

The Parliament of the
Commonwealth of Australia

**125th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly
in Bern, Switzerland and
Bilateral visits to Germany and Austria**

Report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation

16 – 25 October 2011

November 2012

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Membership of the Delegation

Leader

The Hon Dick Adams, MP
Member for Lyons, Tasmania
Australian Labor Party

Deputy Leader

Mr Patrick Secker
Member for Barker, South Australia
Liberal Party of Australia

Members

Senator Sue Boyce
Senator for Queensland
Liberal Party of Australia

Mr Harry Jenkins, MP
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Member for Scullin, Victoria
Australian Labor Party
(attended Inter-Parliamentary Assembly only)

Senator the Hon Ursula Stephens
New South Wales
Australian Labor Party

Officials

Ms Debra Biggs
Adviser to the Speaker
(accompanied the Speaker at the IPU Assembly)

Mr Philip Anderson
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
(Foreign affairs adviser to the delegation at the IPU)

Ms Claressa Surtees
House of Representative
(attended meetings of the Association of Secretaries
General in Bern)

Ms Jeanette Radcliffe
Delegation secretary

Ms Dee Alty, Ms Sharon Secker and Mr Bob Stephens also accompanied the delegation.

Foreword

Between 16 October 2011 and 25 October 2011, it was my pleasure to lead the Australian parliamentary delegation that attended the 125th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly in Bern, Switzerland and undertook a bilateral visit to Germany and Austria.

The full delegation was:

- Delegation Leader, Mr Dick Adams MP, Member for Lyons;
- Deputy Delegation Leader, Mr Patrick Secker MP, Member for Barker;
- Senator Sue Boyce, Senator for Queensland; and
- Senator Ursula Stephens, Senator for New South Wales.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr Harry Jenkins MP, joined the delegation at the 125th IPU Assembly.

At the IPU Assembly the Delegation was supported by Ms Debra Biggs, Adviser to the Speaker and Mr Phillip Anderson, Adviser, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Ms Claressa Surtees, Clerk Assistant (Table), House of Representatives, represented Australia at the meetings of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments which was held in conjunction with the Assembly. Ms Jeanette Radcliffe, Committee Secretary, Department of the Senate accompanied the delegation as its secretary. Ms Dee Alty, Ms Sharon Secker and Mr Bob Stephens also accompanied the delegation.

This report details the work undertaken by the delegation at the IPU Assembly and outlines the delegation's observations from its visits to Germany and Austria. Both the assembly and the bilateral visit provided the opportunity for the delegation to engage on issues of significance for Australia, including nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, renewable energy and parliamentary strengthening.

The Australian delegation played an active role throughout the IPU Assembly, participating in a range of meetings and accepting key leadership roles. I would like to highlight the following contributions by the delegation during the Assembly:

- The Speaker chaired a panel session of the Committee on United Nations Affairs on *Nuclear Weapons: The Road to Zero*.
- The Speaker and Mr Secker participated in the Working Group on the Scale of Contributions.
- Senator Boyce participated in the discussion in the First Standing Committee (Peace and International Security) on *Promoting and practising good governance as a means of advancing peace and security*.
- Mr Adams and Mr Secker participated in the discussion in the Second Standing Committee (Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade) on

Redistribution of power, not just wealth: ownership of the international agendas.

- Senator Stephens chaired the drafting committee for the emergency resolution on *The plight of people of famine-stricken Somalia and relief efforts by IPU Member Parliaments* and participated in the discussion in the Third Standing Committee (Democracy and Human Rights) on *The role of parliaments in addressing key challenges to securing the health of women and children.*
- Members of the delegation attended all meetings of the Twelve Plus geopolitical group and the Asia Pacific geopolitical group.
- The delegation held bilateral discussions with a number of other delegations. The delegation met with the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the Speaker, Mr Adams and Mr Secker met with the President of the Swiss National Council, Mr Jean-René Germanier and the Speaker, Mr Adams and Senator Stephens met with Sheikh Humam Hamoudi and members of the Iraqi Delegation.
- Members of the delegation also attended a number of official ceremonies and social functions hosted by the Swiss, Ugandan and Canadian Parliaments.

I would like to express sincere thanks to the Parliament of Switzerland for its effective organisation of the 125th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly.

Following the 125th IPU Assembly the delegation undertook official visits to Germany and Austria. The program, outlined at Appendix 1 to this report, provided opportunities to explore issues surrounding sustainable energy production, nuclear non-proliferation, education and international efforts to combat drugs, corruption and terrorism. In addition, the visits provided a welcome opportunity to strengthen parliament to parliament relations between the Australian Parliament and the Parliaments of Germany and Austria.

I would like to acknowledge the support provided by Australian embassies and consulates in Switzerland, Germany and Austria which was vital for the success of the delegation. Australia's representatives to those missions are to be commended for their work and careful attention to detail. Particular thanks are due to Ambassador Peter Tesch and staff of the Australian Embassy in Berlin for their assistance during the bilateral visit to Germany and to Ambassador Michael Potts, and staff of the Australian Embassy in Vienna for assistance and support while the delegation was in Austria.

Prior to departure, the delegation received comprehensive and informative briefings from officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) on its bilateral visits to Germany and Austria.

The delegation is also grateful for the comprehensive and informative briefing provided by officers of DFAT, AusAID, and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, Equal Opportunity for Women in

the Workplace Agency and staff of the Parliamentary Library in preparation for its participation at the IPU Assembly.

On behalf of the delegation I would like to make particular mention of the advice and support provided by Mr Phillip Anderson as foreign affairs adviser to the delegation during the IPU Assembly in Bern.

The delegation also thanks Ms Fiona Way and Mr Andrew Templeton, International Community Relations Office, for their support and assistance, the staff of HRG Travel and Mr Tony Styles, Finance Section, Department of the Senate.

Finally, I thank my fellow delegates for their thoughtful participation in the delegation's meetings and their commitment to our program of work.

Mr Dick Adams MP
Delegation Leader

Chapter 1

The Inter-Parliamentary Union

Introduction

1.1 The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the international organisation of parliaments, providing a focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue. It currently comprises 157 member parliaments and nine associate members.

1.2 The IPU works for peace and co-operation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative democracy. To achieve these aims the IPU:

- fosters contacts, coordination and the exchange of experience among parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries;
- considers questions of international interest and concern;
- contributes to the defence and promotion of human rights; and
- contributes to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the strengthening and development of their means of action.

1.3 One hundred and fifty-nine national parliaments are currently members of the IPU. A list of members is attached as Appendix 2. Ten regional parliamentary assemblies are associate members. Most members are affiliated to one of the six geopolitical groups that are currently active in the IPU.

The work of the IPU

1.4 While the major focus for the Australian delegation is participation in the twice-yearly assemblies, the IPU's work is more far reaching than providing a forum for parliamentary dialogue. The IPU is constantly active in promoting democracy throughout the world. Its main areas of activity are:

- representative democracy;
- international peace and security;
- sustainable development;
- human rights and humanitarian law;
- women in politics; and
- education, science and culture.

IPU Assemblies

1.5 The IPU meets twice each year, for a three day assembly in October and a six-to-seven day assembly April, hosted by a member country. The assemblies bring together parliamentarians to study international problems and make recommendations

for action. The assemblies include debates on significant international issues, the regular meeting of the IPU Governing Council, and meetings of specialist committees, working groups and geopolitical groups.

1.6 The 125th IPU Assembly was held in Bern, Switzerland from 16 – 19 October 2011 and was attended by delegations from 127 member parliaments. The Assembly agenda included meetings of the following parts of the IPU:

- a plenary session of the assembly, attended by all delegates, which debates an emergency item, and holds panel discussions on particular subjects;
- the Governing Council, which is the policy-making body of the IPU, and consists of two or three delegates from each member country;
- ad hoc committees established by the Governing Council (at present there are six of these);
- Standing committees, which discuss a chosen topic in preparation for debate of reports and draft resolutions at the April Assembly; and
- six geopolitical groups.

1.7 This report provides details of the meetings and activities in which the Australian parliamentary delegation to the IPU participated. The agenda and complete documents from the Assembly and related meetings are available from the IPU's website at: www.ipu.org/strct-e/stcnfres.htm#125

Chapter 2

125th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly

Inaugural ceremony and opening of the Assembly

2.1 The 125th Assembly opened with the election by acclamation of Mr Jean-René Germanier, Speaker of the Swiss National Council, as President of the Assembly. Mr Germanier said that it was a great honour for him to have been elected to preside over the Assembly's work.

2.2 The President gave the floor to the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Japan, Mr T Yokomichi, who thanked the IPU Members for their support following the earthquake and tsunami which had affected his country, and gave an update of the measures taken to rebuild and secure the affected areas.

Agenda of the 125th Assembly

2.3 The agenda of the Assembly included the following items:

- choice of an emergency item;
- panel discussions by the three standing committees;
- report of the IPU Committee on UN Affairs; and
- amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules.

Choice of an emergency item

2.4 The Assembly considered three requests for the inclusion of an emergency item:

- *The plight of the people of famine-stricken Somalia and relief efforts by IPU Member Parliaments*, submitted by the delegation of Namibia;
- *Realizing the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination*, submitted by the Palestinian delegation; and
- *The need to further mobilize international support and strengthen international efforts to assist the Somali people suffering from famine*, submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

2.5 The delegations of Palestine and the Islamic Republic of Iran subsequently withdrew their proposals in favour of the one presented by Namibia, which was adopted by acclamation.

2.6 The debate of the emergency item was chaired by the President of the 125th Assembly, Mr Germanier, and by the Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, Mr MV Sisulu, in his capacity as Vice-President of the Assembly.

2.7 Speakers expressed their deep concern over the situation in Somalia and expressed their support, urging all parliamentarians to promote global inter-parliamentary cooperation aimed at advancing relief efforts to mitigate human suffering and hunger in the Horn of Africa.

2.8 These concerns were reflected in the draft resolution, which was prepared by a drafting committee composed of representatives of the parliaments of Argentina, Australia, Cambodia, Canada, Malaysia, Mexico, Namibia and the United Kingdom. Senator Ursula Stephens represented Australia on the drafting committee and was appointed as its president.

2.9 The Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution on the emergency item at its last sitting on Wednesday 19 October 2011.¹



Senator Ursula Stephens addressing the Assembly as President of the drafting committee for the emergency resolution.

IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs

The main objectives and initiatives of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

2.10 In its first session, the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs received a briefing from the UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), President Jorge Sampaio. The subsequent discussions highlighted the need to enhance the role of parliaments in dealing with popular concerns over culture, identity and migration. The committee stressed that parliaments and parliamentarians should consider initiatives to enhance inter cultural dialogue and cooperation, inter alia by organising regular debates in parliament, establishing specific mechanisms to help maintain key issues on the parliamentary agenda, and taking follow-up action with a view to implementing the recommendations of the IPU resolution adopted by the 116th IPU Assembly in 2007: *Ensuring respect for peaceful co-existence between all religious communities and beliefs in a globalised world.*²

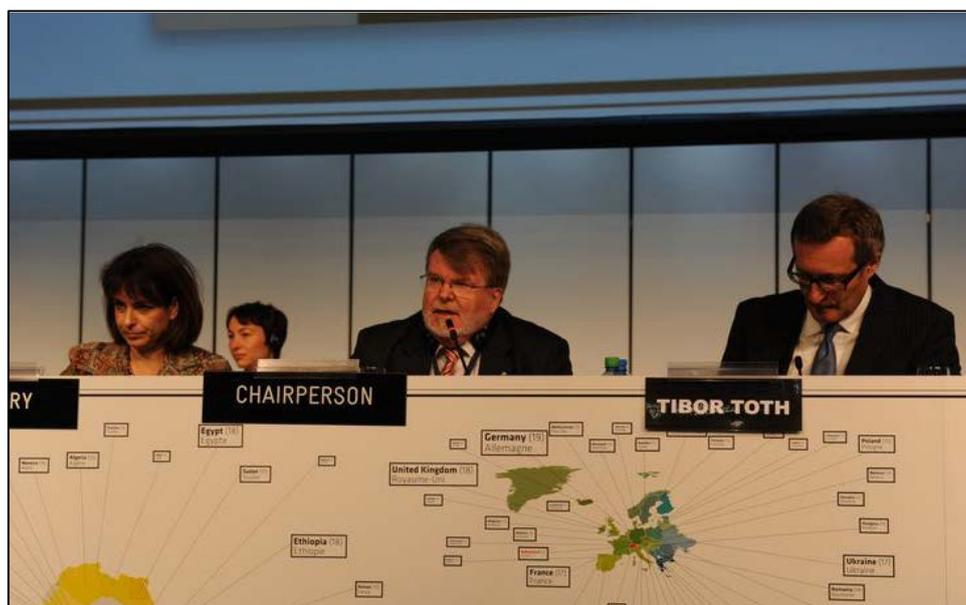
1 The Resolution can be viewed at <http://www.ipu.org/strct-e/stcnfres.htm#125>

2 Resolution adopted by consensus by the 116th IPU Assembly in Nusa Dua, Bali, 4 May 2007, *Ensuring respect for peaceful co-existence between all religious communities and beliefs in a globalised world*, <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/116/116-1.htm>.

Nuclear Weapons: The Road to Zero

2.11 The second session took the form of two panel discussions on *Nuclear Weapons: The Road to Zero*, chaired by the Speaker, Mr Harry Jenkins MP. The event was held as a follow-up to the IPU resolution adopted by the 120th IPU Assembly in 2009: *Advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and securing the entry into force of the comprehensive nuclear-test ban treaty: the role of parliaments*.³

2.12 The first panel focused on the new visions, policies and proposals that have been put forward to address the threats and challenges posed by nuclear weapons. The panel of prominent experts included Mr Gareth Evans, Co-Chair of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and former Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Tibor Tóth, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) and Dr Rebecca E. Johnson, Executive Director, Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy.



The Speaker, Mr Harry Jenkins MP, chairing the panel session Nuclear Weapons: The Road to Zero

2.13 The second panel looked more closely at the steps that can be taken now to work towards the overall objective of achieving zero nuclear weapons. The panel for this segment comprised Lord Desmond Browne, former United Kingdom Defence Secretary, Dr Raphael Chegeni, Co-President of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and Secretary General of the Great Lakes Parliamentary Forum on Peace, and the Honourable Mr Matt Robson, former New Zealand Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control.

3 Resolution adopted by consensus by the 120th IPU Assembly in Addis Ababa, 10 April 2009, *Advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and securing the entry into force of the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty: the role of parliaments*, <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/120/120-1.htm>

2.14 The committee reaffirmed that nuclear weapon States had an obligation to implement the commitments they had undertaken through the Non-Proliferation Treaty and non-nuclear weapon States could help build a framework by prohibiting and criminalising nuclear weapons in their national legislation, establishing regional nuclear weapons-free zones, and promoting common security models as alternatives to nuclear deterrence.

The Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries

2.15 The third session of the committee heard a keynote address by the United Nations High Representative for the Least Developed Countries (LDC), Landlocked Developing countries and Small Island Developing States, Mr Cheick Sidi Diarra. The presentations addressed the main outcomes of the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC IV), held in Istanbul in May 2011 as well as plans for follow-up and the important role of parliaments in the achievement of national development commitments. Participants were briefed on the joint IPU-UN project in support of LDC parliaments and a related Guidance Note developed by the IPU.

Cooperation between the United Nations, parliaments and the IPU

2.16 The committee heard a presentation on the main findings and recommendations of the field mission by the IPU Advisory Group on UN Affairs to Ghana and Sierra Leone. The purpose of the field mission was to examine implementation of UN reform and system-wide coherence at the national level. The committee also took stock of preparations for the UN General Assembly debate on Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU to be held in early 2012.

The green economy: A breakthrough for sustainable development?

2.17 The committee heard a presentation on the state of sustainable development today, the global political and economic context and the objectives of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012. The committee stressed that the sustainable development agenda related to both developed and developing countries and by most standards, remained largely unrealised. The committee was told that the economy was using up far more resources than could be replaced or preserved at the cost of a lower quality of life, and poverty and inequality persisted in spite of an overall increase in total wealth.

State of preparations for the forthcoming session of the UN Climate Change Conference

2.18 The committee discussed preparations for the 2011 session of the UN Climate Change Conference to be held in December 2011 in Durban, South Africa. The committee was briefed on the current negotiations, challenges and requirements for the conclusion of a global agreement on climate policies that encompassed adaptation, mitigation, finance, technology, forests and capacity building.

Advisory Group to the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs

2.19 The Advisory Group to the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs also met during the 125th Assembly. It underscored that, although the Committee was still

a fledgling structure, additional efforts should be made to sensitise Member Parliaments to the Committee's mandate with a view to increasing participation by legislators and enhancing the Committee's status.

Standing Committee Panel Discussions

2.20 Three Standing Committees assist the IPU Assembly with its work. They include representatives from all national groups and function in accordance with their own rules.

2.21 At the 125th Assembly the Standing Committees considered the following topics:

- Promoting and practising good governance as a means of advancing peace and security: Drawing lessons from recent events in the Middle East and North Africa (*First Standing Committee on Peace and International Security*)
- Redistribution of power, not just wealth: Ownership of the international agendas (*Second Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade*)
- Access to health as a basic right: The role of parliaments in addressing key challenges to securing the health of women and children (*Third Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights*)

2.22 The panel discussions at this assembly will inform the preparation of reports and draft resolutions that will form the basis for discussion at the 126th Assembly in Kampala, Uganda in April 2012.

2.23 Australia was represented in all three Standing Committees. Senator Sue Boyce attended the First Standing Committee, Mr Dick Adams MP and Mr Patrick Secker MP attended the Second Standing Committee and Senator Ursula Stephens attended the Third Standing Committee.

First Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

2.24 The panel discussion took place on 20 October and was chaired by Mr SH Chowdhury (Bangladesh), the Committee's President. The co-rapporteurs presented their draft reports, which analysed recent events in the Middle East and North Africa, with particular reference to the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt.

2.25 Participants heard keynote presentations from Mr M El Galad, Editor-in-Chief of the Egyptian daily newspaper *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, Ms S Sekkenes, Senior Adviser, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, UNDP, and Ms K Jabre, Manager of the IPU Gender Partnership Programme.

2.26 Delegates from 48 parliaments and one regional parliamentary organisation took the floor during the ensuing debate. There was broad agreement among delegates on the importance of good governance, which inter alia presupposed political accountability, efforts to curb corruption, and the promotion of gender equality. Participants provided a number of examples of good practices, as well as suggestions on ways to enhance democratic governance. Many delegates underscored that the Arab Spring was an expression of peoples' fundamental desire for dignity and

freedom, and that the revolts in several Arab countries had come in response to the oppressive nature of former or current regimes. Others argued that, for economic or geostrategic reasons, various foreign powers had supported the former regimes, thus delaying the development of democracy in countries such as Tunisia and Egypt.

2.27 Delegates from other Arab countries drew attention to the political reforms taking place in their countries, which, in some cases, had been underway for a number of years. While applauding the co-rapporteurs' efforts to capture the complex political situation in the Middle East and North Africa, some delegates invited them to deepen their analysis. Participants suggested that it might be useful to distinguish between the importance of good governance for the promotion of peace and security, and the evaluation of recent events in the Middle East and North Africa, which were the result of a complex set of historical and political circumstances.

2.28 In her contribution to the discussion, Senator Boyce proposed that practising good governance as a means of advancing peace and security be separated from discussions on the recent events in the Arab world before the draft resolution was discussed at the next Assembly. She suggested that those events should be viewed as a reference point for best practices.

2.29 Senator Boyce said that greater attention should be given to citizen input into good governance at all levels, including in how to establish democracies according to national contexts. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), informing, consulting and engaging citizens were core elements of good governance and the means to promote openness. She said that good governance must be measured and proposed that the attributes which had been identified by the co-rapporteur from Zambia be used as the basis for developing a tool to assist countries in establishing good governance systems. These attributes included: accountability and transparency, broad popular participation in political processes, a fair and efficient system of justice and enforcement of the rule of law.



*Senator Sue Boyce participating in the First Standing Committee's panel discussion:
Promoting and practising good governance as a means of advancing peace and security*

Second Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade

2.30 The Second Standing Committee held its panel discussion on 18 October, with Mr S Alhusseini (Saudi Arabia), President of the Second Standing Committee, in the Chair.

2.31 The two co-rapporteurs presented their respective draft reports and were joined by a non-parliamentary expert, Ms Y Li, Head of the Debt and Development Finance Branch, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

2.32 The subsequent discussion focused on the need for a fundamental re-assessment of power relations between States and citizens and the need to identify ways and means of improving the system of international governance.

2.33 Given the ever increasing number of global challenges and cross-border issues, the existing mechanisms for problem-solving tended to reflect the priorities of those in positions of power rather than those most affected by problems. The recent wave of uprisings referred to as the "Arab Spring" showed that the masses were disillusioned with governments that failed to provide a fair voice and an equitable share of the economic "pie".

2.34 At the global level, trust in multilateral institutions had been eroded and many of those institutions were perceived as reflecting the needs of the post-World War II powers and large economies, at the expense of developing nations. Multilateral institutions and forums for global problem-solving were in dire need of reform if they intended to remain relevant in an increasingly multipolar world and able to tackle the problems of climate change, resource constraints, hunger, poverty and insecurity. Echoing the sentiments reflected by the co-rapporteurs in their reports, most delegates were critical of power equations that underlay decision-making in international bodies such as the UN Security Council, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the G20.

2.35 Delegates pointed to the pervasive influence of media "moguls" and the non-transparent nature of corporate power, in particular the preponderant influence of lobbyists representing private-corporate interests. They endorsed the co-rapporteurs' conclusion that it was necessary to ensure greater transparency in decision-making through freedom of information and a register of lobbyists, both at the national and international levels. The draft reports and the panel discussion served as reminders that effective international accountability depended on strong, vibrant local, regional and national systems of democracy.

