

The Parliament of the  
Commonwealth of Australia

**126<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly  
in Kampala, Uganda and  
Bilateral visits to Kazakhstan and Hungary**

**Report of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation**

**28 March – 21 April 2012**

June 2013

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# Membership of the Delegation

## Leader

The Hon Mr Peter Slipper MP  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Member for Fisher, Queensland  
Independent

## Deputy Leader

The Hon Mr Dick Adams MP  
Member for Lyons, Tasmania  
Australian Labor Party  
(Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and visit to  
Kazakhstan only)

## Members

Senator Sue Boyce  
Senator for Queensland  
Liberal Party of Australia

The Hon Mr Joel Fitzgibbon MP  
Member for Hunter, New South Wales  
Australian Labor Party  
(attended Inter-Parliamentary Assembly only)

Mr Chris Hayes MP  
Member for Fowler, New South Wales  
Australian Labor Party  
(joined the delegation for the visit to Hungary)

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

## Officials

Mr Tim Knapp  
Adviser to the Speaker

Ms Claressa Surtees  
Department of the House of Representatives  
ASGP

Ms Jeanette Radcliffe  
Department of the Senate  
Delegation Secretary

Ms Inge Hall, Ms Dee Alty, Ms Sharon Secker and Ms Bernadette Hayes also accompanied the delegation.





## Foreword

Between 31 March 2012 and 5 April 2012, it was my pleasure to lead the Australian parliamentary delegation that attended the 126<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly in Kampala, Uganda and undertook bilateral visits to Kazakhstan and Hungary.

This report details the work undertaken by the delegation at the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly and outlines the delegation's observations from its visits to Kazakhstan and Hungary. Both the assembly and the bilateral visit provided the opportunity for the delegation to engage on issues of significance for Australia, strengthen parliament-to-parliament relations and discuss opportunities for cooperation and trade.

The Australian delegation played an active role throughout the Inter-parliamentary Union 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:

- I participated in the General debate of the Assembly on the topic *Parliaments and people: Bridging the Gap*;
- Mr Secker 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 participated in the debate of the Second Standing Committee (Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade) on *Redistribution of power, not just wealth: ownership of the international agendas* and chaired the drafting committee for the Committee's resolution;
- Senator Sue Boyce participated in the work of the Third Standing Committee (Democracy and Human Rights) on *Access to health as a basic right* and was a member of the drafting committee for the Committee's resolution;
- Mr Adams attended the Advisory Group of the Committee on UN Affairs.
- Mr Fitzgibbon and I met with the IPU Secretary-General, Anders Johnsson, to discuss the formation of an international whips network
- Mr Fitzgibbon met with the Ugandan Chief Government Whip;
- Senator Boyce participated in a panel discussion convened by the GAVI Alliance on the role of parliamentarians in tackling vaccine-preventable diseases
- Members of the delegation attended all meetings of the Twelve Plus geopolitical group and the Asia Pacific geopolitical group.
- Mr Adams and Senator Boyce met with representatives from NGOs involved in education and health projects; and

- Senator Boyce undertook a field visit to Action for Positive Change Academy, Mulago, Immaculate Heart Community School and Kitumbira slum to observe the work of Water Aid International.

Members of the delegation also attended a number of official ceremonies and social functions hosted by the Ugandan, Swiss, and Canadian Parliaments.

I would like to express sincere thanks to the Parliament of Uganda for its effective organisation of the 126<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly.

Following the 126<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly the delegation undertook official visits to Kazakhstan and Hungary. The program, outlined at Appendix 1 to this report, provided opportunities to explore issues surrounding sustainable energy production, nuclear non-proliferation, education and opportunities for stronger Australian commercial presence in both countries. In addition, the visits provided a welcome opportunity to strengthen parliament-to-parliament relations between the Australian Parliament and the Parliaments of Kazakhstan and Hungary.

I would like to acknowledge the support provided by Australian embassies and consulates in Kenya, Moscow and Hungary 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 HE Ambassador Margaret Twomey and staff of the Australian Embassy in Moscow for their assistance during the bilateral visit to Kazakhstan and to HE Ambassador John Griffin and staff of the Australian Embassy in Budapest for assistance and support while the delegation was in Hungary.

The delegation is also grateful for the comprehensive and informative briefing provided by officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 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.

The delegation also thanks Mr Geoff Barnett, International Community Relations Office, for his 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 delegations meetings and the commitment to our program of work.

**Mr Peter Slipper 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 sixty-two national parliaments are currently members of the IPU. Ten regional parliamentary assemblies are associate members.<sup>1</sup> 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

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1 A list of Members and Associate Members of the IPU is available on the IPU website at: <http://www.ipu.org/english/membshp.htm>

regular meeting of the IPU Governing Council, and meetings of specialist committees, working groups and geopolitical groups.

1.6 The 126<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly was held in Kampala, Uganda from 31 March to 5 April 2012 and was attended by delegations from 120 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 held a general debate on the theme of *Parliaments and people: Bridging the gap*, debated an emergency item, and held 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);
- three Standing Committees, which debated a chosen topic and prepared resolutions for consideration by the Assembly as a whole; 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 results of the 126<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly and related meetings are available online at: <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/126agnd.htm>

## Chapter 2

### 126<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly

#### Inaugural ceremony and opening of the Assembly

2.1 The 126<sup>th</sup> Assembly was inaugurated on 31 March 2012 at a ceremony held at the Speke Resort Munyonyo in Kampala with HE General Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, in attendance. Inaugural addresses were delivered by Ms Rebecca Kadaga, Speaker of the Ugandan Parliament, Mr Zachary Mhuri-Muita, Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union and Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, and Mr Abdewahad Radi, IPU President.

2.2 The 126<sup>th</sup> Assembly opened at the Kampala Serena Conference Centre on 1 April, with the election by acclamation of Ms Kadaga as President of the Assembly. Ms Kadaga said that it was a great honour for her to preside over the Assembly's work. She underscored the relevance of the overall theme for the Kampala Assembly, and invited all participating parliaments to share their experiences and perspectives in the General Debate on *Parliaments and people: Bridging the gap*.

#### Agenda of the 126<sup>th</sup> Assembly

2.3 The agenda of the Assembly included the following items:

- choice of an emergency item;
- a general debate on the theme *Parliaments and people: Bridging the gap*;
- debates by the three standing committees; and
- approval of the subject items for the 128<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

#### General Debate – Parliaments and people: Bridging the gap

2.4 In his address to the Assembly, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr Peter Slipper, said that parliamentarians must engage in a meaningful way with citizens. He said that when he had become Speaker of the Federal Parliament, he had resigned his party affiliation. This had helped him discharge his duties independently without any pressure from political parties. As Speaker, he had received a significant amount of correspondence from citizens who were concerned about the poor conduct of members of parliament. It was his view that such behaviour indicated poor leadership of political parties and contributed greatly to the lack of faith in political leaders.

2.5 Mr Slipper said that, in Australia, citizens' approval of politicians was expressed every three years in federal elections. However, general elections were largely an expression of satisfaction with governments rather than individual members. In 2010, a minority government had been formed in Australia, the first in 70 years. While some argued that this reflected dissatisfaction with the status quo, what was unarguable was that there was more interest in government than at any time in recent history. The minority government had led to a new style of politics because it

had necessitated collaboration with small parties and independent members. In addition, parliament had changed its procedures so that it sat for longer and more frequently and allowed for more debates on topical issues.

2.6 There was now greater opportunity for back bench-sponsored business to be debated. Question time of ministers had also been reformed. Ministers were now questioned in the chamber. Time limits had been placed on the length of questions and responses by ministers. It was hoped that those new procedures would make parliament more relevant. Question time was the most watched and listened to procedure in parliament and it was important that it remained relevant to the concerns of people.

2.7 Further reforms of the support and services given to parliamentarians in their scrutiny of public bills and the proposed introduction of a code of conduct for members of parliament would also help bridge the gap between parliamentarians and citizens. Similarly, that would make governments more transparent and accountable. Parliament and government should always be open to changes in the way they worked and made themselves accountable to citizens.



*The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr Peter Slipper MP, addressing the Plenary of the IPU Assembly*

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

### *Background*

2.8 At each assembly a topic is selected for emergency consideration and a resolution is adopted on the topic. Any member country of the IPU may request the inclusion of an emergency item. The rules of the Assembly provide that only one emergency item may be included on the Assembly agenda. Where more than one topic is proposed the plenary session selects one of them either by consensus or vote. The rules provide for the authors of two or more requests to combine their proposals provided that each of the original proposals relates to the same subject.

### *Selection of emergency item*

2.9 Seven requests for an emergency item were initially received. Subsequently, the delegations of Canada, Egypt, France, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom decided to present a joint proposal on: *Inter-Parliamentary Union initiative for an immediate halt to the bloodshed and human rights violations in Syria, and the need to ensure access to humanitarian aid for all persons in need and to support implementation of all relevant Arab League and United Nations resolutions and peace efforts.*

2.10 In view of the importance of the joint proposal, the delegations from Argentina and the Islamic Republic of Iran withdrew their proposals in favour of the joint proposal, which was adopted by acclamation and added to the agenda as Item 8.

2.11 The subsequent resolution expressed the solidarity and sympathy of the IPU membership for the Syrian people. The resolution called for an immediate end to the violence and abuses in Syria and expressed full support for international and regional efforts to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. The resolution also urged parliaments to provide all necessary humanitarian assistance to those affected by the violence. The resolution called for an inclusive political process addressing the legitimate democratic aspirations of the Syrian people. The pivotal role that the IPU could play in assisting emerging democracies, fostering political reconciliation and in upholding the principles of representative democracy and human rights was noted.<sup>1</sup>

### **Standing committees**

2.12 The IPU Assembly has three standing committees which 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).

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1 The full text of the resolution is available online at: <http://www.ipu.org/strct-e/stcnfres.htm#126>

- *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).

2.13 The three topics were the subject of panel discussions at the Assembly in Bern in October 2011. Following these discussions reports and draft resolutions were prepared by the rapporteurs. These documents formed the basis for discussion at this assembly.

