh Meeting of Women Parliamentarians (Mexico City, April 2004) and prepared the work of the forthcoming Meeting.

5.3 The Committee was briefed on the work and recommendations of the Gender Partnership Group by Ms M Mensah-Williams (Namibia). It welcomed the fact that in Geneva more than 30 per cent of the delegates attending the IPU Assembly were women. Follow-up to the Manila meetings by women parliamentarians was also discussed; this included the organisation of briefing sessions in parliament to inform members of the work of the IPU and gender-related issues, the organisation of special events to launch IPU documents and information tools such as the IPU-United Nations map, *Women in Politics: 2005* and the IPU-UNDAW *Handbook for parliamentarians on the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*.

5.4 Participants also presented activities that had been carried out to combat domestic violence at the local level, awareness-raising activities to combat different types of violence against women, and the drafting of legislation to enhance women's participation in politics.

5.5 The Committee prepared the hearing for candidates to the presidency of the IPU. The hearing subsequently took place in the morning of 18 October. The two candidates, Mr P F Casini and Mr G Versnick, made presentations and each responded to six questions prepared by the Coordinating Committee.

5.6 The Committee also discussed its input into the work of the Second Committee considering Migration and Development. It drafted several amendments to submit to the Committee for inclusion in its resolution. In preparation of the twelfth Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, scheduled to take place in Nairobi in 2006, the Committee decided that the Meeting would debate Assembly agenda item 4, entitled *The role of parliaments in environmental management and in combating global degradation of the environment*.

5.7 The Committee also agreed to dedicate part of the afternoon session to a dialogue among men and women on *Women in politics: Affirmative action measures, pros and cons*.

5.8 The Committee discussed preparations for the panel discussion on HIV/AIDS and children scheduled to take place at the Nairobi Assembly. It also discussed projects to be implemented by the Program for Partnership between Men and Women. These included the production of a database on parliamentary bodies dealing with the status of women and gender equality, a study on how women and men were contributing to gender equality in politics, and a parliamentary meeting entitled *Gender equality: Making a difference through parliament*, to be held on the occasion of the upcoming fiftieth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (March 2006).

5.9 Lastly, the Committee was apprised of the results of the seminar entitled *The roles and responsibilities of representatives*, organised by the Supreme Council for Women of Bahrain and the IPU. The objective of the seminar was to provide support to the women running for election in Bahrain in 2006.

# Chapter 6

## Subsidiary committees and other activities

### Introduction

6.1 During the Assembly, a number of subsidiary committees and other meetings and events took place. These are summarised below.

### Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

6.2 The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians held its 111th session from 15 to 18 October 2005. Ms A Clwyd (United Kingdom), Ms V Nedvedová (Czech Republic), Mr F Margáin Berlanga (Mexico), Mr M Ousmane (Niger) and Mr F M Drilon (Philippines) participated in their titular capacity, whereas Ms S Carstairs (Canada) participated in her capacity as substitute member.

6.3 The Committee conducted eight hearings with delegations from countries where it had cases pending and with representatives of the sources. The Committee examined a total of 59 cases in 30 countries. Four cases were submitted for the first time. The Committee submitted 31 cases to the Governing Council. These appear as Appendix 10 to this report.

### Gender Partnership Group

6.4 The Gender Partnership Group held its sixteenth session on 14 October 2005 in Geneva. Participants included Ms J Fraser (Canada), Ms M Mensah-Williams (Namibia), and Mr R Salles (France). Mr T Kawara (Japan) was unable to attend. Mr Salles acted as moderator. The Group studied the composition of delegations attending the 113th IPU Assembly in Geneva. Of the 548 delegates, 179 (32.5 per cent) were women. In both absolute and relative terms, it was the highest number and percentage ever reached. The Gender Partnership Group welcomed this very positive development. The Group now agreed to set 40 per cent as the new target for participation by women delegates in the Assembly. Of the 130 delegations attending the 113th Assembly, the vast majority (125) were composed of more than one delegate. Of those, just 10 were composed of men only, and one was composed solely of women. That represented the lowest percentage ever (8.8 per cent) of single-sex delegations attending an IPU Assembly. In conformity with Articles 10.3 and 15.2(c) of the Statutes concerning the attendance of single-sex delegations for three consecutive times at sessions of the Assembly, three delegations were subject to sanctions.

6.5 Since 2004, the Group had undertaken to analyse the IPU budget from a gender perspective. At the Manila Assembly, it had recommended the inclusion of specific gender indicators in the IPU's budget. At the Geneva Assembly, the Group studied the proposed 2006 budget and welcomed efforts to include certain gender-

specific indicators and objectives. It took note of the Secretary General's commitment to expand and develop additional gender indicators for all programs, regardless of whether they were directly concerned with work on gender equality. The Group discussed resources allocated to gender projects. It noted the small but steady increase in the allocation of funds from the IPU's core budget to gender-related projects. It also noted that the budget remained one of the smallest compared to other programs. However, 18 per cent of extra-budgetary funds were allocated to gender activities, thereby forming the majority of the operational budget for the gender programme. That allowed the programme to carry out a vast array of activities, but raised the question of sustainability of the programme should extra-budgetary funds decrease in the future.

6.6 The Group continued its debate on progress made in countries where parliaments did not include women. It regretted the fact that the United Arab Emirates had not responded to its invitation to take part in a dialogue session to discuss the status of women's political participation in that country. The Group noted encouraging progress and developments in several Gulf countries. In particular, it highlighted the positive developments that had taken place in Kuwait, with the granting to women of the rights to vote and to stand for election in May 2005. It also welcomed the political commitment to support women's political participation in both Kuwait and Bahrain. It reiterated its hope to see similar developments in the other countries concerned. Lastly, it supported the IPU's engagement in developing assistance activities for women in those two countries and in the region in general.

## **Other meetings**

### ***Panel discussion on nationality and statelessness***

6.7 A panel discussion on nationality and statelessness took place on 18 October 2005, organised jointly by the IPU and UNHCR. It provided the opportunity to launch a new handbook for parliamentarians on the question of statelessness and nationality. Participants heard from the newly-appointed High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr A Guterres; Mr. A. Navarro Brain, First Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile; Professor G-R de Groot, Expert on Nationality Law at the University of Maastricht, the Netherlands, and Ms. M. Santos Pais, Director of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

6.8 The panel discussed current challenges, case studies, issues related to state succession, discrimination and birth registration, as well as concrete ways to protect stateless persons. Participants highlighted the fact that citizenship was the right to have rights. With citizenship, an individual had the right to vote, to own property, to go to school, to obtain medical care, to work and to travel. Nationality was granted by States, yet there were millions of stateless people around the world. A person could become stateless through such factors as the transfer of territory, conflicts of law, marriage or dissolution of marriage, failure to register children at birth, deprivation of nationality or gender discrimination. Discussions highlighted the need to ratify the two main international conventions related to statelessness, to legislate to resolve

statelessness problems and to raise awareness and give visibility to the problem which was more often than not absent from national and international agendas.

### **Launch of *Human rights: A handbook for parliamentarians***

6.9 In recent years, the IPU has carried out an ever increasing number of activities aimed at strengthening the role of parliament as guardian of human rights. Parliaments and their members must fully play their role and exercise their specific powers in order for civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights to become a reality for everyone. However, parliamentarians often know little about the international and regional legal human rights framework that has been put in place since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and the obligations their countries have entered into by becoming a party to human rights treaties. Hence the suggestion that the IPU and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) should publish a handbook with basic information about human rights and the international and regional systems designed to promote and protect them.

6.10 The task of drawing up the handbook was entrusted to a renowned human rights expert, Mr M Nowak, currently the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture. In carrying out his task, he received input and guidance from the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and officials of both OHCHR and the IPU. On 19 October 2005 the handbook was officially launched by Ms M Khan Williams, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr S Páez, President of the IPU, who expressed the hope that this latest in the series of parliamentary handbooks would be widely used by parliaments and translated into as many languages as possible.

### **Information seminar on implementation of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).**

6.11 Following the IPU Assembly, Mrs Moylan, Mrs Irwin, Ms Ellis and Mrs Hull attended an IPU/UN information seminar on implementation of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

6.12 The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the most comprehensive international legal instrument addressing women's rights. It brings together in a single binding document provisions requiring the elimination of discrimination on the basis of sex, and in so doing is key to the promotion of gender equality. The implementation of the Convention is monitored by a United Nations treaty body, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which examines reports from States parties and issues concluding observations and recommendations for follow-up action.

6.13 The seminar, which took place at the IPU Headquarters on Thursday, 20 October 2005, was organised by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in cooperation with the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW). It primarily targeted members of parliaments of those States parties to the Convention

whose reports were considered by the CEDAW Committee at its 32nd and 33rd sessions, held respectively in January and July 2005, and those whose reports would be reviewed in January 2006.