Third Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

2.36 The Third Standing Committee held its panel discussion on 18 October with its President, Mr O Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu (Ghana), in the Chair. After the presentation of the co-rapporteurs, the Standing Committee heard presentations by Dr F Bustreo, Assistant Director-General, Family, Women's and Children's Health, World Health Organization, and Dr C Presern, Director of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

2.37 In the discussion that followed, the health of women and children as a human rights issue was clearly of deep concern to parliaments. Inadequate, weak and failing

health systems, insufficient financial and human resources, particularly in the context of entrenched poverty, the marginalisation of women and girls as well as the social and economic inequalities that hindered certain groups from accessing health services, were emphasised as underlying causes of poor health among women and children.

2.38 Some progress had been made in reducing child and maternal deaths as a result of the concerted efforts by the international community over the past few years. However, while some countries were on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) relating to the health of women and children (MDGs 4 and 5), many others were unlikely to meet their targets. Participants called on the international community to sustain and scale up its support as a matter of urgency.

2.39 The key challenges faced by parliaments in addressing women's and children's health included insufficient political space to inform the budget allocations for maternal and child health, and a lack of resources and access to information for their work. As a result, an accountability gap persisted with respect to the provision of resources and implementation of programmes to ensure improved health outcomes for women and children. Participants provided examples of mechanisms and initiatives employed by their parliaments to promote the health of women and children in their countries. Increasingly, countries recognised health as a basic right in their constitutions. Albeit to varying extents and not without challenges, parliamentarians - both men and women - were increasingly working towards ensuring that improvements in women's and children's health were achieved through their legislative, oversight, representation and advocacy functions. Parliamentary mechanisms such as committees and caucuses were used as avenues for advancing MDGs 4 and 5. Those mechanisms were used to inform public opinion on maternal and child health issues, mobilise stakeholders and link parliamentary action to initiatives by other stakeholders. Legislative reforms in support of improved health outcomes included passing laws to remove financial impediments to health care access for all, laws to promote gender equality and access to sexual and reproductive health care, and marriage laws to prevent abuse against women and girls. At all levels, prevention was considered to be better than cure.

2.40 Parliamentarians were urged to participate in national and regional initiatives relating to maternal and child health and to pay more attention to issues such as legislation on mental, sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, and the needs of vulnerable groups.

2.41 It was generally agreed that the resolution to be adopted at the 126th Assembly in Kampala should identify a framework for parliaments' contribution to improved action and accountability on women's and children's health. The resolution and framework should take into account the prevailing realities in the different countries rather than seek to impose a specific approach and should include measures to promote follow-up by IPU Members.

Amendments to the Statutes and Rules of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

2.42 At its 189th sitting, the Governing Council approved amendments to Articles 5.2 and 5.3 of the Statutes. The amendments foresaw statutory sanctions for Associate

Members in arrears of the payment of their contributions and were adopted by the Assembly after hearing the opinion of the Governing Council.

Closing session of the Assembly

2.43 Before the closing of the Assembly, the outgoing President of the IPU, Dr Theo-Ben Gurirab, paid tribute to two retiring IPU staff members, Mr Marcelo Bustos Letelier, Director of Assembly Affairs and Relations with Member Parliaments, and Ms Ingeborg Schwartz, Secretary of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, for their devoted service to the organisation. Both the new President of the IPU and the President of the Assembly joined in that tribute. The President of the Assembly then declared the Assembly closed.

Chapter 3

189th Session of the Governing Council

3.1 The Governing Council is the plenary policy-making body of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The committees and working groups of the IPU report to the Governing Council.

3.2 The 189th Session of the Governing Council was held on 17 and 19 October 2011.

Election of the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

3.3 The Governing Council elected Mr Abdelwahad Radi, Speaker of the Moroccan House of Representatives, as the new President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to replace outgoing President Dr Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia whose three year term ended on 19 October 2011.

3.4 The Governing Council expressed its deep gratitude to Dr Gurirab, for his unwavering commitment to the cause of the IPU and conferred on him the title of Honorary President of the IPU.

Membership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

3.5 At its sitting on 17 October, the Governing Council readmitted the parliaments of Equatorial Guinea and Niger. At its sitting on 19 October, it admitted the Parliament of Chad as a new Member and readmitted the Parliament of Honduras. The Council suspended the membership of the parliaments of Comoros and Liberia, which had accumulated more than three years' arrears in the payment of their contributions. The IPU currently comprises 159 member parliaments. A list of IPU member parliaments is provided at Appendix 2.

3.6 The Governing Council also approved requests for observer status from Penal Reform International (PRI), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (AP-CPLP) and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH).

Financial situation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

3.7 The IPU is funded by its members and associate members through annual assessed contributions and through voluntary funds provided by donors

3.8 The Governing Council was presented with a comprehensive report on the financial situation of the IPU and an updated list of unpaid contributions as at 30 September 2011. On that date, three Members had significant arrears and were subject to sanctions (either suspension or loss of voting rights). The Council took note of the Secretary General's projected operating surplus of CHF 400,000 due largely to the relative strength of the Swiss franc in 2011, as well as to staff turnover resulting in savings in salaries.

3.9 For the 2011 budget, the Secretary General had identified voluntary funding needs totalling CHF 4.5 million. The total voluntary funding received by the end of

2011 was projected to reach CHF 2.5 million. During the discussion, the Governing Council requested information on the possibility of increasing the level of voluntary contributions to fund IPU activities in the future. The Secretary General noted that the Council had set criteria limiting voluntary funding to Council-approved activities under one consolidated budget for the IPU. Funding agreements with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and Irish Aid that had recently expired were currently being renewed. Discussions were underway on further potential funding arrangements with the Canadian International Development Agency. The voluntary portion of the 2012 budget was lower since it had been prepared based on realistic expectations of known or obtainable funding rather on a desirable quantum.

Programme and budget for 2012

3.10 The Governing Council was presented with the budget proposal for 2012 and a summary of planned activities and requirements for 2012-2014. The Executive Committee had acknowledged a budget reduction of 7 per cent in the IPU's regular budget from CHF 13,537,700 for 2011 to CHF 12,593,700 for 2012. Taking into consideration the difficult financial situation of many IPU Members, the Executive Committee had further requested the Secretary General to present options for reducing the IPU's regular budget by a further 3 per cent, in order to achieve a total cut of 10 per cent from the 2011 approved level. That would require a further reduction of CHF 409,770.

3.11 The Executive Committee recognised that reducing the budget even further - to achieve an overall reduction of 10 per cent - would involve governance debate and agreement on which areas of core IPU activities should be taken out of the work programme in a way that was both acceptable to the membership and sustainable over a longer period. That exercise would require extensive discussion involving the full membership. It was noted that, in many of the potential areas for longer-term reduction, there were already agreements and commitments with Members and partners in place for 2012. Cost savings in those areas could therefore only be realised in a few years. It was, however, understood that every effort would be made to realise savings for 2012 and beyond. The Executive Committee noted that the level of funding of core activities also had an impact on the IPU's ability to generate additional voluntary funding from sources beyond the membership.

3.12 The Executive Committee recommended that the 2012 budget be balanced using the anticipated budget surplus from 2011, which would be complemented by the Working Capital Fund up to a combined total of CHF 409,800.

3.13 The Executive Committee further recommended that additional discussions be held ahead of the 126th IPU Assembly in Kampala on areas of activity and expenditure that could be reduced further in the 2013 budgets and beyond. It recommended that the 2012 consolidated budget be amended to reflect a total amount of CHF 13,690,300.

Working Group on the scale of contributions

3.14 The Speaker, Mr Harry Jenkins MP, and Mr Patrick Secker MP participated in the deliberations of the Working Group on the scale of contributions which met on 16 October 2011.

3.15 The Executive Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Working Group that the assessed contributions from Members for the 2012 budget and beyond be based on the latest updated UN scale of contributions. In the future, the IPU scale of contributions would be automatically aligned with the UN scale, which was periodically updated to reflect the economic reality of UN Member States and their capacity to pay.

3.16 During the debate, several Members stressed the need to take cost-cutting measures not because they wished to limit the IPU's activities, but because in the current economic climate, they simply could not afford to pay more. The IPU was setting a good example by reducing its budget. The 10 per-cent cut should be seen as a new base line for regular expenditure.

3.17 Following the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Governing Council approved the new scale of contributions and adopted the 2012 budget.

Cooperation with the United Nations System

3.18 The Governing Council took stock of recent developments in IPU-United Nations cooperation and was informed about a variety of activities carried out in collaboration with or in support of the United Nations.

3.19 The Council received the latest information on the 2011 Joint Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, to be held on 28 and 29 November at UN Headquarters in New York, under the chairmanship of the President of the IPU and the President of the UN General Assembly. The Hearing would examine the topic *Strengthening political accountability for a more peaceful and prosperous world*. All Member Parliaments were encouraged to participate in the event.

IPU Strategy for 2012-2017

3.20 At its sitting on 19 October, the Governing Council adopted by consensus the first ever Strategy for the IPU. Introducing the document on behalf of the Executive Committee, Mr MC Nago, Speaker of the National Assembly of Benin, said that the Strategy was the fruit of two years of debate and consultations with the entire membership. It was a visionary strategy that placed inter-parliamentary cooperation and the IPU at the service of parliaments, democracy and international cooperation.

3.21 The Strategy charted three strategic directions for the IPU's development over the next five years to make the IPU a more effective instrument of parliamentary cooperation:

- build stronger parliaments by focusing on research, standard-setting, technical assistance, gender equality and human rights;

- help bridge the democracy deficit in international relations by developing a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations system, build parliamentary support for international development goals; and
- contribute to peace-building and conflict prevention.

Recent specialised meetings

3.22 The Governing Council took note of the results of the following meetings:

- the Parliamentary Forum on the occasion of the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries;
- the Parliamentary briefing at the 2011 UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on AIDS;
- the Regional Seminar on child rights for parliaments of the CEE-CIS region;
- the Regional Seminar for Asian Parliaments, *Preventing and responding to violence against women and girls: From legislation to effective enforcement*;
- the Fourth Parliamentary Forum on Shaping the Information Society; and
- the Parliamentary Panel within the framework of the Annual WTO Public Forum.

Reports of plenary bodies and specialised committees

3.23 At its sitting on 19 October, the Governing Council took note of the reports on the activities of the following plenary bodies and specialised committees:

- Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians;
- Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians;
- Committee on Middle East Questions;
- Gender Partnership Group;
- Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS; and
- Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law.

Future inter-parliamentary meetings

3.24 The Governing Council took note of the dates for the next two Assemblies, which would be held in Kampala and Quebec City respectively and noted the invitation from the Parliament of Ecuador to host the 128th Assembly. The Council approved the list of future meetings and other activities to be funded by the IPU's regular budget as well as by external sources.