2.14 Australia was represented in all three standing committees. Mr Patrick Secker MP attended the first standing committee, Mr Dick Adams MP attended the second standing committee, and chaired the drafting committee for the resolution, and Senator Sue Boyce attended the third standing committee and participated in the drafting committee for the resolution.

2.15 The Assembly approved the consideration of the following subject items over the course of the 127<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Quebec City, Canada, in October 2012 and the 128<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Quito, Ecuador in March 2013:

- *The responsibility to protect: The role of parliaments in safeguarding citizens' lives* (First Standing Committee on Peace and International Security).
- *Fair trade and innovative financing mechanisms for sustainable development* (Second Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade).
- *The use of media, including social media, to advance citizen engagement and democracy* (Third Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights).

#### ***First Standing Committee – Peace and International Security***

2.16 The First Standing Committee held two sittings on 1 April and 3 April 2012 with its President, Mr Saber Hossain Chowdhury (Bangladesh), in the chair.

2.17 In addition to the report and preliminary draft resolutions prepared by the co-Rapporteurs, the Standing Committee had before it amendments to the draft resolution submitted by the delegations of Argentina, Canada, China, Congo, Egypt, France, Germany, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, the Philippines, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela.

2.18 At the start of the first sitting, the two co-Rapporteurs submitted the report and preliminary draft resolution they had drawn up together. Mr Martin Chungong, Director of the IPU Division of Programmes, also made a presentation. In all, 46 speakers from 44 parliaments took the floor.

2.19 After the debate, the Standing Committee appointed a drafting committee made up of representatives of the following parliaments: Algeria, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Chile, Egypt, South Africa, Switzerland and Uganda. The co-Rapporteurs took part in the drafting committee's work in an advisory capacity. The drafting committee examined 95 amendments submitted by 16 delegations and adopted a number of them.



2.20 The First Standing Committee adopted the draft resolution by acclamation. The draft resolution was submitted to the Assembly plenary in the afternoon of 5 April 2012 and adopted by consensus, reservations having been expressed with regard to the resolution as a whole by the Venezuelan delegation.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Second Standing Committee Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade***

2.21 The Second Standing Committee held sittings on 2 and 4 April 2012, with its President, Mr Saleh Alhousseini (Saudi Arabia), in the chair. In addition to reports and a preliminary draft resolution prepared by the co-Rapporteurs, the Committee had before it amendments to the draft resolution submitted by the delegations of Belgium, Canada, Chile, China, Congo, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela and Senator Sonia Escudero of Argentina. In addition, the Committee received three amendments from the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians.

2.22 A total of 46 speakers took the floor during the plenary debate, including Mr Dick Adams MP. Mr Adams said that while the global population had increased to seven billion, the availability of land, water and fertilizer was decreasing and it was becoming increasingly difficult to produce sufficient food to meet the needs of the global population. Transfers of technology were required from developed to developing countries to enable them to increase their food production. Global economic power was shifting to the Asia-Pacific region, and the centres of power and influence must adapt to that change. He expressed concern about the reference in the report to informal sources of power. He said there had been recent shifts in power around the world as a result of the use of new technologies, in particular the Internet and social networking. He said that shifts in power must take place through formal democratic processes. It was, therefore, essential that democratic institutions be strengthened. Although change would take time, efforts must be made to move towards a more peaceful and prosperous world.

2.23 The Standing Committee appointed a drafting committee composed of representatives of Australia, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ecuador, India, Italy, Mexico, Oman, Philippines, Sudan, United Kingdom and United Republic of Tanzania. The drafting committee met on 3 April 2013 and appointed Mr Adams as its president. The drafting committee examined 93 amendments to the preliminary draft resolution, adopting some either in full or in part.

2.24 The Second Standing Committee examined the consolidated draft resolution on 4 April 2012 and adopted it as a whole without making further changes. The draft resolution was submitted to the Assembly on 5 April 2012 and was adopted unanimously.<sup>3</sup>

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2 The text of the resolution is available on the IPU website at: <http://www.ipu.org/strct-e/stcnfres.htm#126>

3 The text of the resolution is available on the IPU website at: <http://www.ipu.org/strct-e/stcnfres.htm#126>

### ***Third Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights***

2.25 The Third Standing Committee held three sittings on 1, 2 and 4 April 2012. The Committee President, Mr Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu (Ghana), chaired all three sessions. The Committee had before it a report and preliminary draft resolution prepared by the co-Rapporteurs, along with amendments to the draft preliminary resolution submitted by the delegations of Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Congo, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Netherlands, Philippines, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and Venezuela, and by the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians.

2.26 In all, 52 speakers took the floor, including Senator Sue Boyce. Senator Boyce said that the maternal and child mortality rates were generally low in Australia. However, in rural and aboriginal areas in particular, they were more than double the national average as a result of various problems, including the difficulty of access to services. Telehealth consultations and videoconferencing had therefore been instituted in order to minimise the disruption of travel at the same time as improving health outcomes. She said that it was commendable that the draft resolution included both carrots and sticks. The incentives for education, funding and information were the carrots. The criminalisation of all forms of physical and sexual violence against women and girls was among the sticks. She said that it was imperative not to lose the sticks to the carrots in the final version of the resolution.

2.27 The Committee designated a drafting committee composed of representatives of Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Chad, Kenya, Uganda, United Kingdom, Sweden, Venezuela and Uruguay. It met on 4 April and began its work by appointing Lord R Faulkner (United Kingdom) as president. Senator Boyce represented Australia on the drafting committee.

2.28 The drafting committee considered the amendments proposed by members and incorporated some of them into the draft resolution. On 4 April, the Third Standing Committee considered the consolidated text of the draft resolution presented by the drafting committee. It adopted the draft resolution by acclamation and without any reservations. The Assembly, meeting in plenary on 5 April, adopted the resolution unanimously.<sup>4</sup>

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4 The text of the resolution is available on the IPU website at: <http://www.ipu.org/strct-e/stcnfres.htm#126>

## **Chapter 3**

### **190<sup>th</sup> 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.

#### **Governing Council Agenda**

3.2 The Governing Council met twice during the assembly and dealt with the following matters:

- membership of the IPU;
- activities of the Executive Committee;
- Financial results for 2011 and financial position of the IPU;
- cooperation with the United Nations;
- Action by the IPU to strengthen democracy and parliamentary institutions;
- Recent specialised conferences and meetings; and
- reports of subsidiary bodies

#### **Membership of the IPU**

3.3 The Governing Council readmitted the Parliament of Haiti and granted Associate Member status to the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), readmitted the Parliament of Myanmar, and admitted the Parliament of South Sudan as a new member.

3.4 The Governing Council approved requests for observer status from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the World Scout Parliamentary Union (WSPU).

#### **Financial results for 2011 and financial position of the IPU**

3.5 The Governing Council considered the annual Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for 2011. The Financial Statements showed that the IPU had recorded an operating surplus of CHF 723,874 in 2011. After making provisions for the actuarial loss of the legacy Staff Pension Fund, the Council noted that the Working Capital Fund had been increased by CHF 422,874, compared with a decrease of CHF 401,096 in 2010. As a result, the balance of the Working Capital Fund stood at CHF 4,958,468 at the year end.

3.6 The Governing Council received an overview of the IPU's financial situation at 29 February 2012. The overall financial position of the IPU was sound. Arrears of contributions for past years had improved compared to the same period the previous year. At 31 March 2012, the total amount of outstanding contributions from previous years stood at CHF 455,000, compared to CHF 607,000 for the same period the year before. The overall level of expenditure had reached 81 per cent of the year-to-date budget.

## **Cooperation with United Nations**

3.7 The IPU is developing a closer working relationship with the United Nations, providing a parliamentary dimension to the United Nations. The Governing Council noted the preparations under way for the debate that would take place in late May in the United Nations General Assembly on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments, and the IPU. The Assembly was informed of the content of the draft resolution to be considered by UN Member States for adoption and were encouraged to follow the process closely and consult with our foreign ministries to seek a more structured parliamentary component to the work of the United Nations.

3.8 The Governing Council also took note of the activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations since the 125<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly. The delegation noted the growing interaction between the Bretton Woods Institutions – the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank Group).

### ***Advisory Group of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs***

3.9 The Advisory Group of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs met on 4 April 2012, presided over by Ms Rosario Green (Mexico). Australia is formally represented on the Advisory Group by Mr Joel Fitzgibbon MP. Mr Dick Adams MP attended the meeting on 4 April 2012 in Mr Fitzgibbon's place.

3.10 The Advisory Group reviewed the mandate and functioning of the Committee, and discussed ways to improve both its visibility as well as the participation of Members in the Committee's work. Recently, the Committee had become a unique forum for exchange and interaction with senior UN officials, review of parliamentary action on implementation of international commitments, and a parliamentary input to major UN processes. Members of the Advisory Group expressed the view that the Committee would be better served by a clearer definition of its functions, the development of operational areas of intervention and a regular evaluation system. The members reiterated their proposal that the Committee should be placed on a firm and equal footing with the IPU's existing Standing Committees, and invested with a clear set of rules and regulations.

3.11 The Advisory Group discussed the way forward as it related to the forthcoming UN General Assembly debate and draft resolution on Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The Members noted that field visits conducted in previous years by the Advisory Group had helped identify areas where further work was required, and that those were well reflected in the draft General Assembly resolution. Among the proposed recommendations, UN country teams were called upon to develop a more structured and integrated manner of working with national parliaments, inter alia by involving parliaments in consultations on national development strategies and on development aid effectiveness.

3.12 Lastly, the Advisory Group discussed its work programme, including setting the agenda for the October meeting of the Committee on United Nations Affairs. The next meeting of the Committee would coincide with United Nations Day, which

would provide a good opportunity for a special high-level segment. The October meeting of the Committee should also set the stage for a comprehensive debate on follow-up of the Rio Summit on Sustainable Development, and the role of parliaments in the elaboration of the next generation of millennium development goals.