6.14 The aim of these sessions is to identify opportunities for strengthening parliament's role both in the reporting process, including preparation and presentation of reports, and in follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations in regard to the reporting State. Various experts, including a member of the CEDAW Committee, a member of the Committee's Secretariat, and a member of parliament with experience in this field, facilitated this information seminar.

6.15 The seminar consisted of three sessions, namely:

(1) Introducing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol

- Why a Convention on discrimination against women?
- What does it add?
- Why an Optional Protocol to the Convention?

(2) Implementing the Convention - the Role of Parliament

- Developing an adequate legislative and oversight framework
- Working with civil society and the media
- Other parliamentary mechanisms
- Keeping track of progress: the reporting process and follow-up
- The reporting mechanism of the Convention
- Follow up to the Committee's concluding comments

(3) Parliamentary involvement in the CEDAW reporting mechanism

- Ensuring timely reporting
- Input into the Government's report
- Follow-up to the report: implementing the Committee's concluding comments

6.16 The members of the delegation participated fully in the sessions and found them informative and helpful.



# Chapter 7

## Bilateral visit to the Republic of Singapore

### Aims and Objectives

7.1 The aims and objectives of the bilateral visit were as follows:

- Renew and strengthen relations with the Singapore Parliament;
- Gain an appreciation of Singapore's domestic social, economic and political issues;
- Obtain Singapore's views on regional co-operation and approach to key issues, including ASEAN's future direction, environmental pollution and economic co-operation;
- Gain an understanding of Singapore's evaluation of regional security and strategies to deal with international terrorism; and
- Explore opportunities for the enhancement of commercial relations, including educational ties and people-to-people relations through cultural and other exchange programs.

### Geography

7.2 Singapore sits only 137km north of the Equator, separated from Malaysia by the Straits of Johor and from Indonesia by the Straits of Singapore. The Republic of Singapore is made up of the main island which is 42km long by 23km wide and 63 other smaller islands. Singapore has a total area of approximately 650 sq km, which is roughly one 20<sup>th</sup> the size of Greater Sydney.

7.3 Singapore's climate is warm and humid, averaging between 23°C and 31°C, with an average of 2.3 metres of rain annually.

### Population

7.4 The total population of Singapore is 4.2 million (2004 data). This figure includes approximately 800,000 foreigners. The three major ethnic groups within the local community are Chinese (77 per cent), Malay (14 per cent), and Indians (8 per cent). The official languages of Singapore are Malay, Chinese (Mandarin), Tamil and English. English is the language of administration and is widely spoken.

### Political Overview

7.5 Singapore is a Republic. It has a parliamentary system of Government and an elected President as the Head of State. Parliament is elected by general election every five years. The first sitting of Parliament was held on 8 December 1965. The present Parliament, elected on 3 November 2001, consists of 94 members, comprising 84 elected members, one non-constituency members of Parliament (NCMP) and nine

nominated members of Parliament, who represent various professional and business sectors. In the current parliament, there are three opposition members.

7.6 The majority of MPs are elected to Parliament at a general election on a first-past-the-post basis and represent either single member or group representation constituencies (GRCs).

7.7 In GRCs, political parties field a team of between three to six candidates. At least one candidate in the team must belong to a minority race. This requirement ensures that parties contesting the elections in GRCs are multi-racial so that minority races will be represented in Parliament. There were 14 GRCs in the 2001 general election and 9 single member constituencies.

7.8 The Constitution also provides for the appointment of other MPs not voted in at a general election. Up to three NCMPs from the opposition political parties can be appointed. This is to ensure that there will be a number of opposition representatives in Parliament and that views, other than the Government's, can be expressed in Parliament.

7.9 A constitutional provision for the appointment of up to nine NMPs was made in 1990 to ensure a wide representation of community views in Parliament. NMPs are appointed by the President of Singapore for a term of two and a half years on the recommendation of a Special Select Committee of Parliament chaired by the Speaker. NMPs are not connected to any political party. The political scene in Singapore has been dominated by the People's Action Party (PAP) since 1959. The party has won 10 general elections in succession.



Members of the Australian Delegation with HE Miles Kupa, High Commissioner to Singapore, on The Terrace, Parliament House, Singapore.

7.10 The Judiciary administers the law independently of the Executive, and this independence is safeguarded by the Constitution.

7.11 In Singapore, the President is the Head of State. Prior to 1991, the President was appointed by Parliament and had a largely ceremonial role. In January 1991, the Constitution was amended to allow for the election of a President by Singapore electors. The term of office for an elected President is 6 years. Under the Singapore constitution, the President may veto government budgets and appointments to public office. He may also examine how the Government exercises its powers under the Internal Security Act and religious harmony laws, and investigate cases of corruption. A Council of Presidential Advisors is appointed to advise and make recommendations to the President. The President must consult the Council before performing some of his functions, for instance, in appointing key civil servants.

7.12 The first Presidential election was held on 28 August 1993. The first elected President was HE Mr Ong Teng Cheong. The current (and second) President, HE Mr Sellapan Rama (SR) Nathan, was re-elected unopposed in August 2005 to serve a second 6 year term.

7.13 The Singapore Cabinet is led by the Prime Minister, who is appointed by the President, as the Member of Parliament who commands the confidence of the majority of the members of Parliament. On the advice of the Prime Minister, the President appoints other ministers from among the Members of Parliament to form the Cabinet. Singapore's current Prime Minister is Mr Lee Hsien Loong, who was appointed to the post in August 2004.

7.14 The Cabinet is responsible for all government policies and the day-to-day administration of the affairs of state. It is responsible, collectively, to Parliament, and comprises the Prime Minister and the Ministers in charge of the Ministries of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Defence, Education, the Environment and Water, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Health, Home Affairs, Information, Communications and the Arts, Law, Manpower, National Development, Trade and Industry, and Transport.

## **Foreign Policy**

7.15 One of the guiding principles of Singapore's foreign policy is its commitment to maintaining a secure and stable environment politically and economically in and around Southeast Asia. Singapore's active membership of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is central to Singapore's foreign policy. As a founding member of ASEAN, Singapore remains a strong supporter of ASEAN and is committed to its activities, including efforts to forge ahead with the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and the ASEAN Investment Area (AIA). Singapore is keen to promote regional integration, and is active in efforts to this end.

7.16 Singapore recognises that its future prosperity depends to a large extent on ASEAN's economic progress and competitiveness. To take ASEAN's efforts towards economic competitiveness a step further, former Prime Minister Goh announced, at

the November 2002 Cambodian Summit, the concept of an ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) which would emulate the approach adopted by the EU. The idea has since been under discussion by ASEAN, with Singapore continuing to support it strongly. Singapore is also a strong advocate of an outward looking ASEAN and continues to support efforts to broaden ASEAN links with countries outside its region, especially with China, Japan and India.

7.17 Relations with Singapore's closest neighbours, especially Malaysia and Indonesia, are a major focus of Singapore's foreign policy. Following his appointment in August 2004, Prime Minister Lee reaffirmed that maintaining good relations with Singapore's immediate neighbours and the major powers was one of Singapore's priorities. He acknowledged that Indonesia and Malaysia would always be of special importance to Singapore.

7.18 Outside ASEAN, Singapore is continuing to strengthen its links in the Asia Pacific region and beyond. It has a strong relationship with the United States. Like Australia, Singapore recognises the key role that the US presence in the region plays in underpinning regional security and stability. Singapore has an active interest in building links between East Asia and Latin America, and instigated the Forum for East Asia and Latin American Co-operation (FEALAC). Contacts are increasing between Singapore and Europe bilaterally, and through the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM), a Singaporean initiative. Recently Singapore has also been concentrating on its relations with the Middle East. It is negotiating a number of free trade agreements with Middle Eastern countries and has established an Asia-Middle East Dialogue, with the inaugural meeting held in Singapore in June 2005.

7.19 Singapore supports a strong United Nations and its efforts to preserve international law and order and to settle disputes peacefully. It completed its 2 year term as a Non-Permanent Member of the UN Security Council in December 2002. Singapore also has contributed to UN peacekeeping missions, including in East Timor, and was one of the original participants in the Australian led INTERFET force which restored security in East Timor following the 1999 violence. The Singapore Government has taken a leadership role within the region in efforts to combat international terrorism since its discovery of the JI terrorist group's operations in Singapore in late 2001. It supports the global campaign against terrorism, including military actions by the US and its coalition partners in Afghanistan and Iraq. It has contributed military forces and other assets to the rehabilitation of Iraq.