Chapter 4

Geopolitical groups, bilateral meetings and other activities

Introduction

4.1 During the 125th IPU Assembly, a number of subsidiary committees met and the Australian delegation took the opportunity presented by the IPU Assembly to hold several bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the Assembly. This chapter provides a record of those meetings.

Meetings of geopolitical groups

4.2 The IPU has six geopolitical groups that meet during the assemblies to discuss the operation and activities of the IPU. Geopolitical groups play an important role in the functioning of the IPU. Geopolitical groups consider matters on the IPU Agenda and, where possible, agree a group position. Candidatures for positions on IPU committees are also considered and submitted through the geopolitical groups.

4.3 Most member countries are members of at least one of these groups. Australia is a member of two geopolitical groups: the Asia-Pacific Group and the Twelve Plus Group. Pursuant to Article 25 of the Statutes of the Union, Australia has informed the Secretary General that where it proposes to submit candidatures for positions within the IPU it will do so through the Asia-Pacific Group.

4.4 The Australian delegation participated in meetings of both of these geopolitical groups at the 125th IPU Assembly.

Asia Pacific Geopolitical Group

4.5 The Asia-Pacific Group (APG) met once during the 125th IPU Assembly. It received reports from the IPU Executive Committee Meeting on 13-14 October 2011, the ASEAN+3 meeting on 15 October 2012 and the APG Working Group which met on 14 July 2012. The APG also received presentations from the two candidates for the position of IPU President: Dr Abdelwahid Radi from Morocco and Dr Nurhayati Ali Assegaf from Indonesia. The APG also considered the proposals for inclusion of an Emergency Item on the Assembly agenda but did not reach a decision to endorse a particular proposal.

4.6 The ASEAN+3 report advised the APG that ASEAN+3 had endorsed proposed candidatures for vacancies on the IPU Executive Committee, the drafting committee for the Emergency Item and for the Presidency of the IPU. Australia and Canada raised concerns regarding the practice of ASEAN+3 reaching a position on matters to be considered by the APG, including candidatures for vacancies, and then reporting this to the APG. Australia and Canada favoured substantive discussion of such matters by the APG, on the grounds that not all members of the APG are members of ASEAN+3.

Twelve Plus Group

4.7 The Twelve Plus Group met four times during the 125th IPU Assembly and considered a number of matters on the Assembly agenda in detail. The Twelve Plus Group paid particular attention to the following matters:

- improvements to the 2012-2017 IPU Strategy, noting that the final document had been significantly revised to take account of positions advanced by the Twelve Plus Group;
- the establishment of the Sub-Committee on Finance of the Executive Committee;
- the draft IPU budget for 2012, noting that the 10 per cent cut supported by the Twelve Plus had been implemented;
- proposed revisions to the scale of member contributions;
- candidatures for the Presidency of the IPU;
- candidatures for vacancies on IPU committees; and
- the proposals for an emergency item.

Bilateral meetings

Meeting with United Nations Secretary General

4.8 The delegation was honoured to have the opportunity to meet with United Nations Secretary General Mr Ban Ki-moon on 16 October 2011. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the value of preventative diplomacy, review progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the strengthening of the United Nations-Pacific Island Forum partnership following the 42nd Pacific Islands Forum Summit in Auckland in September 2011.

4.9 The Secretary General commended Australia for its support of preventative diplomacy efforts undertaken by regional organisations in the Pacific. He noted the important regional leadership role Australia continues to play in the Pacific, making special mention of Australia's support of UN initiatives through its involvement in the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), its assistance to Fiji and its long-term support of Timor Leste. The Secretary General also expressed his gratitude for Australia's logistical assistance in his historic first visit to the Pacific for the Pacific Islands Forum.

4.10 The Secretary General also spoke of the importance of actively encouraging female representation in every sphere, including parliament. He said that while 28 countries now have at least 30 per cent women's representation in parliament, 160 did not. He noted that of the nine parliaments in the world with no women members of parliament, five were members of the Pacific Island Forum.

4.11 Mr Jenkins thanked the Secretary General for his kind words and emphasised Australia's commitment to supporting greater involvement of the parliaments of the Pacific Island States as members of the IPU. He said that Australia was particularly committed to initiatives that would make the IPU more relevant and accessible to such parliaments. An example of this was the Regional Climate Change Workshop for

Pacific Island Parliaments hosted by the IPU and the Australian Parliament held on the Gold Coast in August 2011. This meeting had brought together nine parliaments from the Pacific region for discussions with representatives from South Africa and South-East Asian parliaments on climate change.

4.12 Mr Jenkins commended the United Nations on its leadership in focusing global attention on socio-economic challenges through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). He said that the MDGs represented an outstanding contribution by the UN to focus attention on the real problems confronting the world. He said that the MDGs had received a great deal of discussion in the Australia Parliament and that this was in turn an effective mechanism for educating and empowering our communities.



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (left) met with Mr Harry Jenkins MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and members of the Australian delegation, on the sidelines of the 125th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly, in Bern, Switzerland. 16 October 2011.

UN Photo: Jean-Marc Ferré

Meeting with President of the Swiss National Council Mr Jean-René Germanier

4.13 On 17 October 2011 members of the Australian delegation met with the President of the Swiss National Council, Mr Jean-René Germanier. The meeting provided an opportunity to strengthen parliamentary relations between Australia and Switzerland and included discussion of the forthcoming Swiss elections, energy policy, the impact of the global financial crisis and the diplomatic relationship between Australia and Switzerland.

4.14 The delegation noted the Swiss Parliament's decision to phase out nuclear power by 2034. Switzerland has five nuclear reactors generating 40 per cent of its electricity. Mr Germanier said that Switzerland would move to boost the development of its hydro-electric plants, which supply 53 per cent of its energy needs, and other renewable energy sources. He said that energy from other renewable sources, such as

biomass, currently accounted for a very small percentage of Switzerland's energy needs.

4.15 Mr Germanier noted that Australia no longer has a diplomatic presence in Bern. The Australian Ambassador to Germany, based in Berlin, is also accredited to Switzerland. Australian representation in Switzerland is based in Geneva and consists of a Consulate-General and the Australian missions to the UN and World Trade Organisation (WTO).

4.16 The delegation stressed the strong ties between Australia and Switzerland, noting that the two countries, enjoy friendly relations based on shared political and economic interests. A key element of the contemporary bilateral relationship is Switzerland's significant investment in Australia.



President of the Swiss National Council, Mr Jean-René Germanier, met with members of the Australian Delegation on the sidelines of the 125th IPU Assembly.

Meeting with the Iraqi Delegation to the IPU

4.17 Members of the delegation were also fortunate to meet with the Iraqi Delegation to the IPU led by Sheikh Humam Hamoudi.

4.18 Iraq and Australia enjoy a warm and increasingly diverse relationship. Australia is a significant development assistance donor to Iraq and both countries are working to enhance their trade relationship.

4.19 Australia continues to support international efforts to assist Iraq's complex transition to a democratic society with an open market-based economy. Australia

focuses its assistance on niche areas in Iraq where Australia has particular expertise and where progress can be made against the Millenium Development Goals.

4.20 In this context, Sheik Hamoudi noted that, like Iraq, Australia is a dry continent and said that Iraq had enjoyed a cooperative relationship with Australia in the area of agricultural development and innovation.

4.21 Sheikh Hamoudi stressed Iraq's interest in strengthening its relationship with Australia. He noted the importance of strong parliamentary ties and the positive role played by visits by parliamentary delegations and Parliamentary Friendship Groups. The delegation noted that educational exchanges could also serve to strengthen such relationships by providing important avenues for cultural understanding.



Members of the Australian delegation meeting with the Iraqi Delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, led by Sheikh Humam Hamoudi.

Chapter 5

Meetings of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments

Introduction

5.1 Ms Claressa Surtees, Clerk Assistant (Table), of the House of Representatives, attended the meetings of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) held in conjunction with the deliberations of the 125th IPU Assembly in Bern, Switzerland. The meetings of the ASGP were held from 17 to 19 October 2011. Ms Surtees participated in the proceedings of the ASGP as the substitute of Mr Bernard Wright, Clerk of the House, and played a full role in relation to meetings, discussions and deliberations.

Relations between the ASGP and the IPU

5.2 Mr Anders Johnsson, Secretary General of the IPU, attended a meeting and led debate on issues of significance for the IPU. As in the previous session, Mr Johnsson referred again to the draft IPU Strategy 2012–17, which had been discussed by geopolitical groups in meetings at the 124th IPU Assembly in Panama and developed further by the Executive Committee in September.

5.3 Mr Johnsson referred also to the budget, and noted that it had been reduced by 7-10 percent. On current levels of expenditure, this would lead to a deficit for the next year, which would be addressed by cost savings to be achieved through reducing the number of staff and level of activities.

5.4 Mr Martin Chungong, Director at the IPU Secretariat of the Division for the Promotion of Democracy, attended a meeting and led debate on recent activities of the IPU. He referred to the planned assessment activities to be commenced at the conclusion of the 125th Assembly. These activities would involve the review of certain parliaments, initially in Egypt and later in Libya. A report would be prepared for 2012, with the draft to be reviewed by several members of the ASGP.

5.5 Mr Chungong announced there would be a review of the processes and operations of the IPU Secretariat, with reference to results based management and budgeting. He expected a report by the next meeting in Uganda. Mr Chungong stated that as the budget was coming under pressure, in order to maintain support activities they would be looking for donors, including members of the ASGP, for support. Donors had previously included Irish Aid, CEDA and US AID.

5.6 Mr Chungong concluded by thanking Dr Hafnaoui Amrani (Algeria) for his support during the term of his presidency of the ASGP, and looked forward to working with Mr Marc Bosc (Canada) as the incoming ASGP President.

Conference on effective capacity building programmes for parliamentarians: organised jointly with the IPU and Monash University—20 October 2011

5.7 Once again the IPU and the ASGP combined, on this occasion together with Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, to organise a special conference to follow the regular meetings in Bern. The agenda was developed to examine the challenges and opportunities in providing capacity building to parliamentarians, and Ms Surtees attended this conference and participated in proceedings.

5.8 Opening remarks were made by Dr Amrani. Parliamentarians and secretaries general participated in discussions focusing on the need for effective induction and orientation for new parliamentarians, the importance of accommodating particular traditions, rules and procedure of each parliament in such programmes, and acknowledging lessons learned from international support for capacity building and through case studies from different regions. Closing remarks were made by Mr Bosc.

Consideration of parliamentary matters

General debates

5.9 The general meetings of the ASGP continued the format of selected general thematic debates. The chosen subjects for this session were:

- Planning chamber business – informal channels for decision-making and timetabling; and
- The concept of an activist Parliament.

Communications

5.10 There were also presentations and discussions on specific parliamentary topics:

- Relations between Parliaments and the Constitutional Courts;
- The unseating of a Speaker by the courts and its implications;
- Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (PIC): Rationale and activity plan;
- Role of party discipline in the legislative process;
- Attendance policy for Members of Parliament: the South African experience;
- Suspension of a Member from attending proceedings of the House;
- Rules for the use and misuse of research facilities in Parliament;
- Meeting the information needs of Members in Parliament;
- Exchange of information between government and parliament; and
- The Dutch Senate: a paperless parliament.