### **Action by the IPU to strengthen democracy and parliamentary institutions**

3.13 The Governing Council took note of an oral report by the Director of Programmes, Mr Martin Chungong, on recent IPU activities to strengthen parliaments and democracy in the key areas of capacity-building for parliaments, promoting women's political and other rights, defending and promoting human rights, developing standards for democratic parliaments and promoting peace and security. The IPU's democracy-related work in 2011 focused on forging greater links between parliaments and the people and included the following activities:

- capacity building assistance to 16 parliaments mainly in Africa, Asia, Latin American and increasingly Arab countries;
- promotion of gender equality in politics, including provision of advice to transitional authorities in Tunisia, capacity building assistance to women parliamentarians in Rwanda and Burundi, training sessions for the Parliaments of Uganda, Jordan and Burkina Faso on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- defence of human rights through the examination of individual cases of about 400 parliamentarians in 39 countries;
- support to parliaments for their commitment to peace and security and national reconciliation; and
- efforts to ensure parliaments provide meaningful and substantive inputs to the international development agenda.

### ***Launch of Global Parliamentary Report***

3.14 The Global Parliamentary Report, a joint work by the IPU and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was launched in Kampala on 2 April 2012. The report represents both organisations' attempts to strengthen parliaments and promote democracy throughout the world.

3.15 The report examines the various initiatives being undertaken worldwide to engage and inform the public on parliamentary activities. These include the use of interactive websites, open days, and social media. This truly global report has contributions from 125 parliaments and more than 600 individual members of parliament.

3.16 In launching the report, IPU President Abdelwahad Radi said that parliaments must do more to be closer to citizens and that every parliamentarian had an individual responsibility to nurture and develop that relationship. UNDP Associate Administrator and UN Under-Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan drew attention to the need for parliaments to include women, minorities and other marginalized groups. She

highlighted some of the good practices described in the Report, such as the use of radio in Afghanistan to engage citizens in parliamentary work.<sup>1</sup>

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

3.17 The Governing Council took note of the results of the following specialised conferences and meetings:

- the Regional Conference on national and regional defence and security challenges in Latin America - The role of parliaments (see <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/bogota11.htm>);
- the Regional Parliamentary Workshop on Parliamentary oversight of the security sector: Disseminating best practices in ECOWAS Member States (see <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/bamako11.htm>);
- the Joint IPU-UN Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations (see <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/unga11.htm>);
- the Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (see <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/busan11.htm>);
- the Parliamentary Meeting on the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP17/CMP7) (see <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/cop17.htm>); and
- the Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 56th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (see <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/csw12.htm>).

### **Reports of subsidiary bodies and committees of the Governing Council**

3.18 At its sitting on 5 April, the Governing Council took note of the reports on activities of plenary bodies and specialised committees:

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

3.19 A summary of each of these reports is available at pages 14 to 16 of the *Results of the 126th Assembly and related meetings* (see <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/126/results.pdf>).

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1 The Global Parliamentary Report is available online at: <http://www.ipu.org/gpr/>

# **Chapter 4**

## **17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Women Parliamentarians**

### **Introduction**

4.1 The Seventeenth Meeting of Women Parliamentarians took place on 31 March 2012 and brought together approximately 90 women from 58 parliaments. The meeting was also attended by representatives from the East African Legislative Assembly, the International Committee of the Red Cross and UNICEF. Australia was represented at the meeting by Senator Sue Boyce.

### **Background**

4.2 Since 1986, a whole-day session has been held on the eve of the IPU Assembly to enable women MPs to decide on strategies to exert influence on the policies, workings and decisions of the IPU.

4.3 The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians aims to

- promote an increase in the number of women MPs as delegates to IPU meetings;
- promote greater participation of women parliamentarians in all senior posts of the IPU;
- allow women to learn about the status of women in their own and other regions and about strategies or mechanisms developed by other countries to meet the concerns of women;
- establish contact with other women parliamentarians whether or not they participate in IPU meetings;
- pre-study items on the agenda of each of the IPU Assemblies from the perspective of women legislators in order to develop strategies to make their delegations receptive to their concerns and to promote their objectives in the plenary sittings of the Assembly and committees; and
- identify suitable subjects for study by the IPU.

### **17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Women Parliamentarians**

4.4 The meeting received a report on the work of the Gender Partnership Group during its session in Kampala which had considered the level of women's participation in delegations to IPU Assemblies; the representation of women in IPU bodies and committees and the awareness-heightening measures to be taken to enhance the representation of women at the IPU.

4.5 The Meeting was also informed about recent IPU activities on gender issues, notably the parliamentary meeting organised jointly by the IPU and UN Women on the occasion of the 56th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women held in New York in February 2012. Reports were also presented on the outcome of the

campaign to stop violence against women and on the regional seminar for Asian parliaments on that subject, organised with the Parliament of India in September 2011.

4.6 As its contribution to the Assembly, the Meeting considered the subject items to be debated by the Second and Third Standing Committees from a gender perspective:

- Redistribution of power, not just wealth: Ownership of the international agendas (Second Standing Committee); and
- 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).

4.7 The Meeting proposed a series of amendments to the resolutions of each of the committees. Most of the amendments proposed were adopted.

4.8 The Meeting held a dialogue session on the subject *Mentorship: Supporting the next generation of women MPs*. The session opened with a talk by Ms Roberta Blackman-Woods MP (United Kingdom), who described an innovative programme for mentoring and transmitting know-how to women wishing to become involved in politics. The discussion highlighted the activities carried out by groups of women parliamentarians in various countries to help young women acquire the knowledge and skills needed for political action and to gain self-confidence, in particular thanks to information and communication technologies.

4.9 The 2012 edition of the *Map on Women in Politics* co-produced by the IPU and UN Women was presented to the Meeting together with a presentation on the progress made and setbacks encountered by women in parliaments in 2011. During the ensuing debate participants spoke about the attitudes that continued to hamper women's participation in politics and discussed the factors influencing their participation, in particular: political parties; special measures such as quotas; electoral systems and networks of women parliamentarians.



## Chapter 5

### Geopolitical groups, bilateral meetings and other activities

#### Introduction

5.1 During the 126<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, a number of subsidiary committees met and the Australian delegation took the opportunity to hold several bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the Assembly. This chapter provides a record of those meetings.

#### Meetings of geopolitical groups

5.2 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.

5.3 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.

5.4 The Australian delegation participated in meetings of both of these geopolitical groups at the 126<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly.

#### *Asia Pacific Geopolitical Group*

5.5 The Asia-Pacific Group (APG) met once during the 126<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly. It received reports from the IPU Executive Committee Meeting and the ASEAN+3 meeting, held on the margin of the 126<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly. The APG noted that the Executive Committee had discussed the need to enhance the participation of women parliamentarians in the activities of the IPU. The Executive Committee had noted that at the 125<sup>th</sup> Assembly 16 parliamentary delegations had not included women parliamentarians, a number being delegations from the Asia-Pacific Region. The APG also noted the Executive Committee's discussions regarding the need to encourage the active participation of the Asia Pacific Group in the activities of the IPU.

5.6 The report of the ASEAN+3 advised the APG that at its meeting the ASEAN+3 had discussed proposed candidatures for vacancies and proposals for the emergency item. ASEAN+3 had also considered avenues for enhancing the participation of the ASEAN+3 in the activities of the IPU.

5.7 The APG considered the seven proposals for inclusion of an Emergency Item on the Assembly agenda and the majority of the membership agreed to endorse the Iranian proposal.

5.8 In other matters, the APG considered a proposal that the selection of the Secretary-General of the IPU be addressed on the basis of regional rotation. Representatives from Bangladesh, Australia and Iran spoke on the issue. All speakers

emphasised the need for the selection process for the position to be based on merit and competency.

5.9 The APG also considered a proposal for the establishment of a permanent Secretariat for the Asia-Pacific Group. One delegation spoke in favour of the proposal and no delegation opposed it.

### ***Twelve Plus Group***

5.10 The Twelve Plus Group met four times during the 126<sup>th</sup> 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:

- Report from the Group's representatives on the Executive Committee, noting that half of the membership of the Executive Committee was newly appointed and five of them were women, a never-before reached proportion;
- Applications from the Parliaments of Ukraine and Azerbaijan for membership of the Twelve Plus Group;
- A letter from the Finnish delegation regarding legal discrimination against individuals on the basis of sexual orientation and the bill currently before the Ugandan Parliament;
- the report of the newly established Sub-Committee on Finance of the Executive Committee, noting that the IPSAS accounting standards would now apply to the IPU as to all other international organisations;
- the draft IPU budget for 2012, noting that the sub-Committee on Finance's recommendation that the operating surplus be transferred to the working capital to achieve a balanced budget for 2012;
- proposed revisions to the scale of member contributions;
- candidatures for vacancies on IPU committees; and
- the proposals for an emergency item.

5.11 In discussing the applications for membership from the Parliaments of the Azerbaijan and Ukraine, the Group noted that both Parliaments were formally eligible for membership of the Group and that they had been members of the Council of Europe respectively since 2001 and 1995 respectively. Azerbaijan had been a member of the Twelve Plus, but had been excluded for never taking part in its activities. The Group also noted that both Parliaments were the only members of the IPU not to be affiliated with any Geopolitical Group.

5.12 The Group noted concerns regarding the concentration of power, pressure on media and selective justice in the Ukraine and agreed that the elections on 28 October 2012 would be the ultimate test, since the new Ukrainian electoral code did not follow recommendations by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the Venice Commission.

5.13 With respect to Azerbaijan, the Group noted concerns raised by PACE regarding freedom of assembly, freedom of speech and freedom of religion, the

execution of judgements by the European Court of Human Rights and ongoing tension in Nagorny Karabakh.

5.14 Delegations from both Parliaments were invited to present to the Group. Following the presentation by the Ukrainian delegation the majority of the Group decided to postpone the vote on both applications for membership of the Twelve Plus Group until the 127<sup>th</sup> Assembly at Quebec City.