7.20 The Singapore Government has acknowledged that Singapore is a target for terrorism, because of the strong stand it has taken in the war against terrorism. It has, in the past few years, enhanced significantly Singapore's security measures in crucial areas, including aviation, maritime and land transport security, border control, and infrastructure protection. It has formed the Joint Counter Terrorism Centre, and the National Security Coordination Centre to give stronger focus to inter-agency coordination and integration.

## **Australia-Singapore Bilateral Relations**

7.21 The bilateral relationship with Singapore is one of Australia's closest and most comprehensive in Southeast Asia. This is based on long-standing political, defence, educational, trade, tourism and Commonwealth links and an essentially congruent strategic outlook.

7.22 The Australian and Singaporean Governments have worked closely together to enhance the strong relationship between the two countries. A Joint Declaration by the Prime Minister's of Australia and Singapore in January 1996, entitled 'A New Partnership', established a biennial Singapore-Australia Joint Ministerial Committee (SAJMC). The Committee is led by foreign ministers and attended by ministers responsible for other areas of bilateral cooperation (usually trade and defence). The fifth and most recent SAJMC meeting was held in Perth, Western Australia, on 22-23 August 2005.

### ***Regional Security***

7.23 Australia and Singapore have similar views on regional security issues, and Singapore has been a leading supporter of the war against terrorism. In recent years, bilateral collaboration on counter-terrorism has strengthened further, including in the areas of law enforcement, intelligence sharing and through the FPDA. Given shared views and close cooperation on security issues, including counter-terrorism, Australia has not negotiated a separate Memorandum of Understanding on Counter-Terrorism with Singapore.

### ***Other Areas of Cooperation***

7.24 Australia and Singapore are engaged in significant cooperation and dialogue on major regional and global economic, political and security issues, including through APEC, the ARF, and the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC). Australia also has links with Singapore in the areas of narcotics control and disarmament/arms control. Singapore and Australia are the most comparable countries in the region in terms of social and economic development and there is also growing cooperation on social issues.

### ***Bilateral Visits***

7.25 As a reflection of the strength of the bilateral relationship there are many high-level visits between Australia and Singapore. The most prominent Australian visit to Singapore in 2005 was that made by the Australian Prime Minister, the Hon John Howard MP, in February. Singapore's President, His Excellency Mr SR Nathan, made an official visit to Australia in March, the first visit to Australia by any Singapore Head of State.

## **Economic Overview**

7.26 Singapore is an important hub for the South East Asian region. It has a dynamic economy, and strong service and manufacturing sectors. Its port, airport and road systems are among the best in the world.

7.27 Singapore's economy has always depended on international trade and on the sale of services. Its merchandise trade is three times its gross domestic product (GDP). This includes a large volume of re-exports, reflecting Singapore's position as a trans-shipment hub. Its major industries include petroleum refining, electronics, oil drilling equipment, rubber products, processed food and beverages, ship repair, financial services and pharmaceutical manufacturing. It is moving to reduce its reliance on the manufacture and export of electronics by developing its services sector, as well as its chemical, petrochemical and biotechnology industries.

7.28 Singapore's small population and dependence on external markets and suppliers has pushed Singapore toward economic openness, free trade, and free markets. This and government policies that foster economic development have been key factors in Singapore's historically strong economic performance. The Singapore government has continued to pursue an outward-looking, export-oriented economic policy that encourages two-way flows of trade and investment. It has adopted a three-pronged approach to trade policy, by supporting the multilateral trading system particularly through the World Trade Organisation (WTO), but also through such regional trading groups as ASEAN, APEC and the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) and through bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with a range of trading partners.

7.29 Singapore has also sought to position itself as a regional hub and regional pacesetter in economic development and reform. In particular, the Government has introduced measures to enhance Singapore's position as a regional hub for financial, education and transport services.

7.30 Accelerating globalisation and growing competition from fast-growing lower-cost producers like China and India have presented Singapore with continuing challenges. During the period between 2000 and 2004, Singapore has had to adapt to several additional challenges subsequent to the 1997 Asian financial crisis, including the global economic slowdown in 2001, the war in Iraq, and the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003. Singapore had negative growth for the first time in 2001 and growth in Singapore's economy was sluggish in 2002 and 2003.

7.31 Growth picked up sharply in 2004, increasing by 8.4 per cent (real GDP). This growth was led by the manufacturing sector and the wholesale and retail trade sector. To ensure sustainable growth, the Singapore Government announced its intention to create a 'dynamic and entrepreneurial economy' in the 2005 budget. Budget measures included reducing the personal income tax rate to 20 per cent by 2007, expanding incentive schemes, supporting small businesses, and improving Singaporean skills.

7.32 Following a relatively slow growth rate of 2.7 per cent in the first quarter of 2005 (vis-à-vis 6.5 per cent in the previous quarter), Singapore's economy grew more

strongly by 5.2 per cent in the second quarter. Better-than-expected second quarter economic data was attributed to an expansion of biomedical output and robust performance in key service sectors. On a quarter-on-quarter seasonally adjusted annualised basis, real GDP expanded by 12.3 per cent, the fastest rate in almost 2 years, as compared to a contraction of 5.5 per cent in the first quarter. The robust performance in the second quarter was driven by Singapore's services sector, which grew by 4.2 per cent in the second quarter. Singapore's manufacturing sector witnessed marginally better-than-expected growth of 3.5 per cent over the same period.

7.33 Due to the slow growth rate in the first quarter of 2005, the Singapore Government, in August, revised downwards Singapore's growth forecast to between 3.5 and 4.5 per cent from an earlier range of 3 per cent to 5 per cent. With the recent better-than-expected economic performance for the second quarter of 2005, many analysts now expect the economy to continue to grow at a more sustainable rate, of over 3 per cent.

7.34 The Singapore Government is expected to continue to maintain the policy focus on restructuring the economy and controlling wage costs in the near future. Indications are that the budget will move into surplus in this fiscal year (April 06 – March 06), following 3 years of deficits. The GDP growth rate in 2005 will be lower than that in 2004 but is expected to pick up slightly in 2006. Consumer price inflation will likely remain stable at 1 – 1.3 per cent while the Singapore dollar will continue to appreciate against the US dollar. The current-account surplus will decline, but will remain substantial (both in absolute terms and as a percentage of GDP).

7.35 Global trade will continue to influence Singapore's economy. Positive factors include a projected upturn in global semi-conductor sales, continued economic growth in Asia, and moderate growth in global trade. Risks include a slowdown in the US, EC and Japan, persistently high oil prices, and high US inflation and interest rates.

## **Bilateral Economic and Trade Relationship**

7.36 Singapore is Australia's largest trade and investment partner in ASEAN and its eighth largest trading partner overall (reflecting Singapore's role in trans-shipment trade, rather than its size as a domestic market). The Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA), which came into force on 28 July 2003, has contributed towards a stronger bilateral economic partnership.

7.37 In 2004-05, Australian merchandise exports to Singapore were \$A3.3 billion (our 11th largest export market) and our imports from Singapore were valued at \$A7.3 billion (Australia's 5<sup>th</sup> largest source). Services are a key part of our bilateral trade, with exports to Singapore valued at \$A2.3 billion and imports at \$A2.6 billion in 2004.

7.38 Major services exports include education and tourism. Singapore is one of Australia's major sources of overseas students to both on and offshore Australian educational institutions, recorded at 28,290 students in 2004. Australia's position as a

major provider of tertiary education in Singapore has been further enhanced by the University of New South Wales's agreement with the Singapore Government to establish UNSW Asia, Singapore's first foreign university. UNSW Asia is due to open in 2007 and will provide undergraduate and post-graduate teaching and research.

7.39 Singapore is also one of Australia's major sources of short term visitors. With 251,100 Singaporeans visiting Australia in 2004, Singapore was our sixth largest tourism market. Tourism Research Australia forecasts that Singapore inbound numbers will grow by an average annual rate of 3.9 per cent over the period to 2013. Approximately 560,000 Australians travelled to Singapore during 2004, with many more stopping over on their way to third countries.

7.40 Singapore's investment in Australia is substantial, at \$A19.1 billion as at 31 December 2004. Although Singaporean investment has traditionally been concentrated in real estate, diversification is taking place.

7.41 Australia's investment in Singapore as at 31 December 2004 was almost \$A14 billion. The most notable investment in recent times is QANTAS' joint venture project to establish Singapore-based budget airline Jetstar Asia, which commenced operations in December 2004.

7.42 At the end of 2004 there were over 1200 Australian and New Zealand companies operating in Singapore - many with a regional focus. Over one-third of these companies have commenced operations in Singapore in the past 3 years.