Other presentations

5.11 There were also presentations and discussions on the following related matters:

- The parliamentary system of Switzerland; and
- The organisation of the next session of meetings in Kampala, Uganda, 1 to 5 April 2012.

Administrative matters

Budget

5.12 A draft budget of the ASGP for 2012 was circulated.

New members

5.13 A number of new members were admitted to the ASGP, most were replacing existing members who had retired or moved to other employment. In addition, one new associate member from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe was admitted, replacing a previous associate member.

Elections for members of the Executive Committee

5.14 Nominations for the posts of President and one Vice-President, and for two ordinary members of the Executive Committee were invited during the course of the meetings. An election was held for the post of President and Mr Marc Bosc, Deputy Clerk of the House of Commons of Canada, was elected President. An election was held for one post of Vice-President and Dr Ulrich Schoeler, Deputy Secretary General of the Bundestag of Germany, was elected Vice-President. As only two members nominated to vacant posts of ordinary members of the Executive Committee, Mme Marie-Francoise Pucetti, Deputy Secretary General of the National Assembly of Gabon, and Mr Geert Hamilton, Clerk of the Senate of the States General of the Netherlands, were elected to the Executive Committee.

Next meetings

5.15 A draft agenda for the next session, in the northern hemisphere Spring 2012 in Kampala, Uganda, was circulated. When further developed it is to be placed on the ASGP website. <http://www.asgp.info/en/home>.



Delegates to meetings of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments

Chapter 6

Bilateral visit to Germany

Introduction

6.1 The delegation's visit to Germany provided opportunities to explore issues surrounding sustainable energy production, the Eurozone Crisis, and education.

6.2 The Federal Republic of Germany is the largest economy in Europe and the fourth largest in the world, with a gross domestic product of more than A\$3.3 trillion in 2010. Germany is the largest contributor to the European Union budget. Fuelled by robust export growth and stronger domestic consumption, Germany's GDP grew by 3.6 per cent in 2010 (twice the European Union average).

6.3 Services account for 70 per cent of the economy, manufacturing accounts for 30 per cent and agriculture accounts for less than one per cent. German manufacturing is globally competitive in automobiles, machinery, metals and chemical goods.

6.4 The Australia-Germany trade relationship is substantial but heavily in Germany's favour. Germany was Australia's tenth largest merchandise trading partner overall in 2009-10 and Australia's seventh largest investor.

6.5 Germany is a leading producer of new energy technologies such as wind turbines and solar power panels and its exports in this sector are growing markedly.

Acknowledgements

6.6 The delegation is grateful to HE Ambassador Peter Tesch, Australian Ambassador to Germany and Switzerland, Mr Damien Miller, Deputy Head of Mission, Ms Elfie Stapleton, Third Secretary and Vice Consul, and other members of the Australian Embassy in Berlin for arranging a varied and informative program and for the support and briefing they provided to the delegation throughout its visit.

6.7 The delegation also wishes to express its sincere thanks to the following individuals and groups who met with the delegation in Germany:

- Professor Dr Michael Bollig, Pro-Rector for Academic, Career, Diversity and International Affairs, and other staff of the University of Cologne;
- Mr Bernhard Milow, Program Director, Energy and Mr Klause Hennecke, German Aerospace Centre (DLR)
- Mr Jürgen Herrmann MdB, Chairman, and other members of the Germany-Australia-New Zealand Parliamentary Friendship Group;
- Mr Berthold Goeke, Deputy Director General, Renewable Energies Directorate, German Ministry of Environment;
- Mr Heiner Herkenhoff, Representative of the Board, Commerzbank, Dr Michael Kemmer, General Manager, German Banking Association, and Mr Harald Eisenach, Managing Director, Head of North-East Region, Deutsche Bank; and

- Mr Elmar Baumann, Executive Officer, German Association of Biofuels Industry.



The delegation at the Reichstag, Berlin

Education - University of Cologne

6.8 The delegation was pleased to commence its visit to Germany by meeting with Professor Dr Michael Bollig, Pro-Rector for Academic, Career, Diversity and International Affairs, and other staff of the University of Cologne. People to people links between Australia and Germany are significant and play a key role in shaping German perceptions of Australia. In 2009, Germany was Australia's largest European market for students with 6,340 German student enrolments in Australia, and the second-largest European market for overseas visitors in Australia. The University of Cologne has the largest Australian Studies program in Germany with a current enrolment of 1,000 students. The delegation's meeting with Professor Bollig provided an opportunity to gain an understanding of opportunities for further academic exchange between Australian and German universities.

6.9 Professor Bollig provided an overview of Germany's initiatives to improve the quality of German universities and research institutions before setting out the University of Cologne's own initiatives to improve its ranking over the last five years.

6.10 In 2004 Germany began a debate about how to strengthen its position as a location of excellence for science and research. The key focus was the competitiveness of German universities and research centres with respect to international standards and Germany's ability to attract scholars from other countries. In 2005 the German federal government and the federal states signed an agreement on the Excellence Initiative. This contract had the specific aims of funding top-level research, enhancing the international visibility of research activities and driving fundamental structural change by rewarding cooperation between disciplines and institutions and strengthening the international networking of research. University

research funded through the Excellence Initiative is conducted in large networks (or clusters) and in cooperation with non-university research institutions.

6.11 Key areas of focus for the University of Cologne have been in the life sciences, humanities, physics and astronomy. The University has established close relationships with research institutes outside the university, such as the Max Planck Institutes. In the last five years the University has improved its rankings significantly and is now ranked just behind the current Excellence Initiative universities.

6.12 The University of Cologne has strong relationships with a number of Australian Universities including faculty-specific partnerships and student exchange programs with the University of Sydney, the University of Technology Sydney and the University of Melbourne.

6.13 Through its vibrant Australian studies program the University has also established links with Charles Darwin University, the University of South Australia, the University of Western Australia, University of Sydney and the Australian National University. The delegation was fortunate to have the opportunity to meet with Professor Beate Neumeier and her colleagues from the Australian studies program.

6.14 Professor Neumeier was instrumental in setting up the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) sponsored Chair for Australian and Indigenous Studies at the University of Cologne. The Chair is named in honour of Dr R Marika. Dr Marika was a linguist, translator, leader and teacher, highly regarded in her community of Yirrkala Dhanbul, and more widely in Australia and overseas, for her tireless work for reconciliation and as a champion of Yolngu language and culture. The Dr R Marika Chair was first held by Dr Brian Devlin, Charles Darwin University (October 2009 – February 2010).



*The delegation with Professor Michael Bollig,
Professor Beate Neumeier and Professor Dany Adone, University of Cologne*

Renewable energy research - German Aerospace Centre (DLR)

6.15 The delegation's visit to the German Aerospace Centre (DLR) provided an opportunity to gain an understanding of research and development underpinning Germany's decision to phase out nuclear energy in favour of an accelerated transition to a clean energy system built on renewable energy. DLR is Germany's national research centre for aeronautics and space. Its research and development work in aeronautics, space, energy, transport, defence and security is integrated into national and international cooperative ventures. DLR undertakes a wide range of energy research activities for civilian and military purposes with a particular focus on linking research to practical applications.

6.16 Mr Bernhard Milow and Mr Klause Hennecke from DLR led an interesting discussion about some of the practical challenges of developing large scale solar power arrays in northern African which could provide more than 10 per cent of Europe's electricity by 2050.

6.17 DLR's Institute of Solar Research in Cologne is Germany's largest research group on solar concentrating technologies and has further subdivisions in Stuttgart, Jülich and Almería (Spain). The institute is currently working on the development of concentrated solar systems for the generation of energy, heat and fuels to contribute to a future sustainable energy supply based on renewable energies

6.18 The delegation observed that DLR are grappling with a number of similar challenges encountered by Australian research in this field, such as the distance between solar sites and the centres where power is required and the considerable capital expenditure required for initial development. The delegation's visit to DLR included a tour of its prototype 25kW solar furnace and other solar test facilities.

Strengthening parliament to parliament relations

6.19 On 21 October the delegation met with Mr Jürgen Herrmann MdB, Chairman of the Germany-Australia-New Zealand Parliamentary Friendship Group and other members of the Parliamentary Friendship Group. The delegation welcomed this opportunity to meet with members of the German parliament and Mr Adams observed that this was a good follow-up to Mr Herrmann's visit to Australia with the German Parliament's Budget Committee in February 2011.

6.20 That earlier visit had offered an opportunity for an exchange of views about a range of matters including renewable energy. The delegation was very interested to discuss Germany's decision to phase out nuclear energy and boost its use of renewable energy sources. Mr Herrmann said that there had been cross-party consensus to phase out nuclear energy for some time. The Fukushima accident had galvanised anti-nuclear sentiment. On 30 May 2011 the German government announced a plan to shut all nuclear reactors by 2022. In announcing the policy, the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, had stated that Germany intended to phase out nuclear energy and reduce its CO₂ emissions by 40 per cent and double its share of renewable energies from 17 per cent to 35 per cent.

6.21 Mr Herrmann noted that Germany faced significant challenges in implementing its renewable energy policy. He cited distribution issues associated with

grid capacity and challenges with public acceptance of some renewable energies, such as wind farms. Mr Adams said that Australia was familiar with grid capacity and public perception issues.

6.22 With the forthcoming European Council Summit on Sunday 23 October 2012, the meeting also offered an opportunity to discuss the significance of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany's September 2011 ruling that Germany could proceed with its contribution to the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). As the European Union's largest economy, the participation of Germany in the ESM was highly significant.

Meeting with Renewable Energies Directorate

6.23 The delegation's meeting with Mr Berthold Goeke, Deputy Director General, Renewable Energies Directorate provided an opportunity to examine Germany's ambitious plans to accelerate Germany's reliance on renewable energy. Mr Goeke explained that this process had commenced in 2010 with the passage of the *Renewable Energy Act 2010*. Further legislative amendments during 2011 had established a minimum requirement of not less than 35 per cent of renewable energy in electricity supply by 2020, progressively increasing to not less than 80 per cent by 2050.

6.24 Mr Goeke said that the early gains in the transition to sources of renewable energy had been relatively easy, but that the Government now faced a number of challenges. He said that it was important to accelerate market and system acceptance and integration to achieve a more satisfactory relationship between production and demand. He also noted that subsidies designed to generate investment in new technologies needed to be carefully managed.

6.25 To encourage the use of new energy technologies Germany had implemented a system of feed-in electricity tariffs. In 2011 20 per cent of electricity in Germany came from renewable sources and 70 per cent of this was supported with feed-in tariffs. Through the tariff system utilities are required to buy electricity from renewable energy operators at a fixed rate that is guaranteed for 20 years, providing a stable investment environment. The difference between the market price and the feed in tariff is met by the end consumer. Mr Goeke observed that there was a need for care both in setting rates of subsidy and in choosing which infrastructure to subsidise. He noted that it was undesirable to commit to specific technologies too early.