## **Bilateral meetings**

### ***Parliamentary strengthening – Australia-Africa Partnerships Facility***

5.15 Mr Adams and Senator Boyce met briefly with Mr Dison Okumu, Director of Planning and Development, Parliament of Uganda. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss Australia's partnership with the Ugandan Parliament to deliver a series of AusAID-funded training modules to Members of Parliament and parliamentary officers. The modules are part of the AusAID Parliament of Uganda Training Program delivered through the Australia-Africa Partnerships Facility, an initiative that facilitates relationships and development cooperation with African governments and institutions.

5.16 Mr Okumu said that Professor Peter Loney, Director of the Legislative Leadership and Governance Group within the Alfred Deakin Research Institute at Deakin University, would coordinate the first module of the training. The modules would cover parliamentary practices and procedures, the work of committee and their role in good governance, financial scrutiny, parliamentary leadership for women, research and reporting and communicating with the electorate and the media.

5.17 The meeting also provided an opportunity for delegation members to gain an understanding of the system of government in Uganda, particularly the relationship between Local Government Districts and the National Assembly. The meeting was followed by a brief tour of the Ugandan Parliament.



*Mr Dick Adams MP and Senator Sue Boyce with Mr Dison Okumu, Director of Planning and Development, Parliament of Uganda*

### ***Informal meeting with NGOs***

5.18 Mr Adams and Senator Boyce met informally with representatives from Action for Disadvantage People, and Revival Christian Ministry. Representatives from both groups outlined the challenges faced by NGOs and other groups in securing financial assistance for education and health projects. The meeting enabled the delegation to gain an appreciation of the somewhat fragmented approach to the provision of education and health assistance in Kampala.

5.19 The delegates were able to explain that Australia's development aid to Uganda is provided through a range of programs. In 2011-12, Australia committed A\$7.7 million in Official Development Assistance to Uganda. 34 per cent of this supported Australia Awards, a pan-African program of development scholarships and fellowships, 38 per cent was delivered through Australian NGO and Ugandan civil society organisations and 12 per cent was delivered through the Australia-Africa Partnerships Facility. Australia also provides assistance through regional programs such as the African media Research foundation for women's and children's health, UNICEF's Children and AIDS Regional Initiative (CARI) and the IMF's East Africa Regional Technical Assistance Centre (East AFTRITAC).

### **Panel discussion – The role of Parliamentarians in tackling vaccine-preventable diseases**

5.20 Senator Sue Boyce took part in a panel discussion on the margin of the IPU Assembly to highlight the role of parliamentarians as national, regional and international advocates in child health and immunisation. The discussion was jointly hosted by the National Assembly of Uganda and the GAVI Alliance with the aim of broadening parliamentarians' knowledge of immunisation and new vaccines and to provide them with tools to advocate to foster a broader movement to promote vaccines and immunisation. The session was opened by the Rt Hon Rebecca Kadaga, Speaker of the National Assembly of Uganda and was chaired by the Hon Lydia Wanyoto, MP (Uganda).

5.21 Speaking as part of the panel, Senator Boyce, noted that Australia was the first country to introduce HPV vaccine into its routine immunisation. Besides being a leader on vaccine science, Australia is a generous donor to GAVI and to immunisation. Senator Boyce said that politicians can play a powerful advocacy role with other politicians and with funding bodies to elevate health priorities, such as immunisation, on the development agenda, both at a national and international level.

5.22 The GAVI Alliance is a public/private partnership of international organisations, donor governments, developing countries, financing institutions and vaccine manufacturers committed to protecting health through increasing access to immunisation.

5.23 Through AusAID, Australia supports the GAVI Alliance to provide immunisations in the world's poorest countries. GAVI is a critical partner for AusAID in meeting its objective of saving lives, improving maternal and child health and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Australia's contribution to GAVI is expected to immunise 7.7 million children in the world's poorest countries by 2015.

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## **Site visit to WaterAid supported projects in Kifumbira Slums, Kampala**

5.24 On 6 April 2012, Senator Sue Boyce undertook a site visit to the Kifumbira slums in the settlement of Kawempe, Kampala. The purpose of the visit was to inspect water and sanitation projects supported by WaterAid. Senator Boyce was able to visit two schools, APCPD Mulago Integrated Academy of Disabilities and Immaculate Heart Primary School in Kifumbira, and speak with local leaders on a walk through the community.

5.25 The visit was hosted by WaterAid Uganda, who has been working in Uganda for 30 years focusing on nine districts considered to be in greatest need. WaterAid builds partnerships with local organisations to find appropriate and sustainable solutions for each area of need. Mr Didus Ruhombe, Head of Integrated Water and Sanitation Programme WaterAid Uganda, told Senator Boyce that by supporting local communities to build their own solutions, WaterAid is able to encourage people to take ownership of projects to ensure they are in control of changes to their environment. Senator Boyce heard that over half the population in Uganda lacks a safe place to go to the toilet and 9.3 million people, almost a quarter of the population, in Uganda do not have access to safe water. 26,000 children die every year from diarrhoea caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation in Uganda.

5.26 At the APCPD Mulago Integrated Academy of Disabilities, Senator Boyce was impressed by initiatives to successfully integrate designs that cater for the needs of disabled children in the delivery of water and sanitation services. Ms Christine Namwanje, the head teach of the school, said that although the school mainly works with children with a range of intellectual disabilities, it is able to teach the students about hygiene. With WaterAid's assistance the school has built a toilet block that meets the needs of all students through access ramps, doors for privacy and washing facilities at appropriate heights. The school has established a sanitation club where children have learnt to maintain their sanitation facilities and keep their school environment clean.

5.27 Mr Jacob Aoru, the head teacher of Immaculate Heart Primary School said that residents in the Kifumbira area faced a number of challenges, including a high water table, which made the construction of toilets very costly, poor drainage systems, the high cost of safe piped water and contamination of natural spring wells. Senator Boyce heard how the students have become safe water and sanitation change agents in their families and community by talking about the value of boiling drinking water, using toilets and hand washing with soap.



*Senator Sue Boyce with residents of the Kifumbira slum at a contaminated natural spring. Tap water is very expensive in Kampala and residents often need to rely on unsafe sources.*

5.28 Walking through the community, Senator Boyce was able to inspect facilities for the delivery, and sale, of reticulated water to the community, drainage systems to address flooding issues and speak with community leaders about initiatives to educate the population about the importance of good sanitation practices. Senator Boyce inspected a public toilet block that had been constructed as an election promise by the Ugandan Government. She was disappointed to see that, two years after its completion, the facility remained padlocked, forcing residents to use makeshift facilities.



*Senator Sue Boyce discussing the importance of drainage channels in helping to reduce the impact of flooding in slum areas*

5.29 The Australian Government supports WaterAid's work through a partnership agreement between AusAID and WaterAid for the Australia Africa Community Engagement Scheme (AAECS). AACES enables NGOs and their partners to contribute to the AusAID strategy for Africa, through a partnership program focused on community-based interventions across the sectors of water and sanitation, food security and maternal and child health.

5.30 Senator Boyce wishes to express her sincere thanks to WaterAid Uganda for facilitating the visit and for giving her an opportunity to understand the water and sanitation situation, the status of sewerage coverage and sanitation in urban poor schools as well as a practical understanding of WaterAid's contribution in addressing the situation.





# **Chapter 6**

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

### **Introduction**

6.1 Ms Claessa 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 126<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Kampala, Uganda. The meetings of the ASGP were held from 1 to 5 April 2012. 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**

6.2 Mr Martin Chungong, Director at the IPU Secretariat of the Division for the Promotion of Democracy, attended a meeting and led debate on recent developments in the IPU. He informed the meeting that the joint project of the IPU and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the nature of parliamentary representation had been the major work of the past 12 months. The report of the project, the Global Parliamentary Report 2012, had been launched on 2 April.

6.3 Mr Chungong also referred to support initiatives arising from changes in response to the Arab Spring.

6.4 Mr Greg Power, who had been working with the IPU – UNDP joint project to produce the Global Parliamentary Report, also attended and led debate on the report. Copies of the executive summary of the report were distributed.

### **Consideration of parliamentary matters**

#### ***General debates***

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

- Things that can't be said: limits on freedom of expression in parliamentary proceedings;
- Is it necessary to constrain debate in plenary sitting?; and
- Raising matters of urgency or emergency in the Chamber (a topic proposed by Australia).

#### ***Communications***

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

- Impeachment of a judge in the Indian Parliament;

- Strategic plan of the parliamentary service of the Swiss Parliament for 2012-2016;
- How to optimally support a parliament in times of cutbacks;
- The Knesset Visitors' Centre – Transparency and Accessibility;
- Who decides which Members get to speak in the plenary – the President of the Bundestag or the political groups?;
- Parliamentary modalities for managing a post-war situation – The case of Sudan;
- The South African system of co-operative government and intergovernmental relations: an analysis;
- The sub judice rule: parliament and the courts. Implications for the doctrine of the separation of powers in Zimbabwe;
- Structure and function of the Meshrano Jerga (Afghan Upper House): a brief introduction;
- Developing a new document production system for the Chamber secretariat – Phase one (a topic proposed by Australia);
- Lessons from the work of the House of Federation in celebrating Ethiopian Constitution Day 2011; and
- Basic aspects and prospects of TURKPA's international cooperation.

### ***Other presentations***

6.7 There were presentations and discussions on the following related matters:

- The parliamentary system of Uganda; and
- The organisation of the next session of meetings in Quebec, Canada, 21–26 October 2012.

### **Administrative matters**

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

6.8 A number of new members were admitted to the ASGP, most were replacing existing members who had retired or moved to other employment. Two new members were admitted from South Sudan because that country joined the ASGP for the first time, one from each of the National Legislative Assembly and the Council of States. In addition, one new associate member from the Pan-African Parliament and one new observer from the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services were admitted.

#### ***Elections for members of the Executive Committee***

6.9 Nominations for the post of one vice-President and for one ordinary member of the Executive Committee were invited during the course of the meetings. As only one member nominated to the vacant post of vice-President, Ms Doris Mwinga, Clerk of the National Assembly of Zambia, was elected as vice-President. As only one member nominated to the vacant post of ordinary member, Mr Philippe Schwab,

Secretary General of the Council of States and Deputy Secretary General of the Federal Assembly, of Switzerland, was elected to the Executive Committee.