### ***Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement***

7.43 Following 10 full rounds of negotiations between April 2001 and October 2002, the Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) was signed by the Minister for Trade, the Hon Mark Vaile MP, and the (then) Minister for Trade and Industry of Singapore, BG (NS) George Yeo, on 17 February 2003. It entered into force on 28 July 2003. SAFTA was the first FTA Australia had concluded in the 20 years since the Australia New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement (CER) came into effect on 1 January 1983.

7.44 SAFTA is a wide-ranging and comprehensive agreement, covering tariff-free access for goods, improved market access for services (including specific commitments on sectoral markets for telecommunications, financial services and professional services) and cooperation and trade facilitation in key areas, such as e-commerce, standards, education, intellectual property protection, competition policy and customs procedures. SAFTA presents new trade and investment opportunities for businesses in both Australia and Singapore. It also provides investors with greater certainty through provisions on the protection and promotion of investment.

7.45 To ensure its continued relevance for business, SAFTA contains specific review provisions. The first review was launched by the Minister for Trade, the Hon Mark Vaile MP, and the (then) Minister for Trade and Industry of Singapore, BG (NS) George Yeo, on 14 July 2004. The Ministerial meeting produced a balanced package of outcomes for both Australia and Singapore, including Singapore's agreement to



recognise law degrees from two additional Australian universities, and Australia's agreement to add four new entities to the list of government agencies subject to the national treatment provision on procurement as well as to revise arrangements in relation to Certificates of Origin for Singapore exports. These additional commitments and the SAFTA Annexes on horticultural goods and food concluded at the time of the first review will come into effect shortly when the treaty amendment processes have been completed.

### ***Singapore's other trade relationships***

7.46 Since 2000, Singapore has concluded bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) with Australia (2003), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA, a group of countries covering Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, 2002), Japan (2002), Jordan (2004), New Zealand (2000), the US (2003) and the Republic of Korea (2005). It has also finalised a comprehensive economic cooperation agreement with India (2005). It is currently negotiating bilateral FTAs with Bahrain, Canada, Egypt, Kuwait, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Qatar, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates. Regionally, Singapore has concluded the Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement ('Trans-Pacific SEP') with Brunei, Chile and New Zealand (2005).

7.47 Singapore is a strong supporter of the World Trade Organization (WTO). It hosted the WTO's first Ministerial meeting in December 1996 and the WTO Mini-Ministerial in October 2001 and the latter served as an important event in the lead-up to the WTO meeting in Doha. It has been working closely with other members in the Doha Round of negotiations for a successful conclusion. Singapore Ministers participated in the following four WTO Ministerial Meetings in Geneva, Seattle, Doha, and Cancun. Its leaders are very active participants in the World Economic Forum (WEF). Singapore hosted WEF meetings in 1999 and 2003.

7.48 Singapore also strongly supports trade liberalisation through its membership of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and has prepared a strong Individual Action Plan which goes beyond its WTO commitments. Singapore has joined with Australia and other like-minded countries in pushing for identification of sectors for early liberalisation. The APEC Secretariat is located in Singapore.

### ***Export Opportunities***

7.49 Australia's top 10 merchandise exports to Singapore in 2004-05 were crude petroleum, non-monetary gold, refined petroleum, milk and cream, meat (excluding beef), confidential items, photographic supplies, measuring and controlling instruments, medicaments (including veterinary) and computer parts. The fastest growing merchandise exports since 2000 (valued over \$1 million) were plastic waste, parings and scrap; alcohols, phenols and phenol-alcohols; steam boilers and parts; sound or video recorders; 'soft' fixed vegetable fats and oils; sugars, molasses and honey; radio-broadcast receivers; optical instruments; iron or steel wire; and office machines.

7.50 Since SAFTA's entry into force until early September 2005, Austrade has assisted 546 Australian companies to win business in Singapore, to a total export sales value of \$A458.6 million. Of these, 249 were new exporters (and the value of their exports was estimated at \$A35.8 million).

### **Nguyen Tuong Van**

7.51 Mr Nguyen Tuong Van, a 25 year old Australian citizen was arrested on 12 December 2002 at Changi Airport, Singapore and was subsequently charged with importing 396.2 grams of heroin. On 20 March 2004 he was found guilty and sentenced to death, which is the mandatory penalty for importing more than 15 grams.

7.52 Mr Nguyen's appeal against his conviction was dismissed on 20 October 2004. In March 2005, his legal team lodged an application for clemency, focusing on humanitarian and other mitigating factors. Clemency is considered by the President on the advice of the Singapore Cabinet.

7.53 The Australian Government has supported Mr Nguyen's appeal for clemency.

7.54 On Friday, 21 October 2005, the President of Singapore announced that Mr Nguyen's appeal for clemency had been rejected.

7.55 The delegation raised its distress about this decision and voiced its plea that that Mr Nguyen's life should be spared with the Speaker of the Parliament of Singapore, members of the Singapore-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group, the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence.

7.56 At these meetings, Mrs Moylan and the other members of the delegation emphasised the particular humanitarian and mitigating circumstances of the case, including Mr Nguyen's youth, lack of criminal record, remorse and co-operation with authorities.

7.57 The delegation felt so strongly about this matter it wrote to the Prime Minister of Singapore and the text of that letter is as follows:

27 October 2005

HE Mr Lee Hsien Loong

Prime Minister

THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

Dear Prime Minister,

Our delegation arrived in Singapore on a bilateral visit on Saturday 22nd October and we were all deeply distressed to hear the news that your Government rejected the plea for clemency, by our Prime Minister, the Hon John Howard MP, on behalf of Mr Nguyen Tuong Van.

We understand the concerns of the Singapore Government and people in regard to the impact of drugs on the community and the reasons for the strict policy

prohibiting drug use and trafficking. We acknowledge that due process has been adhered to in the case of Mr Nguyen.

However, we are a delegation of women, concerned that one serious mistake by this young man, not for his own benefit but for that of a family member, will result in the loss of his life if Singapore proceeds with this sentence.

We know that your Government is committed to even-handed treatment in these cases and must face domestic criticism if exceptions are made. Notwithstanding this, we believe that there is a strong case for clemency in the case of Mr Nguyen.

We have appreciated the opportunity to raise our deep regret and concern with several senior Government Ministers during the course of our visit and remain convinced of the merit of our Government's plea for clemency.

Our delegation consists of women from three major parties in the Australian Parliament. We are all elected by our constituencies and wholeheartedly support the action of our Prime Minister, the Hon John Howard MP, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Alexander Downer MP, the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon Kim Beazley MP, the Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Kevin Rudd MP, and Back-bench Members and Senators who have consistently called for clemency for Mr Nguyen.

We all have families and know that despite our best efforts, poor judgements are exercised sometimes, due to a lack of maturity and experience.

As senior members of our Parliament, we respectfully plea with you to spare the life of this young Australian, Mr Nguyen Tuong Van, on this occasion.

7.58 The letter was signed by each member of the delegation.

### **Delegation's Program**

7.59 The delegation's visit to Singapore commenced on Sunday 23 October and concluded on Thursday 27 October 2005. The delegation's schedule of meetings appears at Appendix 11 to this report.

#### ***Inspection of Battle Box, Fort Canning Park.***

7.60 Accompanied by WOFF Keith Pepper, Defence Administrative Assistant, Australian High Commission, the delegation travelled to Fort Canning Park to inspect Battle Box.

7.61 Fort Canning is located on a hill in the heart of the city of Singapore and has played a vital and strategic role in Singapore's history. Sir Stamford Raffles built a bungalow on the hill and constructed a botanical gardens there in 1822. In the late 1850s, a military fort, bearing the name of Viscount Canning, the first Viceroy of India, was built. The buildings on the hill were built in the early 1900s and housed the British Far East Command Centre in World War II.

7.62 The delegation inspected Battle Box, the underground military complex of 22 rooms where Lieutenant-General Percival decided to surrender to the Japanese in 1942. War figurines, video and audio effects recreate the events of that fateful day of 15 February 1942. Mr Nedumaran, the curator of the exhibition gave the delegation in-depth explanations of the complex and its historical significance.

### ***Changi Chapel and Museum***

7.63 Changi was the main prisoner-of-war camp in Singapore. Some 14 972 Australians captured at the fall of Singapore were imprisoned there (as drafts were sent away, the numbers at Changi declined, then after the completion of the Burma-Thailand Railway, numbers rose again). Lieutenant Colonel FG 'Black Jack' Galleghan of the 2/30th Battalion was commander of the AIF in Changi. Many work forces were assembled in Changi before being sent to the Burma-Thailand Railway and other work camps. It was also used as a staging camp for those captured elsewhere. Prisoners were used on heavy labouring works in and around Singapore. Tasks included road-building, freight-moving, mining and work in chemical factories. These troops suffered from diseases such as beriberi, malaria and dysentery.