German Biofuels Industry

6.26 Mr Elmar Baumann, Managing Director of the Association of German Biofuels Industry, provided the delegation with a very useful overview of the German biofuels industry. Since the beginning of 2011, bioethanol petrol (E10) has been available at German petrol stations. All petrol stations throughout Germany are required to offer conventional petrol (E5) as fuel for the time being. E85 bioethanol fuel is available at approximately 350 filling stations across Germany.

6.27 Production at the nine bioethanol plants in Germany has remained virtually unchanged in recent years. Production in 2010 was almost 0.6 million tonnes, two-thirds of which was extracted from grains, while the remaining third was extracted from beet stock.

6.28 In 2010, 2.6 million tonnes of the diesel fuel substitute biodiesel were consumed in Germany, equivalent to 8 per cent of Germany's diesel fuel consumption. In 2010, German biodiesel production capacity was approximately 4.9 million tonnes, produced at 45 plants with individual capacities between 2,000 and 580,000 tonnes per year making it the world's top producer.

6.29 In 2011 biofuels accounted for approximately 5.4 per cent of German fuel consumption. Biodiesel accounted for the largest share of the German biofuel market. Mr Baumann said that production of biodiesel and pure vegetable oil has dropped in recent years due to a change in German renewable energy policy. Biodiesel and pure vegetable oil are no longer exempt from the petroleum tax.

6.30 Mr Elmar said that the current debate in Germany around questions of land use and food versus fuel had a significant impact on biofuels policy in Germany and throughout Europe.

Eurozone crisis

6.31 The delegation's visit to Germany coincided with the commencement of six days of meetings between Eurozone leaders regarding measures to prevent the collapse of member economies.

6.32 The delegation was grateful to Ambassador Tesch for hosting a lunchtime meeting with Mr Heiner Herkenhoff, Representative of the Board, Commerzbank, Dr Michael Kemmer, General Manager, German Banking Association, and Mr Harald Eisenach, Managing Director, Head of North-East Region, Deutsche Bank to discuss the Eurozone crisis. The meeting provided an opportunity for a frank discussion of various historical, political, and economic elements of the crisis. The delegation agreed that there was great benefit in being able to receive a first-hand perspective on the crisis from the German banking sector.

6.33 In their remarks to the delegation the three representatives emphasised that crisis was not new to the European Union and that this particular crisis offered opportunities for leadership and opportunities to address some of the more fundamental issues facing the Union. They observed that the crisis had highlighted the need for a common fiscal and economic policy, not just a common currency. Each expressed confidence that Germany and the European Union would survive the crisis. They stressed that Germany's financial position was sound, despite a slight downturn in the German economy

Cultural Exchange - Dresden

6.34 Cultural exchanges play a key role in the bilateral relationship between Australia and Germany. An Australia Council representative in Berlin works with the Australian Embassy to assist Australian artists and writers to operate in the German market. A Cultural Agreement between Germany and Australia aimed at enhancing cultural and academic exchanges was signed in November 1997.

6.35 A significant number of Australian artists are based in Germany, working in music, performing and visual arts, literature, as well as arts management. They include prominent figures such as Simone Young, General Manager and Music Director of the

Hamburg State Opera and Music Director of the Philharmonic State Orchestra Hamburg. The delegation was very fortunate to attend a performance of Benjamin Britten's 'War Requiem' by the Dresden Philharmonic conducted by Simone Young in the Frauenkirche Dresden. After the performance the delegation met with Ms Young and Australian soprano Ms Miriam Gordon-Stewart.

Conclusions

6.36 The delegation's visit to Germany provided some excellent opportunities to strengthen the important bilateral relationship between the two countries. The program for the visit focussed primarily on the renewable energy and education sectors. Both of these are areas where Australia and Germany have much to learn from each other.

6.37 Through a series of frank discussions the delegation was able to gain a clearer understanding of the historical, economic, social and environmental context of Germany's enthusiastic approach to renewable energies. The delegation appreciated the honest way in which representatives from government, industry and research sectors discussed both the successes and lessons learned to date.

6.38 Many of the issues raised around market and system acceptance, and land use competition between food, fibre, forestry and fuel in Germany have been encountered in Australia's efforts to encourage greater reliance on renewable energies. It was educative to explore alternate models for encouraging and supporting diversity and innovation across all sectors of the renewable energy industry.

6.39 Similarly, the delegation welcomed the opportunity to explore Germany's approach to encouraging innovation and excellence in its tertiary education sector. It was also very encouraging to note the successful collaboration between the University of Cologne's Australian studies program and a number of Australian universities. This serves to underscore the cultural and economic value of such exchanges.

6.40 Finally, the delegation was very pleased to have the opportunity to further strengthen the ties between the Australian and German Parliaments. The delegation received a very warm welcome from members of the Germany-Australia-New Zealand friendship group and was able to discuss a wide range of issues of mutual interest to both parliaments. The delegation was saddened to learn of the sudden passing of Mr Jürgen Herrmann MdB, Chairman of the Friendship Group in August 2012. Mr Herrmann was a very good friend to Australia with a firm commitment to fostering inter-parliamentary relations.

Chapter 7

Bilateral visit to Austria

Background

7.1 The delegation's visit to Austria provided an opportunity to strengthen parliamentary relations and visit three key international institutions based in Vienna.

7.2 Australia enjoys friendly relations with Austria, underpinned by a wide range of political, economic and social links. The two countries share common positions on a number of multilateral issues including non-proliferation, arms control, human rights and the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

7.3 Austria has a long history of close links with Australia since Austrians visited Australia as members of early scientific, diplomatic and religious missions. The bulk of Austrian migration to Australia took place between the end of World War II and 1960. Today, the relationship is marked by strong people-to-people links with around 51,000 Australians with Austrian ancestry.

7.4 In 2011 Austria was Australia's 41st largest merchandise trading partner with Austria being the stronger partner in the relationship. The main products exported by Australia to Austria were gold coin and legal tender coin, leather, electrical circuits equipment, vehicle parts and accessories, and in 2011, for the first time, silver and platinum. Major Austrian imports to Australia in 2011 were non-alcoholic beverages, pharmaceutical products and medicaments, manufactures of base metal, and motorcycles and cycles.

7.5 Austria has been a member state of the European Union since January 1995 and is a member of the Schengen region. Austria's role within the EU remains a key area of interest for the government. Austria has a strong policy commitment to strengthening the EU's role as an international player and supports measures to deepen the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the development of a common European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

7.6 The Eurozone recession has affected Austria to some degree, but the stimulus provided to its exports by economies outside of Europe cushioned its effects, in particular in the first half of 2011. Austria's GDP, in terms of volume, grew by 3.1 per cent by the end of 2011.

Acknowledgements

7.7 The delegation is grateful to HE Ambassador Michael Potts, Mr Gerry Mcguire, Deputy Head Mission, Dr Ada Cheung, First Secretary, and other staff of the Australian Embassy in Vienna for arranging a very useful program and for the support and briefings they provided to the delegation.

7.8 The delegation also wishes to express its sincere thanks to the following individuals and groups who met with the delegation in Vienna:

- Ms Barbara Prammer, President of the Austrian National Council;

- Mr David Waller, Deputy Director General Management, and other officers of the International Atomic Energy Agency;
- Mr Tibor Toth, Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Organisation Preparatory Commission, and other officers of the CTBTO; and
- Sandeep Chawla, Director, Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, and other officers of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.



The delegation with HE Ambassador Michael Potts at the Austrian Parliament

Strengthening parliament to parliament relations

7.9 On 25 October 2011, the delegation met with the President of the Austrian National Council, Ms Barbara Prammer and was given a tour of the Austrian Parliament.

7.10 Austria is a federal republic, comprising nine provinces, each with its own provincial assembly and government. Legislative power is vested in a bicameral federal assembly, which has a similar structure to the Australian Federal Parliament. The lower house, the Nationalrat, has 183 members elected for five year terms. The upper house, the Bundesrat, has 64 members elected by the provincial assemblies. Seats are apportioned in relation to the population of each province. The Head of State, the Federal President, is elected by popular vote for a six-year term. The Federal Presidency is primarily a ceremonial position. The President is advised by the Council of Ministers, led by the Federal Chancellor, and is answerable to the Nationalrat.

7.11 The delegation's visit to the Austrian Parliament coincided with celebrations to mark the International Day of Democracy and the Austrian National Day on 26 October 2011.

7.12 The delegation's meeting with President Prammer offered an opportunity to discuss approaches to parliamentary accountability and transparency in the Australian and Austrian parliaments. The delegation said that the Australian parliament had recently passed legislation to create a Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO). The role of the PBO would be to inform the Parliament by providing independent and non-partisan analysis of the budget, fiscal policy and the financial implications of proposals. The PBO's functions will include: preparing budget analyses and policy costings on request by Senators and Members, preparing submissions to inquiries of Parliamentary Committees and, at its own initiative, conducting and publishing research on the budget and fiscal policy settings.

7.13 Senators Boyce and Stephens also noted that while the delegation had been away, the Senate's eight Legislation Committees had held supplementary budget estimates hearings. They explained that the estimates hearings play a key role in parliamentary scrutiny of the performance of the executive branch of government.

7.14 Ms Prammer noted that the Austrian Parliament also had mechanisms that provided for budgetary scrutiny throughout the year. The National Council approves the budget in two steps: in spring the budget framework is adopted, and then the Budget Committee discusses the draft in detail in the course of several sittings. Subsequent deliberation in plenary also takes several days. Only the National Council has a role in discussing and approving the budget.

7.15 The Austrian Constitution also provides for the National Council's participation in budget management. Under this provision the Budget Committee checks the work of the Finance Minister and his/her officials continuously. Detailed scrutiny of the economic aspects of the budget, or management control, is undertaken by the Court of Audit which also prepares the Federal Balance of Accounts at the end of the fiscal year.

7.16 The Austrian Court of Audit is a federal body that acts on a federal, länder and municipal level to verify that budgets are being spent economically, efficiently and effectively. Dr Prammer said that this form of public auditing is seen as one of the cornerstones of the Austrian parliamentary system.



The delegation with Ms Barbara Prammer, President of the Austrian National Council

Meetings with International Organisations

7.17 Austria's capital Vienna is the base for key international organisations, including the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation and the United Nation's Office on Drugs and Crime. The delegation was fortunate to be able to meet with representatives of these three organisations and receive detailed briefings on the important work that they undertake.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

7.18 The IAEA is the world's centre of cooperation in the nuclear field. It was set up as the world's "Atoms for Peace" organisation in 1957 within the United Nations. The Agency works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote safe, secure and peaceful nuclear technologies.

7.19 As an independent international organisation related to the United Nations system, the IAEA's relationship with the UN is regulated by special agreement. IAEA programmes and budgets are set through decisions of its 35 member Board of Governors and the General Conference of all Member States. The IAEA reports annually to the UN General Assembly and, when appropriate, to the Security Council regarding non-compliance of States with their safeguards obligations as well as on matters relating to international peace and security.