**Next meetings**

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



# Chapter 7

## Visit to Kazakhstan

### Introduction

7.1 Kazakhstan is the largest of the Central Asian Republics and the ninth-largest country in the world, covering some 2.7 million square kilometres. It is bordered by Russia to the north, the Caspian Sea to the south-west, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic to the south, and China to the east.

7.2 This was the first visit by an Australian parliamentary delegation to Kazakhstan and as such marked an important milestone in bilateral relations between the two countries. The visit also coincided with the twentieth anniversary of Australia's establishment of diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan in 1992.

7.3 Australia opened an embassy in Almaty in 1995, but closed it in 1999 due to resource constraints. Kazakhstan opened a consulate in Sydney in January 1996, but closed it in March 2003 for similar reasons. Despite this the two countries have maintained a strong diplomatic relationship. Australia's Ambassador to Kazakhstan is resident in Moscow, and makes regular visits to Kazakhstan. In January 2005, Australia established an Honorary Consulate in Almaty. Australia's Ambassador to Germany, Peter Tesch, is Australia's Special Envoy to Central Asia and brings significant knowledge and experience to the role, having been Australia's Ambassador to Kazakhstan from 1996 to 1999.



*The Australian delegation with Mr Jumatay Aliev, Head of Australia-Kazakhstan Parliamentary Friendship Group and HE Margaret Twomey, Australian Ambassador to Moscow*

## **Program**

7.4 The delegation was privileged to have numerous opportunities to gain valuable insights into Kazakhstan's history, culture and society and to speak frankly with members of parliament and government officials in Astana and Almaty. Mr Slipper had the honour of meeting privately with the Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr Karim Massimov and the delegation met with senior members of the Kazakhstan Parliament and received informative briefings from government Ministers and their departments.

The delegation wishes to express its sincere thanks to the following individuals who met with the delegation:

- HE Mr Karim Massimov, Prime Minister of Kazakhstan;
- The Hon Nurlan Nigmatulin MP, Chairman of the Mazhilis of the Parliament of Kazakhstan;
- The Hon Kairat Mami, Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan;
- HE Mr Yezhan Kazykhanov, Foreign Minister
- Mr Jumatay Aliev, Head of Australia-Kazakhstan Parliamentary Friendship Group
- Mr Albert Rau, First Vice-Minister, Ministry of Industry and New Technologies,
- The Hon Akhmetzhan Esimov, Akim of the City of Almaty
- Mufti Absattar Derbisali, Supreme Mufit of Kazakhstan; and
- Mr Anzar Musakhanov, Governor of the Almaty Region.

## **Parliamentary Strengthening**

7.5 The delegation's meetings with members of the Kazakhstan parliament served to demonstrate the warmth of the relationship that exists between the two parliaments. The wide ranging discussions enabled the delegation to gain an appreciation of opportunities for further developing the bilateral relationship between Australia and Kazakhstan.

7.6 Kazakhstan is a presidential republic and gained its independence from the former Soviet Union on 16 November 1991. Power rests almost entirely with the President, who is elected by direct vote for a five year term. The Prime Minister and the First Deputy Prime Minister are appointed by the President.

7.7 President Nursultan Nazarbayev was first elected in December 1991 and has been Kazakhstan's only President since independence. Prior to his election in 1991, he was Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh Republic within the Soviet Union. In the Presidential election held on 3 April 2011, Mr Nazarbayev gained over 95 per cent of the vote, an increase on the 91 per cent he gained in the last Presidential election in 2005. The Prime Minister, Mr Karim Massimov, took office on 8 January 2007.

7.8 The Kazakh Parliament consists of the Senate and the Mazhilis (lower house). There are 39 members of the Senate, seven of whom are appointed by the President, and 77 members of the Mazhilis, all of whom are popularly elected to serve four-year terms.

7.9 A parliamentary election was held in Kazakhstan in January 2012. The President's party, Nur-Otan, won 81 per cent of the vote. Two other parties closely aligned with Nur-Otan won seats, making this Kazakhstan's first multi-party parliament.

***Meeting with the Chairman of Mazhilis, the Hon Nurlan Nigmatulin MP***

7.10 On 9 April 2012 the delegation met with the Hon Nurlan Nigmatulin MP, the Chairman of the Mazhilis and other members of the Mazhilis. Mr Nigmatulin observed that this first visit to Kazakhstan by an Australian delegation was symbolic because it coincided with 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan and Australia and 20 years of Kazakh independence.

7.11 He said there were many similarities between Australia and Kazakhstan, noting that they are both large territories with small populations and low population density. He also observed that they both have significant mining and agricultural industries and share a common attitude to nuclear non-proliferation, terrorism, climate change and drug trafficking.

7.12 Mr Slipper congratulated Kazakhstan on its bid to host Expo 2017 and wished it every success. He said that, as Queenslanders, both he and Senator Boyce were mindful of the benefits that flowed to Brisbane as a result of its successful hosting of Expo 88. Mr Slipper said that Kazakhstan is also to be congratulated on the very beautiful national capital it has established in Astana.

7.13 The delegation was interested to learn that Kazakh members of parliament do not commute to Astana. Instead, they live and work in Astana and return to their regions once every quarter to discuss legislative and policy proposals with their constituents.

***Meeting with the Chairman of the Senate, the Hon Kairat Mami***

7.14 The Chairman of the Senate welcomed the delegation by saying that this visit testifies to the importance of Kazakhstan to Australia. He said that Australia was a most promising partner to Kazakhstan in the Asia-Pacific and that this historic visit would lay the foundations for a solid relationship between the two parliaments.

7.15 Mr Slipper agreed that the relationship between Australia and Kazakhstan is significant to both countries and that both have a great deal in common and a great deal to learn from each other.

7.16 The delegation was interested to learn that in Kazakhstan 32 Senators represent 16 regions and that like Australia, each region has the same number of Senate representatives regardless of the size and population. In addition to these 32 Senators, a further 15 Senators are appointed by the President.

7.17 The delegation noted the many similarities between Australia and Kazakhstan, noting that Australia is also a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious nation.

At its independence, Kazakhstan was unique among post-Soviet Central Asian nations in that less than 50 per cent of the total population were ethnic Kazakhs. Now more than half the 15.6 million people in Kazakhstan are ethnic Kazakhs. There is also a sizeable Russian community (23 per cent of the population) and smaller communities of Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Uighurs, Tartars and Germans.

7.18 On behalf of the President of the Senate and himself, the Speaker extended an invitation for a Kazakhstan parliamentary delegation to visit Australia as a guest of the Australian Parliament. Mr Slipper said that the Australian Parliament looked forward to such a visit as a means of further fostering a strong relationship between Kazakhstan and Australia.

### ***Meeting with Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister***

7.19 Australia and Kazakhstan enjoy a strong bilateral relationship. Kazakhstan is Australia's leading trading partner in Central Asia, though the level of trade between the two countries remains modest. The delegation's meeting with Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister, Mr Yerzhan Kazymkhanov, provided an opportunity to discuss a number of issues of common interest to the two parliaments, including border control and nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

7.20 Mr Kazykhanov provided an overview of Kazakhstan's relationship with its neighbours, characterising Kazakhstan's location between China and Russia, with whom Kazakhstan shares two very long borders, as 'living between a dragon and a bear'. He said that bilateral meetings with China were held twice yearly and that China participates in a number of significant projects within Kazakhstan.

7.21 Border control poses a significant challenge for Kazakhstan as it does for Australia. Mr Kazykhanov said that Kazakhstan's southern borders pose the main concern. He said that Kazakhstan's borders with Uzbekistan and Kurgistan had been closed for a time but were now reopening. He said a significant problem for Kazakhstan was illegal migration by seasonal workers attracted by higher salaries. Kazakhstan is part of a customs union with Russia and Belaruse which obliges it to maintain tight border control.

7.22 Like Australia, Kazakhstan had nuclear weapons tested in its territory. Kazakhstan takes an active approach to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and is an active partner nation in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Kazakhstan is a party to the Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone.





*The delegation with Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister, Mr Yerzhan Kazymkhanov*

### ***Meeting with Ministry for Industry and New Technology***

7.23 Staff from the Ministry for Industry and New Technologies provided the delegation with a presentation on industrial development and innovation in Kazakhstan. The delegation noted that the oil and gas sector is particularly significant in the industrial development of Kazakhstan, contributing eighty per cent of foreign direct investment in Kazakhstan.

7.24 Kazakhstan possesses vast reserves of natural resources and fossil fuels, many of which are untapped. Globally, Kazakhstan ranks in the top ten countries for coal, oil and gas, chrome Zinc and bauxite reserves. Kazakhstan has plans to significantly expand its oil production. Full development of its major oilfields could make it one of the world's top five oil producers. The planned further development of its giant Tengiz and Karachaganak fields is expected to add 1.5 million barrels per day by 2014. Kazakhstan's sector of the Caspian Sea is believed to hold several other major oil and natural gas deposits as yet unexploited.

7.25 The presentation underscored the number of opportunities for Australian investment, particularly in the mining sector where there is great demand for specialist expertise in non-ferrous metallurgy, ferrous metallurgy and waste dumps. The presentation identified similar opportunities in the chemical, machinery, construction and livestock industries.

### ***Meeting with Ministry of Labour and Social Protection***

7.26 At its meeting with the representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the delegation heard that while Kazakhstan is one of three rapidly developing economies, along with Qatar and China, it also faces some significant social issues.

7.27 Women make up 52 per cent of Kazakhstan's population and have historically enjoyed greater freedom than women in other Central Asian countries (women in Kazakhstan have had the vote since 1918). However, women's salaries are on average 69 per cent of men's salaries. The delegation heard that Kazakhstan has implemented a National Strategy to Gender Equality. Under this strategy, Kazakhstan aims to have increased the number of women decision makers to 60 per cent by 2016. Currently

women make up nine per cent of decision makers compared to 24 per cent in Australia and there are three female ministers out of a total of 18 ministers in the Kazakhstan government.