7.64 The delegation was honoured to visit the Changi Prisoner of War Chapel and the Changi Museum and found the experience deeply moving.

7.65 Changi Chapel is a symbolic replica of many chapels that were found in various parts of Singapore and Malaya during the Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945. The delegation saw the altar cross that a British POW, Sergeant Harold Stogden fashioned from a used artillery shell which the chaplain took back to Britain after the war ended. The cross was later returned on permanent loan to the Chapel in 1995.

7.66 The delegation also saw memorabilia and read moving notes pinned on the notice board of the Chapel by relatives and friends of Changi POWs.

7.67 The delegation is indebted to Mr Jeyathurai, Director of the Museum, for his outstanding commentary on the Chapel and Museum. The delegation also thanks Squadron Leader Ian Wooding, Assistant Defence Adviser, Australian High Commission, for his participation in this visit.

### ***Meeting with the Speaker of the Parliament of Singapore – Hon Abdullah Bin Tarmugi***

7.68 The delegation received a warm welcome from the Speaker of the Singapore Parliament. Mr Tarmugi was elected Speaker of the Parliament in 2002. He is the seventh Speaker in the history of the Singapore Parliament, since it started in 1955 as a Legislative Assembly. Mr Tarmugi has been a Member of Parliament since 1984. Prior to his election as Speaker, he was the Minister for Communications, Development and Sports and Minister in charge of Muslim Affairs. He has also served as Deputy Speaker of Parliament from 1989 to 1993.

7.69 At the outset, Mrs Moylan took the opportunity to thank the Singapore Government for the assistance it provided to the victims of the Bali bombing that occurred on 1 October 2005.

7.70 The delegation noted the Speaker's background and extensive experience in urban planning and community development and discussed challenges facing Singapore in relation to these matters. The delegation commented on the change and

progress that had taken place in Singapore and the excellent infrastructure and transport systems.

7.71 The Leader of the delegation noted the close relationship between Singapore and Australia, and commended the work done by Singapore authorities to preserve the Battle Box site and also the Changi Prisoner of War Chapel and Museum. Mrs Moylan commented that these are not only excellent exhibitions but are also deeply moving.

7.72 At the conclusion of the meeting, Mrs Moylan expressed the concern of each member of the delegation about the recent rejection of a clemency plea for Mr Van Nguyen. Mrs Moylan emphasised the exceptional and mitigating circumstances surrounding this case.

7.73 Prior to this meeting, the delegation inspected the parliamentary precincts, including the chamber of the Parliament.

***Meeting with Parliamentary members of the Singapore – Australia Friendship Group***

7.74 The delegation was pleased to meet Dr Ong Chit Chung and Madame Cynthia Phua, members of the Parliamentary Singapore – Australia Friendship Group, as well as Ms Ng Sheau Juan, Clerk of Singapore's Parliament.

7.75 At the invitation of Dr Ong to raise any outstanding issues, each member of the delegation expressed concern about Mr Nguyen and the recent rejection of a plea clemency. Mrs Moylan emphasised the exceptional and mitigating circumstances surrounding this case.

7.76 Mrs Moylan emphasised that relations between Australia and Singapore are strong and co-operative. Dr Ong agreed and referred to the number of Singaporeans who have studied in Australia and the number of Australians who work in Singapore. He indicated that he has visited Australia on many occasions and has inspected the air force base at Pearce, in Mrs Moylan's electorate. The meeting also agreed that the regional interests of Singapore and Australia are closely aligned and this has added to strong relations.

7.77 The delegation noted that water is a significant issue in Australia and asked the members about water resources in Singapore. Dr Ong advised that water is a high priority issue and that there is a National Water Commission. Tap water is of good quality but some water is imported from Malaysia. Singapore has a multi-layered approach to the issue through recycling grey water and sewerage, de-salination plants and reservoirs. This has proved successful and dependence on imports is decreasing and shortly Singapore will be self-sufficient.

7.78 Following its meeting, the delegation attended a working lunch hosted by the Singapore – Australia Friendship Group.

***Minister for Health: Mr Khaw Boon Wan***

7.79 The delegation had an interesting meeting with the Minister for Health. The Minister indicated that he was very familiar with Australia as he had studied engineering and commerce at the University of Newcastle, New South Wales.

7.80 The Minister told the delegation that bird flu was a significant issue and that, although no country is fully prepared, significant steps have been taken, based on the experience of dealing with SARS. For example, the Singapore government has stockpiled one million anti-viral doses which are about a quarter of what is needed and has also stockpiled protective gear and face masks.

7.81 The Minister expressed the view that more thought needs to be given to the long-term implications of an outbreak. He noted that the SARS crisis lasted about 3 months but pondered the implications on societies if a pandemic lasted for a longer period such as one year. He suggested that a longer period would have significant effects on international and domestic infrastructures and that strategies need to be developed to address this situation. In this regard, Singapore supports 'upstream' prevention measures such as the outlawing of slaughtering of animals in 'meat markets' and better farming practices.

7.82 Mrs Moylan expressed deep appreciation of the Singapore Government's assistance to victims of the Bali bombings. The Minister responded that it is essential for countries to have strong policies to counter terrorism and recorded his admiration for the psychological resolve of Londoners to continue their daily lives.

7.83 The Minister told the delegation that, although SARS and bird flu pose great challenges, key lifestyle issues remain important. These include cigarettes, alcohol, cholesterol and blood pressure. In relation to smoking the Minister indicated that Singapore is 'tough' in relation to taxes but conceded that other countries have 'gone further'. Singapore has reduced rates of smoking to about 15 per cent. However, the Minister expressed concern about the proportion of young people who smoke cigarettes.

The delegation discussed several other topics of interest with the Minister including:

- Drug addiction program: The Minister advised that the drug problem in Singapore although in absolute terms 'not high' is not zero. There are several rehabilitation programs, including half-way house programs.
- HIV/AIDS: The Minister advised that numbers are small. In relation to HIV/AIDS and prostitution the Minister indicated that there are strict regulations on prostitution that ensure proper medical checks and safe-sex.

***Economic Development Board (EDB)***

7.84 The EDB is the leading government agency that promotes high value-added investments to boost the Singapore economy. The Board was established in 1961 to spearhead Singapore's industrialisation. In 2005 the Board's vision is to make

'Singapore a compelling global hub for business and investment' while its mission is to 'create sustainable GDP growth for Singapore with good jobs and business opportunities for its people'.

7.85 During a detailed briefing the delegation was advised that Singapore has, since the 1960s worked hard to stay at the forefront of the world's most competitive economies and that today it is an open market economy with a global network. The Singapore government promotes a pro-business environment that encourages multi-national and local companies to invest and expand in Singapore.

7.86 The Board has developed several strategies to realise its vision for the 21st century of ensuring that Singapore remains a relevant and competitive centre for goods, services and information. These strategies include:

- Promoting manufacturing and services as twin pillars of growth;
- Strengthening industry clusters; Identifying and growing new clusters;
- Nurturing innovation-driven enterprises;
- Developing new geographies; and
- Securing an environment conducive and competitive for global business.

7.87 The delegation was interested to learn also of recent initiatives in the education sector. In 2004, Singapore hosted more than 66,000 international students. Singapore's vision is to become a 'Global School House' fostering relations with foreign universities including a significant initiative with the University of New South Wales.

7.88 There has also been an expansion in the local education sector with the addition of preparatory and boarding schools, and specialist institutes in areas such as hospitality, sports, e-learning and corporate training.

7.89 Other emerging industries include intellectual property management, information and physical security and resource management, nanotechnology and photonics.

### ***APEC Secretariat - Singapore***

7.90 The delegation was pleased to meet with the following officers of APEC:

- Ambassador Choi Seok Young (Korea) – Executive Director
- Ambassador Tran Trong Toan (Vietnam) – Deputy Executive Director
- Mr Geoffrey Woodhead (Hong Kong – China) – Director of Finance
- Ms Michelle Lowe (AusAID) – Director
- Ms Monica Ohola (Mexico) – Director
- Mr Bruce Bennett (Australia) – Director
- Mr Paak Doo Soon (Korea) – Specialist Assistant
- Mr Goonthorn (Thailand) – Director
- Ms Anita Douglas (Canada) – Communications and Public Affairs

7.91 The APEC forum is the world's largest cooperative economic forum. APEC spans four continents and its Member Economies account for :

- 57 per cent of world GDP or \$US20.7 trillion;
- 44.8 per cent of the world's population or nearly 2.8 billion people; and
- 45.8 per cent of world trade or just over \$US7 trillion.