7.20 Mr David Waller, the Deputy Director General for Management, welcomed the delegation saying that visits from Parliamentary delegations were important in disseminating a broader appreciation of the scope of the IAEA's work. He said that the IAEA is often tagged as a nuclear watchdog, but that this presents a very limited view of what is really a much broader mandate. The IAEA works for the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear science and technology. A key role of the IAEA is to contribute to international peace and security. It does this through its work to provide a strong, sustainable and visible global nuclear safety and security framework, its duties as the world's nuclear inspectorate, and by fostering the efficient and safe use of

nuclear power through its support for nuclear programs around the world and technical cooperation.

7.21 It also plays a key role in assisting countries to work toward the Millennium Development Goals for social, economic and environmental development. The IAEA helps countries to use nuclear and isotopic techniques to promote sustainable development objectives in agriculture, human health, water resource management, marine environment and industrial applications.



The delegation with Mr David Waller, the Deputy Director General for Management, IAEA

Nuclear Safety

7.22 Mr Gustavo Caruso, Special Coordinator on Nuclear Safety, provided an overview of the IAEA's Action Plan for Nuclear Safety. Mr Caruso explained that the Action Plan had resulted from the IAEA's Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety held in Vienna in June 2011. The conference was called to identify lessons learned from the nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station in Japan that was caused by an earthquake and tsunami on 11 March 2011. The conference adopted a Ministerial Declaration that called for improvements in global nuclear safety and asked the Director General to prepare a draft action plan to address issues related to nuclear safety, emergency preparedness and response, and radiation protection of people and the environment, as well as the international legal framework.

7.23 The Action Plan was adopted by the IAEA's Board of Governors and had been unanimously endorsed by the IAEA General Conference in September 2011. The ultimate goal of the Action Plan is to strengthen nuclear safety worldwide by:

- strengthening safety standards;
- providing for systemic review of all nuclear power plants;
- enhancing the effectiveness of national nuclear regulatory bodies;
- strengthening global emergency preparedness and response systems; and
- expanding the IAEA's role in receiving and disseminating information.

Nuclear Security

7.24 Mr Tim Andrews, Group Leader, Office of Nuclear Security, provided a briefing on Nuclear Security. The objective of the IAEA's Nuclear Security Programme is to contribute to global efforts toward achieving worldwide, effective security wherever nuclear or other radioactive material is in use, storage and/or transport. The IAEA assists through capacity building, guidance, human resource development, sustainability and risk reduction.

Thorium

7.25 Mr Harikrishnan Tulsidas, nuclear technology specialist, provided an overview of the role of thorium to supplement fuel cycles for future nuclear energy systems. Due to increased demand for carbon-free energy, accelerated growth of nuclear power is foreseen in several countries, especially in China and India. The use of abundant thorium deposits as nuclear fuel may provide an opportunity for supplying future large scale deployment of nuclear energy systems and enhancing the sustainability of nuclear power.

7.26 Geochemically thorium is four times more abundant than uranium and major concentrations of thorium are found in a number of countries including Australia, Brazil, Canada, India, Norway, South Africa and the USA.

7.27 The present production of thorium is mainly as a by-product of the processing of heavy mineral sand deposits for Rare Earth Elements (REE). As a result of the recent shortage in REE supplies and subsequent boom in development of REE projects, thorium as a by-product from REE industries has become important.

7.28 In December 2010, the IAEA's International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles (INPRO) completed a three-year Collaborative Project on Further Investigation of the U-233/Thorium Fuel Cycle (ThFC). The project examined the potential of ThFCs to help achieve sustainable nuclear energy. While the project does not claim completeness (several possible reactor types for thorium application were not considered) the study should provide an incentive for further consideration and development.

IAEA Safeguards

7.29 Mr Marco Marzo, Director, IAEA Safeguards Division Operations A, provided the delegation with a briefing on IAEA safeguards. He said that the safeguards system is an important element of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime and comprises an extensive set of technical measures by which the IAEA Secretariat independently verifies the correctness and the completeness of the declarations made by States about their nuclear material and activities. The purpose of the safeguards system is to provide credible assurance to the international community that nuclear material and other specified items are not diverted from peaceful nuclear uses.

7.30 The safeguards system consists of several, interrelated elements:

- The IAEA's statutory authority to establish and administer safeguards;
- The rights and obligations assumed in safeguards and agreements and additional protocols; and

- The technical measures implemented pursuant to those agreements

7.31 Under comprehensive safeguards agreements the IAEA is provided with information and access to verify the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities.

7.32 In the early 1990s, some significant weaknesses in the safeguards system were exposed with the discovery of Iraq's clandestine nuclear weapons program. This led to a focus on safeguard strengthening measures including the need for greater rights of access at declared sites and elsewhere, greater capabilities to acquire and analyse information and the deployment of new technologies, particularly environmental sampling. This culminated in the adoption of the Model Additional Protocol. Australia was the first country to sign up to and implement the additional measures, having had a pioneering role in assisting the IAEA to develop the procedures and methods for strengthened safeguards.

7.33 Mr Marzo told the delegation that a central element of the strengthened safeguards is the comprehensive State Evaluation. Through the State Evaluation process the IAEA can use all available information about a State's nuclear program to establish a thorough understanding of the State's nuclear and nuclear related activities and plan, implement and evaluate safeguards activities. A substantially increased amount of information is available to the IAEA, including:

- information supplied by the State itself, under its safeguards agreement, under its additional protocol and voluntarily;
- information from the IAEA's verification activities, including inspections and complementary access;
- open source and related information; and
- information provided by third parties, such as export data.

7.34 More recently, a number of other safeguards challenges have resulted in increasing expectations of the safeguards system, including possible undeclared nuclear material activities by Iran and Libya's admission that it had engaged in nuclear weapons related research and attempted to acquire related technology. Such developments illustrate the evolving nature of the IAEA's operating environment. In the last two years the Department of Safeguards has engaged in a major strategic planning process resulting in a Long-Term Strategic Plan for the period 2012-2023.

Technical cooperation program

7.35 Ms Suzanne Nebel provided the delegation with an overview of the IAEA's technical cooperation program and explained that this program is one of the main mechanisms through which the IAEA delivers services to its Member States. Through the program, the IAEA is able to help Member States to build, strengthen and maintain capacities in the safe, peaceful and secure use of nuclear technology. The program focuses on applying nuclear technology to improve human health, support agriculture and rural development, advance water resource management, address environmental challenges and help sustainable energy development, including the use of nuclear power for electricity.

7.36 The technical cooperation program operates in four geographic regions: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America. Within each region the program helps Member States to address specific needs, taking into account existing capacities and different operational conditions. The program aims to leverage the differences among Member States in the same region by facilitating cooperation between them.

7.37 Ms Negel said that the IAEA is not widely recognised as a development organisation, and that strategic partnerships with Member States, United Nations Agencies, research organisations and with civil society were fundamental to the success of the technical cooperation program. She said that this collaborative approach ensures the coordination and optimisation of complementary activities and allows a more streamlined international response to current development issues ensuring the best possible socioeconomic impact of the technical cooperation program. She said that the program is keen to develop new partnerships, particularly with aid organisations such as AusAID.

IAEA response to Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant Accident

7.38 In June 2011, and in direct response to the Fukushima accident, the Director General of the IAEA convened the inaugural Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety. At that meeting, the Director General was charged with the responsibility to develop a comprehensive action plan to coordinate international action responding to lessons learned from the accident. The IAEA Action Plan for Nuclear Safety was unanimously approved and adopted by IAEA Member States, including Australia, at the September 2011 Board of Governors and General Conference. The IAEA Action Plan consists of 12 main actions:

- assess the safety vulnerabilities of nuclear power plants in light of lessons learned from the Fukushima accident;
- strengthen IAEA peer reviews in order to maximise benefits to Member States;
- strengthen emergency preparedness and response;
- strengthen the effectiveness of national regulatory bodies;
- strengthen the effectiveness of operational organisations with respect to nuclear safety;
- review and strengthen IAEA Safety Standards and improve their implementation;
- improve the effectiveness of the international legal framework;
- facilitate the development of the infrastructure necessary for Member States embarking on a nuclear power program;
- strengthen and maintain capacity building – including education, training and exercises at the national, regional and international levels;
- ensure the ongoing protection of people and the environment from ionising radiation following a nuclear emergency;

- enhance transparency and effectiveness of communication and improve dissemination of information; and
- effectively utilise research and development.

Technical cooperation in Asia-Pacific Region and Briefing on Pacific Marine Benchmark Study

7.39 Mr Oscar Acuna, Section Head for Technical Cooperation for the Asia-Pacific, provided a very useful overview of the IAEA's program for technical cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region. The IAEA currently has 32 member states in the Asia Pacific and annual disbursements of \$23 million across these states. The program is implemented through two inter-governmental agreements: the one for the "Asia and the Pacific" region which provides a framework for cooperation between east Asian states and the one for the "Arab States in Asia" region which performs the same function for west Asian states.

7.40 Mr Acuna said that for the 2012-2013 cycle, the key elements in the core technical cooperation program are:

- safety and security – 27.0%
- health and nutrition – 17.8%
- food and agriculture – 20.7%

7.41 However, he noted that sustainable energy and nuclear knowledge development were becoming increasingly important.

7.42 The program promotes and enjoys strong horizontal cooperation among all Member States. A key feature of the program is the role of advanced countries in sharing expertise and knowledge in the use of nuclear technology to support development. Mr Acuna said that Australia plays a key role in promoting regional cooperation through the technical cooperation program, particularly within the Regional Cooperation Agreement.

7.43 Kesarat Sukasam provided the committee with an overview of the marine benchmark study on the impact of the Fukushima radioactive releases in the Asia-Pacific Region. This study grew out of a meeting of Regional Cooperative Agreement (RCA) member states in Bali in April 2011 which discussed the impact of the Fukushima accident on the marine environment.

7.44 Following the earthquake and tsunami in Japan on 11 March 2011 and the subsequent impact on nuclear reactors and associated fuel storage ponds at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, there were releases of radioactively contaminated water in the marine environment neighbouring the north east coast of the island of Honshu. It was recognised that this radioactive contamination could be transported and circulated through the Pacific Ocean and RCA Member States expressed concern about the possible impact of these releases on their coastal zones.

7.45 Australia, New Zealand and the USA made financial contributions which enabled the initiation of the project. 17 RCA Member States are involved in the study along with a number of non-Member States who have concerns about the extent and

possible impact of the Fukushima event. Australia has played a key role as lead country in this project.

Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Organisation (CTBTO)

7.46 The delegation met with Mr Tibor Toth, Executive Secretary of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission.

7.47 The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) bans all nuclear weapon tests. The CTBT was negotiated in Geneva between 1994 and 1996. 182 countries have signed the Treaty, of which 155 have also ratified it (as of September 2011), including three of the nuclear weapon States: France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom. Before the CTBT can enter into force 44 specific nuclear technology holder countries must sign and ratify. Of these, eight have yet to sign: China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the USA.