7.28 Men's health is also a significant issue for Kazakhstan. The average life expectancy for a woman is 73 years compared with 64 years for men. With 45 per cent of the population living in rural areas, rural health issues are a high priority for the Kazakhstan government. The delegation was able to provide some insight into the significant challenges posed for rural health in Australia, particularly in ensuring access to an appropriate level of health services in regional and remote communities.

### ***Parliamentary Friendship Group***

7.29 The delegation received a very warm welcome from the Kazakhstan-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group. The Friendship Group hosted a lunch in the delegation's honour which enabled the delegation to gain a closer understanding of the Kazakhstan parliament. The Chair of the Friendship Group, Mr Aliev, accompanied the delegation to throughout its visit. The delegation appreciated the assistance in meetings and the informal briefings that he provided throughout the visit. The delegation's understanding of Kazakhstan's parliamentary system, economy, history and culture is much richer for the time and care that Mr Aliev devoted to the delegation's visit.

7.30 Since returning to Australia, the delegation has established a friendship group.

### **Doing Business in Kazakhstan**

7.31 The delegation's visit to Almaty provided an opportunity to gain an understanding of the opportunities for Australian investment in Kazakhstan. Prior to 1998, the south eastern city of Almaty was the capital of Kazakhstan. The reception hosted by Mr Slipper in honour of the Australian business community enabled the delegation to gain a first-hand understanding of the rewards and challenges of doing business in Kazakhstan.

7.32 Several Australian companies are active in Kazakhstan and Australian investment in Kazakhstan totalled \$57 million in 2009. Australia's mining investment in Kazakhstan is still small and the delegation noted that Australia has a more noticeable presence in the services sector with WorleyParsons, Leighton Holdings, Orica Limited, and Macquarie Renaissance Infrastructure Fund being among Australian companies who have successfully made inroads. As well as the significant potential for Australian involvement in Kazakhstan's mining and services industries, the delegation noted that agriculture is an area of considerable potential for Australian investment. An example of this is the partnership between the Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics in Adelaide and the Kazakhstan Government on wheat and barley genetics.

7.33 The delegation noted that Australian businesses seeking to conduct business in Kazakhstan often need a Kazakhstan business partner and that the protocols for successfully establishing a business presence could be complex. Throughout its visit, the delegation noted a high level of interest in moves to re-established an Austrade

office in Astana. Currently Austrade's Moscow and Vladivostok offices provide support for trade and two-way investment with Kazakhstan.

## **Education**

7.34 Education features prominently in Kazakhstan's plans for the future and the Kazakh government has invested significantly in the education of its population. The government-financed 'Bolashak' International Scholarship Program sends thousands of the country's top students to overseas universities each year and has been seen as a means of invigorating Kazakhstan's drive toward modernization. Under the program approximately 50 scholarship recipients have studied in Australia each year since 2007. In 2011 there were 158 Kazakh nationals enrolled to study in Australia.

7.35 The delegation was very pleased to visit Nazarbayev University. The university is named for President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who also initiated the Bolashak program in the 1990s.

7.36 The delegation met with the Provost, Mrs Anne Lonsdale and Mr Michael Kelly, Associate Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences. Mrs Lonsdale told the delegation that the University is planning to become an international research university to combine teaching and research activities. Mrs Lonsdale said that there are opportunities for Australian Universities to partner with Nazarbayev University. The University of Melbourne's School of Engineering has been involved in course development at Nazarbayev University and Mrs Lonsdale said that the University's School of Mining was hoping to establish a strategic partnership with a university in South Australia.



*Senator Sue Boyce and Mr Patrick Secker MP with the Provost of Nazarbayev University, Mrs Anne Lonsdale*

## **Cultural exchange**

7.37 The delegation's program offered a number of opportunities to gain a greater understanding of Kazakhstan history and culture.

7.38 The current population of Kazakhstan is 16.7 million people, of which 63 per cent are ethnic Kazakhs. There is also a sizeable Russian community (23 per cent of the population) and smaller communities of Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Uighurs, Tartars and Germans. Kazakhstan's population is again slowly rising following mass emigration of minorities during the post-independence period. Religious affiliation is split between Islam (70 per cent of the population) and Russian Orthodox (26 per cent) according to 2009 census.

7.39 The national language, Kazakh, is a Turkic language and is thus akin to the Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Tatar, Turkmen and Uighur languages spoken across Central Asia. Kazakh has a well-established community of speakers in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as well as in Mongolia, China and Iran. It can be written in Cyrillic, Latin or Arabic script. Russian is extensively used for administrative and technical purposes, and is still a first language for a significant proportion of the population.

#### ***Visit to ALZHIR Gulag Camp Museum***

7.40 The delegation's visit to ALZHIR Gulag Camp Museum was a sobering reminder of Kazakhstan's links to political repression under Joseph Stalin. Located in the tundra 25 kilometres from Astana, the camp housed the wives of those considered to be enemies of the people and was one of the most notorious of eleven camps established from 1924 to 1954 to house public figures, politicians and members of the Soviet Union's creative and scientific intelligentsia.

7.41 ALZHIR is a Russian acronym for the Akmolinskii Camp for Wives of Traitors of the Motherland. At least 7,620 women perished at the camp and their experiences are recorded on the wall that surrounds the museum. Following the German invasion of the Soviet-Union at the beginning of World War II, many Russian-Germans were resettled at ALZHIR after being deported from the Soviet-Union.

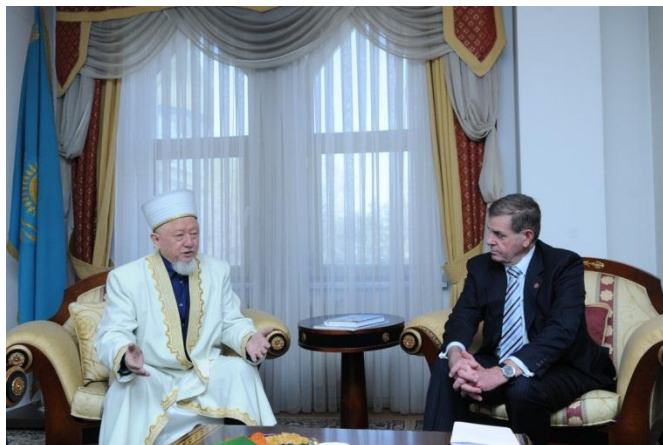
7.42 The delegation heard that the Museum has a special place in the memory of the Kazakh people and the Kazakhstan strives to adhere to ideas of tolerance, equality and friendship of all nations and is working tirelessly to bring justice to all victims' families and relatives of those who suffered under Soviet rule.

#### ***Meeting with Mufti Absattar Derbisali, Head Mufti of Kazakhstan***

7.43 The delegation welcomed the opportunity to meet with Mufti Derbisali to discuss issues around religious freedom and interfaith friendship.

7.44 On behalf of the delegation, Mr Slipper said what an honour it was to meet with Mufti Derbisali and noted that he is a significant scholar who has contributed greatly to interreligious understanding. Mr Slipper noted that, like Australia, Kazakhstan supports religious freedom and interfaith friendship. While Australia's population is overwhelmingly Christian, Kazakhstan's population is predominantly Muslim.

7.45 Mufti Derbisali told the delegation that while the majority of Kazakhstan's population is Muslim, it has a significant Christian population. He said that religious freedom is of great significance in Kazakhstan and closely connected to its transition to independence. He said that in Soviet Russia it had been very difficult to be Muslim or Christian.



*The Speaker with Mufti Absattar Derbisali, Head Mufti of Kazakhstan*

### ***Visit to Issyksky Burial Ground***

7.46 The delegation's visit to the museum and burial ground near the town of Issyk, 70 kilometres east of Almaty, provided an opportunity to learn more about the Scythian warrior who has become an important symbol for Kazakhstan. The remains of what is believed to be a 17-18 year old man, wearing a red leather suit richly embroidered and embellished with gold, was discovered by the Kazakh archaeologist, Kemal Akishev during excavations near Issyk in 1969.

7.47 The delegation was able to speak with Bekmukhanbet Nurmukhanbetov, a local archaeologist who worked alongside Kemal Akishev during the excavation of the site, before receiving an informative tour of the museum and burial site.



*Members of the delegation at Issyksky Burial Ground and Museum*

7.48 Following this visit the delegation attended a lunch hosted by the Governor of the Almaty Region, Mr Anzar Musakhanov. The delegation appreciated the opportunity to gain an understanding of the Almaty region and to experience the local cuisine, music and dancing.

### ***Visit to Medeo***

7.49 At the conclusion of its visit to Almaty the delegation undertook a short tour of the picturesque Malaya Almatinka valley located 15 kilometres above Almaty. The delegation inspected the dam constructed on the Malaya Almatinka river to protect Almaty from meltwater floods. The dam is an impressive engineering feat and has a capacity of 6,000,000 cubic meters. The delegation also viewed the Chimbulak ski resort and the outdoor skating rink at Medeo. This rink is the largest and, at 1,691 metres above sea level, the highest skating rink in the world and has hosted numerous international speed skating, figure skating and ice hockey competitions.

### **Conclusion and acknowledgements**

7.50 The delegation's program in Kazakhstan was diverse and engaging and the delegation is grateful to the Kazakhstan Parliament for the time devoted to the delegation's visit and the generous hospitality provided. The opportunity to speak with so many senior parliamentarians and ministry officials greatly enhanced the delegation's understanding of Kazakhstan's system of government, economy and key areas of social policy.

7.51 The delegation notes that Kazakhstan offers many opportunities for Australian business in Kazakhstan. Aside from the tremendous potential offered by Kazakhstan's mining and services sectors, the delegation noted opportunities exist for Australia in the agribusiness sector and to increase its share of the education market in Kazakhstan. The delegation considers that efforts to increase tertiary education partnerships between Australia and Kazakhstan are important for progressively strengthening the bilateral relationship between the two countries. Scholarships and exchanges provide an avenue for facilitating greater knowledge and understanding of Australia in Kazakhstan. The delegation notes the strong interest in the reestablishment Australia's Austrade office in Astana and considers that this is a significant step if Australia is to capitalise on each of these areas of opportunity.