7.92 As a point of interest, APEC is Australia's major trading partner, accounting for 68 per cent of total trade in goods and services in 2002-2003. APEC's main objectives are:

- To promote sustainable economic growth;
- To develop and strengthen the multilateral trading system; and
- To increase the interdependence and prosperity of member economies

7.93 APEC is a unique forum, operating on the basis of open dialogue and respect for the views of all participants. Decision making is reached by consensus. There are no binding commitments and compliance is achieved through discussion and mutual support.

7.94 APEC was established in Canberra, Australia in 1989. Its 12 founding Member Economies span the Pacific Rim. Since then the forum has grown to 21 members. Currently there is a moratorium on membership until 2007, after which new members will be considered. This issue will be most important during Australia's tenure as host economy in 2007.

7.95 APEC's aim is to enhance economic dynamism and a sense of community in the Asia-Pacific region. APEC encourages its members to pursue sound macroeconomic policies to stimulate domestic demand, and constructive microeconomic policies to promote financial and corporate restructuring, in order to attract investment. APEC works to lower tariffs and other trade barriers across the Asia-Pacific region, creating efficient economies and galvanizing exports.

7.96 APEC collaborates with the private sector to produce outcomes with broad social and commercial benefits. It works to create a secure environment for the efficient movement of goods, services and people across borders. APEC undertakes programs to improve the social infrastructure of Member Economies, by providing access to training and technology. A guiding principle of APEC is that economic growth must always translate into real social progress.

7.97 APEC promotes increased transparency, openness and predictability based on the rule of law.

7.98 APEC's 'vision' is embodied in what are referred to as the 'Bogor Goals'. The ambitious Bogor Declaration was made in 1994, when APEC Leaders committed to 'free and open trade in the region'. The Bogor Goals are to be achieved by industrialized economies no later than 2010, and by developing economies no later



than 2020. Achievement of the goals is a voluntary commitment, based on good faith and a pledge of best endeavour.

7.99 Each year, one of the 21 APEC Member Economies, serves as the APEC Chair and plays host to the flagship APEC meetings. This includes chairing the annual Economic Leaders' Meeting, selected Ministerial Meetings, Senior Officials' Meetings, the APEC Business Advisory Council and the APEC Study Centres meetings, amongst others.

7.100 APEC policy direction is provided by the Leaders, with priorities and goals set at the annual meeting. Strategic recommendations provided by APEC Ministers are considered, and private sector input comes from the APEC Business Advisory Council, made up of senior business people.

7.101 The working level of APEC involves Senior Officials' providing direction to a set of Committees, Working Groups and Special Task Groups, which undertake work in specific sectors. The APEC process is supported by a small secretariat located in Singapore. The APEC Secretariat is currently staffed by a team of 23 program directors seconded from APEC Member Economies with a similar number of specialist and administrative staff. The Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director positions rotate annually and are filled by Ambassadors from the current and incoming host economy, respectively. The APEC Secretariat is the core support mechanism for the APEC process. It performs a project administration role, assisting economies with oversight of over 230 APEC-funded projects and administers APEC's annual budget.

7.102 APEC works in three broad areas -

- Trade and investment liberalisation focuses on reducing, and eventually eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade and investment. Economic liberalisation measures have led to sizeable reductions in tariffs. Since the Bogor Declaration, APEC's average tariffs have declined significantly, from 12 per cent in 1995 to 7 per cent in 2001. All the developed Member Economies of APEC but one now have average tariffs of less than 5 per cent.
- Business facilitation aims to assist importers and exporters in the region meet and conduct business more efficiently, thus reducing business transaction costs.
- Economic and technical cooperation (ECOTECH) comprises training and cooperation to build capacities at the institutional and individual levels in Member Economies to enable all economies to take advantage of global trade and the New Economy.

7.103 Over the past few years, new threats to the economic well being of the region have emerged. The commercial impact of the terrorist attacks on Member Economies, and the epidemics of SARS and avian influenza, reinforces the nexus of trade and human security. APEC is meeting these new challenges through cooperative activities

aimed at ensuring trade and economic development continues, whilst safeguarding the people and economies of the region.

7.104 Other new challenges facing APEC are sub-regional trading arrangements, regional trade agreements, free trade agreements, and APEC reform.

7.105 APEC has recently adopted 'Best Practices for FTAs and RTAs' to help ensure that agreements are comprehensive, consistent with WTO requirements and genuinely pave the way for the realisation of the Bogor Goals. APEC reform is a key component of APEC's work during 2005 and will continue to be an issue during Australia's host year of 2007.

7.106 This year's host economy, the Republic of Korea, in consultation with other Member Economies, has developed a theme and sub-themes to guide the activities of the forum. Towards One Community: Meet the Challenge and Make the Change is the central theme for APEC 2005. In order to better define the overall theme, three sub-themes showcase the key areas in which APEC is focusing its efforts in 2005.

7.107 APEC is undergoing a mid-term self-assessment of progress towards the Bogor Goals. After the review, a revised roadmap to achieve the goals will be produced. Incorporating the findings of the midterm assessment into future APEC work plans will also be undertaken.

7.108 APEC Member Economies are uniting in the common cause to combat corruption and terrorism in order to create a safe and predictable regional trading environment. APEC members will find ways to facilitate community building through economic development and the celebration of cultural diversity.

7.109 APEC priorities for 2005 include the following:

- **Advancing Freer Trade:** Trade is at the forefront of the 2005 agenda. APEC continues its strong political support for the WTO Doha Development Agenda and will renew its commitment to the Bogor Goals through its midterm stock-take and development of a roadmap for future work plans.
- **Fighting Corruption:** Anti-corruption efforts focus on stronger implementation, which has already begun with the establishment of the APEC Anti-Corruption and Transparency Experts' Task Force.
- **Sharing Prosperity of the Knowledge-Based Economy: Protecting Innovation and Expanding Digital Opportunity:** In 2005, APEC is taking additional steps to foster innovation in science and technology by focusing on protecting intellectual property rights and enhancing digital opportunities. IPR issues include on-line and offline piracy, best practices and capacity building in IPR enforcement. In 2005, APEC took stock of what members have achieved, individually and collectively, to strengthen the digital opportunity, and will continue to explore ways to add more value.
- **Human Security: Counter-Terrorism, Energy Security, Health and Disaster Response and Preparedness:** Human security remains a top priority for 2005. APEC will fully implement what has been agreed upon to date, and will seek

out additional ways to strengthen APEC counter-terrorism activities. Energy security and health issues, including the fight against HIV/AIDS, will also be key elements of the human security agenda. After feeling the effects of the recent devastating Indian Ocean tsunami, APEC is working towards better preparedness against similar disasters. APEC will focus on a number of areas such as epidemic control, early warning systems, capacity building and APEC's role in assisting vulnerable industries such as fisheries and tourism.

- SMEs and Micro-Enterprises, and Gender Integration: An ongoing agenda in support of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises is being pursued this year, with emphasis on nurturing SMEs that have developed innovative and creative technology. APEC will also examine the role and contribution of women in regional business and encourage further involvement.
- APEC Reform: APEC will continue the momentum of reform planning for a more effective work structure, and address ongoing issues, such as securing the financial sustainability of APEC. An informal 'Friends of the Chair' group is helping to facilitate this exercise.

#### ***University of New South Wales Asia site***

7.110 In April 2004, the University of New South Wales and the Economic Development Board of Singapore jointly announced plans for UNSW Asia to be established in Singapore, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. UNSW Asia will be Singapore's first foreign university, and the first wholly-owned and operated research and teaching campus to be established overseas by an Australian university. It will be built on a green-fields site at South Changi. The campus will offer a comprehensive range of undergraduate, postgraduate and research degrees and will include extensive research laboratories. The first students will be enrolled in February 2007.

7.111 The delegation visited the site and heard a presentation from several UNSW officials on this initiative. The group included the Vice-Chancellor and President of UNSW, Professor Mark Wainright, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Robert King, Professor Greg Whittred, Foundation President, UNSW Asia, and Ms Jennifer Lang, Executive Director, UNSW International. The delegation also received an impressive briefing on the proposed buildings and landscape for the campus from Mr Kerry Hill, Kerry Hill Architects.

#### ***Meeting with Mr Raymond Lim, Acting Foreign Minister***

7.112 The delegation was pleased to meet with Minister Lim, who is Minister, Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Finance and Second Minister for Foreign Affairs. At the time of this meeting, he was acting Foreign Minister while the Foreign Minister, Mr George Yeo, was accompanying Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on an official visit to China.

7.113 The Minister reviewed some of the history of Singapore, emphasising that in 1965, it was not clear that Singapore would survive as the 'red dot' on the map.