7.48 Since the Treaty is not yet in force, the organisation is called the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Organisation. Its main tasks are the promotion of the Treaty and the build-up of the verification regime so that it is operational when the Treaty enters into force.

7.49 The Treaty has a unique and comprehensive verification regime to make sure that no nuclear explosion goes undetected. The CTBT's International Monitoring System (IMS) will, when complete, consist of 337 facilities worldwide to monitor the planet for signs of nuclear explosions. Around 85 per cent, or 285, of the facilities are already operational.

7.50 The IMS uses the following state of the art technologies:

- 50 primary and 120 auxiliary seismic stations monitor shockwaves in the Earth;
- 11 hydroacoustic stations to "listen" for sound waves in the oceans;
- 60 infrasound stations on the surface that can detect ultra-low frequency sound waves that are emitted by large explosions; and
- 80 radionuclide stations measure the atmosphere for radioactive particles and 40 of them also pick up noble gas.

7.51 Mr Toth told the delegation that Australia is very important in the CTBTO's International Monitoring System as it has one of the best seismic arrays in the world: Warramunga Seismic and Infrasound Station near Tennant Creek.

7.52 The IMS is currently operating in test mode so that data are already transmitted for analysis from monitoring facilities to the International Data Centre at the CTBTO in Vienna. Data and analysis results are shared with Member States. Mr Toth told the delegation that 333,329 events had been detected between February 2000 and August 2011, with only two significant detections.

7.53 The CTBTO and the IAEA work very closely together.



The delegation receiving a briefing on the work of the CTBTO from Executive Secretary of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission Mr Tibor Toth.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

7.54 UNODC is a global leader in the fight against illicit drugs and international crime. Established in 1997 through a merger between the United Nations Drug Control Programme and the Centre for International Crime Prevention, UNODC operates in all regions of the world through an extensive network of field offices. UNODC relies on voluntary contributions, mainly from Governments, for 90 percent of its budget. Australia is a major donor to UNODC and the delegation welcomed the opportunity to meet with Mr Sandeep Chawla, Director, Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, and other officers of UNODC to gain a closer understanding the agency's work.

7.55 UNODC is mandated to assist Member States in their struggle against illicit drugs, crime and terrorism. In the Millennium Declaration, member States also resolved to intensify efforts to fight transnational crime in all its dimensions, to redouble the efforts to implement the commitment to counter the world drug problem and to take concerted action against international terrorism.

7.56 The three pillars of the UNODC work programme are:

- field-based technical cooperation projects to enhance the capacity of Member States to counteract illicit drugs, crime and terrorism;
- research and analytical work to increase knowledge and understanding of drugs and crime issues and expand the evidence base for policy and operational decisions; and
- normative work to assist States in the ratification and implementation of the relevant international treaties, the development of domestic legislation on drugs, crime and terrorism, and the provision of secretariat and substantive services to the treaty-based and governing bodies.

7.57 Through its Regional Programme for East Asia and the Pacific UNODC is making progress to improve cross-border cooperation to fight human trafficking and the smuggling of people, as well as illicit drugs, wildlife and hazardous goods. UNODC is also improving the region's ability to collect and share information on the production, trafficking and use of amphetamine-type stimulants and opiates as well as transnational organised crime trends. Mr Chawla said that the Regional Programme has allowed UNODC to act more strategically, developing linkages and synergies on both a thematic and geographic basis, while at the same time facilitating greater cooperation between States.

7.58 The scale and the magnitude of the task before the UNODC continues to outstrip the agency's resources. Mr Chawla said that while UNODC receives a small amount funding through the United Nations, its Regional Programme for East Asia and the Pacific is primarily funded by donor Governments. He said that the UNODC was exploring other sources of funding through private sector partnerships and multitrust funds. Mr Chawla said that UNODC was indebted to Australia for its continued financial and technical support to the Regional Programme and to specific capacity building projects in the region.



The delegation meeting with Mr Sandeep Chawla, Director, Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, and other officers of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Conclusions

7.59 Australia has a proud record as an active supporter of international organisations such as the IAEA, CTBTO and UNODC. The delegation welcomed the opportunity provided by its visit to Austria to gain a closer understanding of the important work of each of these organisations. The delegation was particularly grateful for the comprehensive briefings arranged for it.

7.60 The Fukushima accident highlights the importance of nuclear safety and security. Australia makes a substantial contribution to supporting international nuclear safety and security through capacity-building programs, such as the IAEA's technical cooperation program and the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation's close collaboration with the IAEA through programs like the Regional Radiological Security Partnership for South-East Asia. The delegation's meetings with

the IAEA and the CTBTO demonstrated how highly valued these contributions are and underscored the need to continue to support and strengthen the capacity of these agencies to undertake their important roles.

7.61 Similarly, Australia has been one of UNODC's major donors. The delegation's meeting with UNODC confirmed the value of this support by demonstrating the tangible results that can be achieved through the agency's programs. However, the delegation observed that the UNODC's resources are spread very thinly and that there is some risk that this could compromise its effectiveness. The delegation noted UNODC's efforts to address this risk by exploring alternative sources of funding while at the same time focussing on improved program evaluation and reporting.

7.62 Finally, the delegation was grateful for the opportunity to meet with Ms Barbara Prammer, President of the Austrian National Council. The Australian and Austrian delegations to the Inter-Parliamentary Union enjoy a very warm relationship and the delegation appreciated the opportunity to build on this through its discussions with Ms Prammer. The discussions were wide ranging and Ms Prammer provided an Austrian perspective on the renewable energy issues that the delegation had explored in Germany as well as providing valuable insights to the workings of the Austrian Parliament. The delegation was particularly appreciative of the time Ms Prammer made available to meet with the delegation on the eve of celebrations to mark Austrian National Day.

Appendix 1

IPU Program

Saturday, 15 October 2011

- 12+ Group Cocktail Reception, Rathaushalle

Sunday, 16 October 2011

- 12+ Group Meeting;
- Asian-Pacific Group Meeting;
- Asia Pacific Group Luncheon;
- Meeting of Advisers and Secretaries to delegations;
- Working Group on scale of contributions meeting;
- Inaugural Ceremony of the 125th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union;
- Reception for all Delegates courtesy of the Host Parliament at the Federal Parliament.

Monday, 17 October 2011

- 12+ Group Meeting;
- Governing Council: membership, reports; finance; presentation of the budget;
- IPU Committee on UN Affairs; briefing on the parliamentary contribution to major UN events in 2011; Debate on Nuclear Weapons—the Road to Zero;
- Assembly: Opening, Adoption of an emergency item;
- Lunch in honour of the women parliamentarians hosted by Ms Doris Stump, President of the Swiss IPU Group;
- Working Luncheon for the Speaker, hosted by Mr Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary General of the IPU;
- Assembly: Debate on the emergency item;
- IPU Committee on UN Affairs: Hearing with Jorge Sampaio, High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations; discussion on the co-operation with the UN
- Bilateral meeting with Jean-René Germanier, Speaker, Swiss National Council;
- Inaugural Ceremony of the 125th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union;
- Dinner for all Delegates hosted by Ms Micheline Calmy-Rey, President of Switzerland.

Tuesday, 18 October 2011

- 12+ Group Meeting;
- Special event on Reform of the financial markets;
- Panel discussion on Access to health as a basic right: Key challenges to women's and children's health (subject to be discussed by the Third Standing Committee during the 126th Assembly in April 2012);
- Drafting committee on emergency item;
- Advisory Group of the IPU Committee on UN Affairs;
- Lunch in honour of the ASGP hosted by Mr Christoph Lanz, Secretary General of the Federal Assembly, at the Federal Parliament
- Reception with the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Morocco and the Head of the Interparliamentary Moroccan group;
- Meeting between women parliamentarians and candidates for the IPU Presidency;
- Panel discussion on Redistribution of power not just wealth (subject to be discussed by the Second Standing Committee during the 126th Assembly in April 2012);
- Panel discussion on Promoting and practising good governance (subject to be discussed by the First Standing Committee during the 126th Assembly in April 2012);
- Reception and presentation on Quebec for all participants hosted by the Canadian Parliament, Host of the 127th IPU Assembly in Quebec.

Wednesday, 19 October 2011

- 12+ Group Meeting;
- Governing Council: debate and adoption of the budget; IPU reform;
- IPU Committee on UN Affairs: briefing and discussion on preparations for 2012 Summit on Sustainable Development; finalisation and adoption of outcome document;
- Governing Council;
- Assembly: adoption of resolution and closing session;
- Cocktails for all participants, hosted by the Ugandan Parliament, Host of the 126th IPU Assembly in Kampala.

Bilateral visit to Germany

Thursday, 20 October 2011 – Cologne

University of Cologne

- Meeting with Professor Beate Neumeier, Coordinator, Visiting Chair Australian Studies, English Department.
- Working lunch hosted by Dr Michael Bollig, Pro-rector for Academic Career, Diversity and International Affairs with:

German Aerospace Centre (DLR)

- Meeting and tour of DLR

Friday, 21 October 2011 – Berlin

German Parliament

- Meeting with Mr Jürgen Herrmann, Chairman, Germany-Australia-New Zealand Parliamentary Friendship Group.
- Meeting with Bernard Gocke, Renewable Energies Sub-Director from the German Ministry of Environment.

Australian Embassy

- Lunch meeting with the Eurozone crisis hosted by the Australian Ambassador with:
 - Mr Heiner Herkenhoff, Representative of the Board, Commerzbank;
 - Dr Michael Kemmer, General Manager, German Banking Association; and
 - Mr Harald Eisenach, Managing Director, Head of North-East Region, Deutsche Bank.
- Meeting with Mr Elmar Baumann, Chief Executive Officer, German Association of Biofuels Industry.

Saturday, 22 October 2011 – Dresden

Frauenkirche

- Performance of Benjamin Britten's War Requiem by Dresden Philharmonic conducted by Simone Young.

Bilateral visit to Vienna, Austria

Monday, 24 October 2011

Vienna International Centre (UN)

- Meeting with representatives from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Dinner for the delegation hosted by Ambassador Michael Potts and Mrs Lynda Potts.

Tuesday, 25 October 2011

Austrian Parliament

- Meeting with Ms Barbara Prammer, President of National Council (Speaker of Parliament).
- Tour of Austria's Parliament.

Vienna International Centre (UN)

- Meeting with officials of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC):
- Meeting with officials of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO).

Appendix 2

Member Parliaments of the IPU

There are currently 162 member parliaments and 10 associate members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Member parliaments

Afghanistan, 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, Chad, 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, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia

Finland, France

Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau

Haiti, Honduras, Hungary

Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy

Japan, Jordan

Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan

Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg

Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar

Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway

Oman

Pakistan, Palau, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal

Qatar

Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda

Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic

Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey

Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay

Venezuela, Viet Nam

Yemen

Zambia, Zimbabwe

Associate members

Andean Parliament

Central American Parliament

East African Legislative Assembly

European Parliament

Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union

Latin American Parliament

Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States

Parliament of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Transitional Arab Parliament