7.52 The delegation expresses its sincere appreciation to Mr Talgat Kaymbetov, Head of Protocol Department, Parliament of Kazakhstan and his staff for their assistance and attention to detail throughout the delegation's visit.

7.53 The delegation is equally grateful to HE Ambassador Ms Margaret Twomey, Australia's Ambassador to Moscow, HE Ambassador Mr Peter Tesch, Australia's Special Envoy to Central Asia and Ambassador to Germany, and Mr Mark Pierce, Assistant Secretary, South and Central Asia Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for their assistance and informative briefings in Kazakhstan.

7.54 The delegation wishes to thank Australia's Honorary Consul, Mr Paul Roberts, for his support during the reception hosted by the Speaker in Almaty in honour of the Australian business community. The delegation also wishes to express its appreciation to Mr Michael Kourteff, Mr Peter Nagy, Ms Natalia Chudinovskikh and other embassy staff for their assistance in arranging the delegation's program and for providing advice and assistance throughout the visit.

# **Chapter 8**

## **Bilateral visit to Hungary**

### **Introduction**

8.1 Australia and Hungary enjoy strong people to people links flowing from the large numbers of Hungarians who have migrated to Australia. Hungarian-Australians have been active in the fields of business, academia, politics and the arts and count among their number many prominent Australians.

8.2 At the time of the 2006 Census, there were 67,625 people in Australia of Hungarian ancestry and Hungarian-Australians have figured prominently in the fields of business, academia, politics and the arts.

8.3 Since Hungary's EU accession in 2004, increasing numbers of Australian businesses have been exploring Hungary's potential as a base for operations in the European Union and especially in the Central/Eastern European region. Hungary's EU membership offers opportunities for Australian business in areas such as environmental technologies and solutions. Two-way merchandise trade increased in 2009-10 to \$439 million.

8.4 Australia and Hungary enjoy a very cooperative bilateral relationship which has been strengthened through regular high-level bilateral visits. Most recently, the Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary, Mr Zsolt Semjén, visited Australia in October 2011 and the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, visited Hungary in June 2011 to attend the Asia-Europe Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

8.5 As one of the most advanced Central European countries with traditionally close geographic, historical, cultural and economic ties to Austria and Germany and Russia, Hungary offers excellent opportunities for Australian investment.

### **Strengthening parliament to parliament relations**

8.6 The delegation's program in Hungary had a strong focus on parliamentary relations as a means of further strengthening the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

8.7 This visit to the Hungarian parliament coincided with a challenging and uncertain time in Hungarian politics following the resignation of the Hungarian President, Mr Pál Schmitt. The Hungarian Speaker, Mr László Kövér assumed the duties of President until the election of Mr Schmitt's successor, Mr Janos Ader on 2 May 2012.

8.8 The delegation was very appreciative that so many members of the Hungarian parliament made time to meet with the delegation. This testifies to the warmth of the relationship between the two parliaments. The delegation was particularly honoured to have a private meeting with the Hungarian Prime Minister, HE Dr Viktor Orbán, and to meet with the Interim President of Hungary, Mr László Kövér, the Interim Speaker of the Parliament, Mr Sandor Lezsak, and members of the key parliamentary factions in the Hungarian Parliament.

8.9 The delegation was joined during this part of its program by the Hon Don Harwin MLC, President of the NSW Legislative Council

***Meeting with HE Dr Viktor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary***

8.10 The delegation was honoured to meet in with the Prime Minister of Hungary, HE Dr Viktor Orban. There was discussion of the need for visits by business delegations, in order to develop economic links between the two countries. Both sides said that cooperation in the field of energy is important. Mr Orbán said that one of the most important goals of Hungarian economic policy continues to be reduction of government debt and stimulation of investment, for which Hungary is continuously rationalising and simplifying economic regulation.



*The Speaker, HE Ambassador John Griffin and members of the delegation meeting with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán*

***Meeting with Interim President of Hungary***

8.11 On 16 April 2012 the delegation met with the Interim President of Hungary, Mr László Kövér. Mr Kövér commented on the strength of the relationship between the Hungarian and Australian Parliaments and said that while the Hungarian Parliament's visits to Australia were not as frequent as those to its nearer neighbours, this in no way reflected the quality or the importance of the relationship.

8.12 The meeting provided an opportunity for a very frank discussion about Hungary's economy and its relationship with the European Union. Mr Kövér spoke of Hungary's efforts to rebuild Hungarian industry and address labour issues, particularly the shortage of skilled labour.



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***Meeting with Interim Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament***

8.13 In his meeting with the delegation Mr Sandro Lezsak stressed his interest in exploring opportunities for greater cooperation between Hungary and Australia. He noted the Australia-Hungary Social Security Agreement which would enter into force later in 2012 and the flow on benefits this would have for business.

8.14 Mr Slipper said that Australia was equally interested in encouraging further trade with Hungary and was looking forward to the planned visit by a Hungarian trade delegation to Australia. He said that such delegations represented a significant step toward establishing strong business to business links. The Australian delegation noted that the energy sector held some promising opportunities for partnerships with Australian companies.

8.15 The delegation was also pleased to gain the Speaker's perspectives on Hungary's unicameral system of parliament. The delegation noted that an upper house could play a role in improving legislation and that a robust committee system could also had a significant role to play. Mr Lezsak said that this had been discussed during the review of Hungary's constitution. He said that the role of an upper house had to some extent been assumed by the Constitutional Court which provides an avenue for legislative change.

***Meeting with Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister***

8.16 Hungary's Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Tibor Navracsics introduced himself to the delegation as one of the few Hungarians without relatives living in Australia. The delegation's meeting with Mr Navracsics focussed on recent judicial reforms in Hungary, which Mr Navracsics described as important and contested. He explained that the Hungarian judicial system was considered to have become inefficient and that the changes were an attempt to address this.

8.17 Mr Navracsics observed that some of the concerns that had been raised more broadly in Europe about the democracy in Hungary did not adequately recognise that, as in Australia, the system of checks and balances in the Hungarian parliament depended on a strong opposition which could work toward achieving a degree of consensus. He said the reality was that the Government enjoyed a two-thirds majority and that this had redrawn the political landscape in Hungary and in the parliament.

***Meetings with faction leaders and the Australian-Hungarian Friendship Group***

8.18 The delegation was very fortunate to meet with Party Leaders from Fidesz, the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) and Lehet Mas a Politika (LMP or Politics Can be Different). These meetings provided a unique opportunity to discuss each faction's perspectives on the significance of the current distribution of power in the Hungarian Parliament.

8.19 Mr Attila Mesterhazy, Faction Leader of the Hungarian Socialist Party MSZP said that the political situation in Hungary was historically quite turbulent and that the Socialist Party's heavy losses at the last election had initiated a process of renewal within the party.

8.20 Mr Benedek Javor, LMP discussed his Party's focus on younger voters. He explained that while his party was a member of the European Green Party grouping, its name reflected its commitment to a wider set of issues that those traditionally associated with some "green" parties. He discussed his party's interest in electoral reform, and said that none of the other parties appeared to be dealing with this. He explained that the problem in Hungary was more complex than the number. He explained that the electoral system was heavily weighted in favour of the major parties.

8.21 Mr Mihaly Balla, the Deputy Leader of the ruling Fidesz party, stressed his party's commitment to finding appropriate answers to the social and economic challenges facing Hungary. He said that many of Hungary's current difficulties stemmed from a reliance in the past on government subsidies and other non-work related payments. He stressed the importance of attracting foreign investment and said that he considered Hungarian's living abroad could play a significant role in this.

### ***Ministry Foreign Affairs***

8.22 In its meeting with Hungary's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr János Martonyi the delegation was able to discuss Australia and Hungary's cooperation in multilateral fora. The delegation expressed appreciation of Hungary's support for Australia's candidacy for the UN Security Council and acknowledged the two countries' shared commitment to international peace and security as partners in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

8.23 The meeting provided an opportunity for the delegation to express Australia's gratitude to Hungary for providing emergency consular support for Australians in Syria following the withdrawal of the Canadian mission from Damascus. Dr Martonyi said that, as the only western power to remain in Syria, Hungary was keen to maintain its presence. Dr Martonyi noted Australia's contribution to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan had been disproportionately important and positive. He said that Hungary recognised that such intervention could not continue indefinitely and that there was a need for an orderly withdrawal and handover.

8.24 The meeting provided an opportunity to explore avenues for improved investment partnerships between Australia and Hungary. Since Hungary's accession to the European Union in 2004, increasing numbers of Australian businesses have been exploring Hungary's potential as a base for operations in the EU, and especially in the Central/Easter European region. Dr Martonyi said that the delegation's visit was an important sign that Australia and Hungary are looking to move forward together and develop an ever closer relationship. He said that Hungary is one of the most open economies in the world, particularly in the energy, pharmaceutical and water management sectors.

8.25 The delegation said that Australia was ready to welcome the planned Hungarian business delegation to Australia. The delegation also noted Hungary's interest in establishing closer links with rising economies in Asia and said that Australia is a natural partner for Western countries, such as Hungary, seeking to do business in Asia.

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### ***Ministry of National Development***

8.26 The delegation's meeting with the Hungarian Minister for National Development, Mrs Zsuzsa Németh, provided an opportunity to discuss Hungary's National Energy Strategy and opportunities for Australian investment in Hungary's Energy Sector.

8.27 The delegation was able to discuss some of the challenges facing Australian companies seeking to invest in Hungary. The delegation noted that some highly successful Australian companies had experienced difficulties establishing joint-ventures with Hungarian companies and that this sent a poor message to other Australian companies. The delegation heard that Hungary had experienced problems through the "piracy" of its resources by foreign interests. The delegation heard that requirements under the National Mining Act now placed more stringent requirements on foreign interests. The fact that seven companies were interested in participating in the Hungarian geothermal sector is a positive sign.

8.28 Ms Németh explained Hungary's position on foreign investment further by providing an overview of the Hungarian Government's strategy to bolster the state's role in strategic industries. She said that following the end of communism, the Hungarian Government divested itself of most of its state-owned companies. Regrettably many of the remaining state owned businesses have become inefficient and unprofitable. Hungary is now seeking to protect remaining national assets through stringent regulations that limit the sale of assets and shares in assets to foreign entities unless this can be demonstrated to be in the common good.