Ms Ellis who had visited Singapore several years ago commented on the significant changes that have occurred and the vibrancy of the city state.

7.114 The delegation recorded its thanks to the Minister, parliamentarians, authorities and officials for giving time to discuss the challenges facing contemporary Singapore.

7.115 The delegation questioned the Minister on Singapore's foreign policy, particularly in the Asia/Pacific region and the Minister responded that both countries 'sing from the same song sheet' – on many issues Australia and Singapore have the same strategic responses.

7.116 The meeting discussed the East Asia Summit which Australia will attend and the Minister commented that Singapore very much wants Australia engaged as much as possible in the region.

7.117 Other issues discussed at the meeting included:

- military exercises at Pearce Air Force Base, Perth;
- people to people exchanges, particularly in the education sector; and
- the Free Trade Agreement between the two countries.

7.118 Mrs Moylan and the members of the delegation also raised and discussed with the Minister the plea for clemency for Mr Nguyen.

### ***Ministry of Defence***

7.119 The delegation was briefed by Singapore Defence officials on the Five Power Defence Agreement, including Colonel Ng Chee Peng.

7.120 Australia and Singapore have developed a strong bilateral defence relationship covering a comprehensive range of activities, including high level policy dialogue, significant combined exercises, personnel exchanges and training. A major feature of the relationship is the access to the Australian training areas provided to the Singapore Armed Forces. Singapore has one of the most advanced armed forces in the region. It is one of the Australian Defence Force's most valuable combined exercise partners.

7.121 Australia and Singapore are both members of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), a joint defence arrangement between Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom which is a valuable component of the regional security architecture and the only one with an operational dimension. This arrangement has existed for 31 years and although it originally focussed on the defence of Malaysia and Singapore against conventional threats it now also focuses on asymmetrical threats such as terrorism. Australia and Singapore are also active participants in the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Asia Security Conference (Shangri-La Dialogue).

### ***Meeting with Minister Teo Chee Hean, Minister for Defence***

7.122 The Minister extended a warm welcome to the delegation. In response, Mrs Moylan thanked the Minister for giving of his time to meet with the delegation and emphasised the long-standing close defence ties that exist between Singapore and Australia. She said that the strength of this relationship was exemplified in the delegation's visits to Battle Box and the Changi Chapel and Museum.

7.123 The Minister indicated that the strong relationship between the two countries was based on a shared perspective on a range of international and regional issues. These included recognition of the presence of the United States, and the need to fight terrorism.

7.124 The Minister responded to a number of questions from the delegation on:

- the number and role of women in the Singapore Defence Forces;
- views on regional security;
- the Five Power Defence Agreement;
- the position of China and India; and
- Muslim communities in Singapore and Australia and the need to break down real and perceived prejudices.

7.125 Finally, Mrs Moylan, on behalf of the delegation, expressed the strong concerns about the recent announcement that Singapore would not grant clemency from the death penalty for Van Nguyen. Ms Irene Ng, MP, who also attended the meeting, explained that Singapore had strong drug laws that were well known and that a decision to commute the death sentence would be difficult to explain to the relatives of Singaporeans in the same circumstances.

### ***Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies – Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research***

7.126 The delegation met Dr John Harrison and received an overview of the work of the Institute, including its role in:

- briefing of government and private sector officials;
- education in anti-terrorism; and
- research, including the maintenance of an international terrorism database.

7.127 Dr Harrison, along with a number of his colleagues, provided the delegation with briefings on maritime terrorism and the terrorist threat in the region, and specifically in relation to Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore.

### ***Port of Singapore Authority (PSA)***

7.128 The delegation was pleased to be briefed and to inspect the PSA. The delegation thanks the staff of PSA, including Vice President Wong Fong Tze.

7.129 The delegation was told that PSA is a global leader in the ports and terminals business, with investments in 18 port projects in 11 countries, namely Singapore, Belgium, Brunei, China, India, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Portugal, South Korea and Thailand.

7.130 In 2004, the Group handled 33.11 million TEUs (twenty foot equivalent units) of containers at all its ports around the world, including 20.62 million TEUs in Singapore. According to officials, there are more containers at this single location than anywhere else in the world. Thirty-two percent of containers are "connected" within 12 hours. The delegation was told that a sophisticated computer system tracks each container and that it is extremely rare for a box to be lost.

7.131 PSA Singapore Terminals is also the world's busiest transshipment hub, handling about one-fifth of the world's total container transshipment throughput, and 6 per cent of global container throughput. It is also the world's largest refrigerated container (reefer) port with about 4,000 reefer points, handling over 370,000 reefers in 2004. PSA Singapore Terminals provides shippers with a choice of 200 shipping lines with connections to 600 ports in 123 countries. This includes daily sailings to every major port in the world. It was voted the 'Best Container Terminal Operator (Asia)' for the 16th time at the 2005 Asian Freight and Supply Chain Awards, and 'Best Container Terminal' at the Lloyd's List Maritime Asia Awards, for the 5th time.

7.132 Singapore "consumes" 20 per cent of the boxes that arrive at the port while 80 per cent are transhipped.

7.133 PSA staff are represented by the Singapore Port Workers Union and the Port Officers' Union. The delegation was told that both unions enjoy a close relationship with PSA Management and staff. Currently, PSA Singapore Terminals employs some 5000 people.

### ***Ministry of Home Affairs***

7.134 Singapore is a strategic partner of Australia in the campaign against terrorism. Both countries exchange valuable intelligence, agree on the nature of the terrorist threat, and appreciate the need to tackle terrorism at the ideological level. Singapore favours practical cooperation with Australia on CT rather than a formalised MOU like those Australia has with other countries.

7.135 Australia and Singapore have long-standing defence ties through the Five Power Defence Arrangement. Current bilateral military cooperation includes annual special forces training with an emphasis on counter-hijack and hostage recovery. AUSTRAC and Singapore's financial intelligence unit have an arrangement for the exchange of financial intelligence, and the AFP has conducted training for Singaporean financial investigation officials. Australian experts run training courses

for port security officers in Singapore, and consult with their Singaporean counterparts to improve security arrangements for radioactive sources.

7.136 Australia and Singapore have worked together to promote CT efforts within the region. In Darwin in June 2003, Australia co-hosted with Singapore an ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) workshop on managing the consequences of a terrorist attack. The workshop produced solid outcomes including the establishment of an extensive network of contacts and commitments to continue dialogue. Australia hosted the inaugural Regional Special Forces Counter Terrorism Conference in Bowral in June 2004. The conference aimed to establish a network of regional special force commanders and key policy officers on CT issues. Singapore has confirmed that it will host the 2005 Regional Special Forces Conference.

7.137 Singapore has been the direct target of international terrorist plots, although fortunately none of these have come to fruition. Since December 2001, Singapore has detained more than 50 suspects linked to the Islamic militant group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and the Philippines based separatist group Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Some of those arrested were involved in plots to attack Singaporean official and civilian targets as well as the diplomatic missions of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and Israel in Singapore

7.138 Singapore has taken an active role in implementing strong domestic CT measures. Since 11 September 2001, the government has raised security standards in crucial areas such as aviation security, maritime security, land transport security, border control, and critical infrastructure protection. Singapore has also introduced new structures and enhanced existing organisations in the policy, intelligence and operations domains. Agencies such as the Home Front Security Office and the Joint Counter-Terrorism Centre have been established to give a stronger focus to inter-agency coordination and to build up Singapore's defences against terrorism. As a result, Singapore's capacity to deal with the threat posed by terrorism is well developed and the strongest in the region.

7.139 Singapore has been active in promoting international CT cooperation and capacity building. At various international forums such as the United Nations, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, Commonwealth, Asia-Europe Meeting and Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Singapore has played a constructive role in strengthening international counter-terrorism efforts. Like Australia, Singapore considers that practical cooperation between countries, especially between front-line law-enforcement and security agencies, is the most effective means of achieving tangible progress in combating terrorism. Singapore has been particularly effective in assisting countries in consequence management and disaster relief, including helping to build regional capacity for emergency response in areas such as disaster victim identification.

7.140 The Singaporean government has worked closely with countries in the region to implement a series of practical anti-terrorism measures including: cooperating with other regional countries on maritime security, for example the "eyes in the sky" initiative for the Malacca Straits; co-hosting a workshop with the United States on

counter-terrorism financing in January 2003 to help ASEAN and Pacific Island Forum members strengthen their domestic efforts against terrorism and various intelligence cooperation and information exchange arrangements with regional countries.

7.141 The delegation met with the following officials of the Ministry:

- Ms Philomena Chong Ho Yuet Long — Senior Assistant Director;
- Mr How Siang Meng — Deputy Director;
- Mr Peh Eng Kiat — Assistant Director; and
- Mr Finian Markose — Counter-Terrorism Investigations.

7.142 The delegation received a comprehensive briefing on terrorist threats in South East Asia and specifically in Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and South Thailand and counter-terrorism arrangements.

7.143 In response to delegation questions, the officials advised that:

- most arrests in Singapore in relation to terrorist activities involve local Singaporeans;
- considerable dialogue is occurring with local communities in Singapore, including the Muslim community;
- Singapore has strong internal security legislation that provides for arrest and detention for 2 years. If the detainee is held for more than 30 days, Cabinet and Presidential approval is required. This process is also subject to independent review by an internal security advisory board consisting of a high court judge and two prominent citizens. Those detained are advised of charges against them and in some cases access to lawyers and relatives is delayed for 1 to 2 weeks for operational reasons. The officials stressed that the legislation was designed not to be ‘punitive’ but rather to ‘rehabilitate’.

### ***Other briefings***

7.144 Mrs Moylan and Mrs Hull attended briefings on diabetes, including presentations on epidemiology and the National Diabetes Control Framework, National Healthy Life Style Program. Mrs Moylan and Mrs Hull also visited the Diabetes Clinic at Singapore’s General Hospital and were briefed on the care program for diabetes and saw a demonstration of diabetes management software.

7.145 Mrs Hull, Mrs Irwin and Ms Ellis attended a briefing on ageing and disability issues at the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports. The briefing was presented by officers of the Elderly Development Division and the Disability Policy Branch of the Ministry.



### ***Bali Bomb Victims***

7.146 The delegation visited the Mt Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore to extend best wishes to Mr Paul and Mrs Penelope Anicich from Newcastle who were victims of the Bali bombings on 1 October 2005.

### **Conclusions**

7.147 The Australian delegation expresses its appreciation of members of the Singapore Parliament, several Ministers of State, public officials and representatives of the private sector for the generous time and detailed information provided at meetings during the visit.

7.148 This report attests to the strong bi-lateral relations between Singapore and Australia based on a shared approach to many regional and international issues. The report also indicates the strong economic and people to people links that exist between the two countries. The report also shows that the delegation, through several parliamentary, public and private sector meetings held during its visit has achieved the aims and objectives of what was an interesting and informative visit.

7.149 The delegation, however, records that this visit was overshadowed by the sadness and regret that accompanied the announcement that the Singapore Government had rejected pleas for clemency for Mr Nguyen.

### **Acknowledgements**

7.150 The delegation greatly appreciated the excellent program and the advice and assistance provide during its visit by H.E. Miles Kupa, Australian High Commissioner to Singapore and his enthusiastic and dedicated staff, including Ms Kathy Klugman, Deputy High Commissioner, Mr David Tough, Counsellor, Ms Carla Giuca, Third Secretary, Ms Avryl Lattin, third Secretary and Ms Yvette Smith, Visits Officer. The delegation also commends Ms Annette Morris for the work she does as Second Secretary and Consul.

# **Chapter 8**

## **Meetings of the Association of Secretaries-General of Parliaments**

### **Geneva - October 2005**

#### **Geneva 2005**

8.1 The Clerk of the House of Representatives and President of the Association of Secretaries-General of Parliament (ASGP), Mr Ian Harris, chaired all meetings of the ASGP and its Executive Committee from 17 to 19 October 2004. The ASGP meetings were held in conjunction with the deliberations of the 113<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Assembly in Geneva organised by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Ms Claressa Surtees also attended the meetings, as did Ms Judy Middlebrook, currently on secondment to the IPU secretariat, assisting the ASGP President in Geneva. Both Ms Surtees and Ms Middlebrook played an active role in the Association's deliberations.

#### **Report to IPU Executive Committee**

8.2 On 15 October, Mr Harris presented the annual report of the President of the ASGP to the IPU Executive Committee. The Executive Committee was complimentary of the moves that had been made to align the activities of the two associations, and the attempts to profit from the synergy between the two bodies. Mr Anders Johnsson, the IPU Secretary-General, indicated that there had been co-operation between the IPU Secretariat and past ASGP Presidents, but none equal to that achieved by the organisations during the presidency of M Harris, and he hoped that this would continue.

#### **Consideration of Parliamentary matters**

##### *General debates*

8.3 The general meetings of the ASGP continued the format of general, thematic debates. The chosen subjects were:

- Privileges and immunities in Parliament (Moderator: Mme Hélène Ponceau, Office of the Questor, the Senate, France);
- Inter-parliamentary cooperation within geopolitical regions: the African and worldwide experience (Moderator: Mr Samuel Waweru Ndindiri, National Assembly, Kenya);
- Management issues relating to staff attached to the Speaker/President, Members of Parliament and political groups (Moderator: Mr Xavier Roques, Office of the Questor, National Assembly, France).

8.4 There were also presentations and discussions on specific parliamentary topics. Included on the draft on the agenda was an item sponsored by Australia on the intern experience from a parliamentary and an academic point of view. The Executive Committee had invited Professor Stephen Levine, from New Zealand, to join Mr Harris in a joint presentation. Australia had prepared a paper for the agenda item, but the matter was removed from the agenda in the light of the unavailability because of health considerations of Professor Levine. It may be relisted for a future meeting.

### ***Meeting of the Finno-Ugrick Group***

8.5 Reports of activities at previous IPU/ASGP meetings have indicated that every year, the delegations to the IPU Assembly from the Parliaments of Estonia, Finland and Hungary meet to discuss matters of common concern. The wife of the ASGP President, Erika Harris, is Hungarian-born, and receives an invitation to these meetings, with the ASGP President invited as her partner. Occasionally, when ASGP meetings or functions prevent the attendance of the ASGP President, the Leader of the Australian delegation has accompanied Mrs Harris. For example, in 2003, then Speaker Andrew went to the meeting and was given the opportunity to expand on the attitude of Australia in relation to Iraq. This year, Mr and Mrs Harris were both able to attend the meeting, organised by the Estonian delegation. The meetings next year will be organised by Hungary.

### **Administrative matters**

#### ***New members***

8.6 A number of new members were admitted to the Association. Most were replacing existing members who had retired or moved to other employment.

8.7 During the previous year, Deputy Clerk and ASGP member, Ms Anne Lynch, had retired after over thirty years of meritorious service to the Australian Senate. Australia is entitled to four ASGP members, and in the circumstances of the Senate Department's declining to propose the newly-appointed Deputy Clerk for membership, Mr Harris approached Ms Hilary Penfold, PSM QC, Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services, to ascertain whether she would be prepared for her nomination for membership to be proposed. Under the rules of the Association, membership is available to a person who is in charge of the parliamentary services of an Assembly, and the Secretaries-General to the Questors of the Senate and the National Assembly of France are ASGP members, attending most meetings and playing an active role in Association affairs. The membership of Ms Penfold was endorsed on 17 October.

#### ***Financial and administrative matters***

8.8 The meeting considered administrative and financial matters, and adopted the draft budget recommended by the Executive Committee. The meeting also adopted the draft agenda for the meeting to be held in Kenya in May 2006. A copy of the draft agenda is on the ASGP website ([http:// www.asgp.info/](http://www.asgp.info/)).

## **Executive Committee matters**

8.9 In January 2005, Mr Harris notified all Association members of his intention to resign as President of the Association at the Geneva 2005 meeting, rather than serve a full term (which would expire in May 2006). He advanced a number of reasons, the principal one of which was that his successor would be elected at the non-hosted Geneva meeting. The new President elected was Mr Anders Forsberg, previously Vice-President, Secretary-General of the Riksdagen, Sweden. Mr Carlos Hoffmann Contreras of the Senate of Chile was elected Vice-President. Mr Marc Bosc, House of Commons, Canada, Mr Brissi Lucas Guehi, Cote d'Ivoire and Mr José Pedro Montero, of the Chamber of Deputies, Uruguay were elected as ordinary members of the Executive Committee.

8.10 Towards the conclusion of the meeting, the incoming President, Mr Forsberg, led a warm and unanimous vote of thanks from the floor to Mr Harris for his significant contribution to the leadership of the Association during his term in office and in establishing its future direction. In ending his last term as President, Mr Harris thanked the staff based in Geneva, Paris and London, the members of the Executive Committee and the members of the Association. He also thanked his wife Erika for the assistance she had provided to him and the Association.

8.11 Mr Harris remains a member of the ASGP. He is also an honorary member of its Executive Committee.

### ***Next meeting of the ASGP***

8.12 The next meeting of the Association will be in Nairobi, Kenya, from 8 to 10 May 2006. A draft agenda has been agreed, and this will appear on the ASGP website.