### **Holocaust Memorial Day**

8.29 The delegation's visit coincided with events to mark Holocaust Memorial Day and the centenary of the birth of Raoul Wallenberg. On 15 April Mr Slipper joined Hungary's Interim President, Mr Laszlo Kövér, the Acting Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament, Sandor Lezsak, and thousands of Hungarian citizens in a March for Life in Budapest. The purpose of the March was to teach the lessons of the Holocaust and the send the message "never again" to future generations. In her address to the a gathering outside the House of Terror Museum, the head of the museum, paid tribute to Raoul Wallenberg .

### **Visit to Lake Balaton**

8.30 The delegation was grateful to the Hungarian Parliament for the opportunity to gain a closer appreciation of the history and culture of Hungary through a visit to the Lake Balaton region. The delegation commenced its visit in the historic Tihany peninsula where it was warmly welcomed by the Mayor of Tihany, Mr Imre Tosoki. Mr Tosoki guided the delegation through the Benedictine Abbey at Tihany, explaining that the founding charter of this abbey is the first extant record of Hungarian language.

8.31 Tihany is the gateway to the Bakony-Balaton Geopark and the delegation also received an informative briefing from the Director and staff of the Geopark. The briefing outlined how the park was making a significant contribution to the economy of the peninsula through sustainable geotourism initiatives in cooperation with local communities. The main goals of the geopark include the protection and interpretation

of the rich geological heritage of the area, maintenance of cultural heritage sites and the promotion of specific educational and tourism initiative. The delegation learnt that the park is continuing a proud history of cultural and environmental conservation that dates from 1952.

8.32 Mr Tosoki hosted a lunch for the delegation at the Honthy Villa which provided a valuable opportunity for an informal discussion of local government in Hungary.



*The delegation with Mr Imre Tosoki and Mrs Tosoki at Honthy Villa, Tihany.*

8.33 The delegation then travelled to the city of Keszthely on the western shore of Lake Balaton. Keszthely is the largest city on Lake Balaton and is an important cultural, educational and economic hub for the region. The delegation was privileged to meet the Mayor of Keszthely, Mr Ferenc Ruzsics, who provided an informative briefing on the history and economy of the region and accompanied the delegation on a tour of the historic Festetics Castle. Originally constructed by Christoph Festetics in 1745, this castle is one of the largest baroque palaces in Hungary and currently houses a museum and conference centre.

8.34 The delegation completed its visit to Lake Balaton with a visit to the Pannon University Centre for Agricultural Sciences' Grape and Wine Research Centre in Badacsony. The Badacsony region is recognised for its wines and boasts vineyards dating back to Roman times. The Institute is part of a network of research institutes throughout Hungary's 22 wine producing regions based on vineyards that were originally privately owned, passed into State ownership during the Communist era and are now attached to universities. They play an important role in undertaking research and providing advice to the Hungarian wine industry. The delegation heard that there

is renewed interest in preserving Hungary's wine culture and cultivating wine tourism. The work of the Institute is therefore equally focussed on the cultivation and preservation of local varieties and improving production and land management techniques.

### **Conclusion and Acknowledgements**

8.35 This visit highlighted the very strong ties between Australia and Hungary and that the two countries have much in common. This together with their experience, respective geographical locations and high business and ethical standards should provide an excellent platform for future commercial partnerships. The delegation's noted potential opportunities for trade and investment in Hungary in areas as diverse as infrastructure, government-related services (particularly health and e-government), consumer goods, food and beverages, computer and telecommunications software and services, building and construction technologies and education services. The delegation notes that Hungary's accession to the European Union also offers opportunities for Australian business in areas such as environmental technologies and solutions.

8.36 The delegation is grateful to the Hungarian Parliament for hosting its visit to Hungary and extends its particular thanks to Mrs Zsuzsa Gyurcsik Holop and Mrs Katalin Vigh-Varga who accompanied the delegation during its visit.

8.37 The delegation is particularly appreciative of the assistance provided by Hungary's Ambassador to Australia, Ms Anna Sikó, who accompanied the delegation throughout its visit. Prior to the delegation's departure, the Speaker was pleased to provide a venue for a Hungarian Music, Food and Wine Festival hosted by Ms Sikó.

8.38 Finally, the delegation is grateful to HE Ambassador John Griffin, Mr Tamás Uhrin, and other staff at Australia's Embassy in Budapest for the time and support they lent to the delegation's visit. Their informative briefings and advice, together with the practical support they provided was pivotal to the success of the visit.



# Appendix 1

## Visit Programs

### **126<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly – Kampala, Uganda**

#### ***Friday 30 March 2012***

- Arrive Kampala, Uganda
- Twelve Plus Group Meeting

#### ***Saturday 31 March 2012***

- Asia-Pacific Group Meeting
- Meeting of Women Parliamentarians
- Meeting of the Network of Secretaries and Advisers to delegations
- Inaugural Ceremony of the 126<sup>th</sup> Assembly

#### ***Sunday 1 April 2012***

- Twelve Plus Group Meeting
- Governing Council: election of the President of the Assembly, Questions relating to Members and Report on the activities of the Executive Committee
- Assembly: election of the President, followed by general debate; consideration of requests for emergency item
- First Standing Committee: presentation of the Report and draft resolution of the rapporteurs; debate and possible designation of a drafting committee
- Open Debate with the Executive Directors of UNICEF and UNFPA
- Third Standing Committee: presentation of the Report and draft resolution of the rapporteurs; debate and possible designation of a drafting committee

#### ***Monday 2 April 2012***

- Twelve Plus Group Meeting
- Assembly – continuation of plenary debate
- Launch of Global Parliamentary Report
- Third Standing Committee: continuation of the debate
- Second Standing Committee: presentation of the Report and draft resolution of the rapporteurs; debate and possible designation of a drafting committee

***Tuesday 3 April 2012***

- Twelve Plus Group Meeting
- Meeting with IPU Secretary-General
- Panel discussion on *Tackling malnutrition in young children: The role of parliamentarians*
- Informal Panel discussion on *Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development*
- Panel Discussion on *Making the law work for the response to AIDS: zero new infections, zero AIDS-related deaths*
- Second Standing Committee: drafting committee
- Third Standing Committee: drafting committee
- Open briefing of the International Humanitarian Law Committee on *Health care in situations of conflict and violence*
- First Standing Committee: adoption of draft resolution

***Wednesday 4 April 2012***

- Assembly: continuation of General Debate
- Third Standing Committee: adoption of draft resolution
- Workshop: *Parliamentary oversight of Government external loans* and related processes and launch of joint global survey report (IPU, World Bank)
- Meeting of Women Parliamentarians
- Second Standing Committee: adoption of resolution
- Advisory Group of the IPU Committee on UN Affairs
- Meeting with Director, Planning and Development, Ugandan Parliament

***Thursday 5 April 2012***

- Twelve Plus Group Meeting
- Governing Council: reports of subsidiary bodies and final sitting
- Assembly: closing session, reports from Committees, and adoption of the resolutions and decisions
- Informal meeting with NGOs

***Friday 6 April 2012***

- Site visit to Water Aid Projects



## **Visit to Kazakhstan**

### ***Saturday 7 April 2012***

- Arrive Astana, Kazakhstan

### ***Sunday 8 April***

- Visit to Palace of Peace and Reconciliation, Palace of Independence, Presidential Centre of Culture
- Roman Catholic Cathedral – Easter Service

### ***Monday 9 April 2012***

- Embassy briefing
- Visit to Bayterek Tower
- Meeting with the Hon Mr Nurlan Nigmatulin MP, Chairman of the Lower House (Majilis), Parliament of Kazakhstan
- Meeting with Mr Yerzhan Kazykhanov, Foreign Minister
- Briefing by Ministry of Industry and New Technologies
- Lunch hosted by the Australia-Kazakhstan Parliamentary Friendship Group
- Visit to Nazarbayev University
- Visit to Memorial for the Victims of Political Repression
- Reception hosted by the Hon Mr Nurlan Nigmatulin, Chairman of the Lower House (Majilis), Parliament of Kazakhstan

### ***Tuesday 10 April 2012***

- Visit to Museum of the First President
- Meeting with the Hon Mr Kairat Mami, Chairman of the Senate, Parliament of Kazakhstan
- Lunch hosted by the Hon Kairat Mami
- Meeting with HE Mr Karim Massimov, Prime Minister
- Briefing by the National Commission on Women's Affairs
- Depart for Almaty

### ***Wednesday 11 April 2012***

- Meeting with Mr Akhmetzhan Esimov, Mayor of the City of Almaty
- Meeting with Mr Absattar Derbisali, Head Mufti of Kazakhstan

- Lunch hosted by Mr Anzar Musakhanov, Governor of the Almaty Region
- Visit to Issykky Burial Ground
- Reception hosted by the Hon Mr peter Slipper MP in honour of the Australian business community

***Thursday 12 April 2012***

- Visit to Medeo speed skating rink
- Visit to Shymbulak ski resort
- Depart for Astana
- Depart Kazakhstan for Hungary

**Visit to Hungary**

***Thursday 12 April 2012***

- Arrive Budapest

***Friday 13 April 2012***

- Briefing Australian Embassy

***Saturday 14 April 2012***

- Tour of Budapest

***Monday 16 April 2012***

- Meeting with HE Mr Laslo Kover
- Luncheon hosted by the Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament
- Tour of the Hungarian Parliament
- Observe the Plenary Session of Parliament
- Meeting with Mr Janos Martonyi, Minister for Foreign Affairs

***Tuesday 17 April 2012***

- Meeting with HE Mr Victor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary
- Meeting with Mr Tibor Navracsics, Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary
- Luncheon with members of the Australian-Hungarian National Opera

***Wednesday 18 April 2012***

- Daytrip to Lake Balaton region including visit to Abbey of Tihany, Festetics Castle in Keszthely and the Badacsony wine region.

***Thursday 19 April 2012***

- Depart Hungary for Australia