



Parliament of Australia

Parliamentary Delegation

to

134th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly

Lusaka, Zambia

19 – 23 March 2016

Commonwealth of Australia 2016

ISBN 978-1-76010-416-0

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Members of the Delegation

Leader of the Delegation

The Hon Bruce Scott MP
Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives
Liberal Party of Australia
(accompanied by Mrs Joan Scott)

Deputy Leader of the Delegation

Mr Laurie Ferguson
Member for Werriwa (New South Wales)
Australian Labor Party

Ms Nola Marino MP

Member for Forrest (Western Australia)
Chief Government Whip
Liberal Party of Australia

Senator Cory Bernardi

Senator for South Australia
Liberal party of Australia

Senator Sue Lines

Senator for Western Australia
Australian Labor Party

Officials:

Mr Brien Hallett
Delegation Secretary

Ms Claressa Surtees
Deputy Clerk of the House of Representatives
(attending ASGP meeting)

Ms Elysia Ruttley
Adviser to the Deputy Speaker

134th IPU Assembly – Lusaka

The 134th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly took place in Lusaka, Zambia, from 19 to 23 March 2016 and was attended by 634 parliamentarians from 126 member countries including 74 presiding or deputy presiding officers. A number of observers also attended.

The Australian delegation to the Assembly was led by the Deputy Speaker, the Hon Bruce Scott MP, and included Mr Laurie Ferguson (Deputy Delegation Leader), Ms Nola Marino MP, Senator Cory Bernardi and Senator Sue Lines.

Background

The IPU is the international organisation of parliaments of sovereign states and provides a focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue. 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 for 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.

There are currently 170 national parliaments who are members of the IPU and 11 regional parliamentary assemblies which are associate members.¹ Most members are affiliated with

¹ A list of current members of the IPU is available on the IPU website:
<http://www.ipu.org/english/membshp.htm>

one of six geopolitical groups that are currently active in the IPU.

While the major focus for the Australian delegation is participation in the twice-yearly assemblies, 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.

The Australian Parliament plays an active role in supporting a number of these activities in partnership with the IPU, particularly in the local region.

The IPU Assembly is the principal statutory body of the IPU. It meets bi-annually to bring together parliamentarians to study international problems and make recommendations for action. The assemblies include debates on significant international issues, the regular meeting of the IPU Governing Council, and meetings of specialist committees, working groups and geopolitical groups.



The Australian Delegation with IPU President Saber Chowdhury and Secretary General Martin Chungong at the Mulungushi International Convention Centre (MICC) in Lusaka

Assembly

The 134th Assembly was formally opened on Saturday, 18 March 2016. The Assembly agenda addressed the following items:

- General Debate – *Rejuvenating Democracy, giving voice to youth*;
- Consideration of items for debate as an Emergency Item and the debate;
- Resolution: *Terrorism – The need to enhance global cooperation against the threat to democracy and human rights*;
- Resolution: *Ensuring lasting protection against destruction and deterioration for the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of humanity*;
- Reports of the standing committees; and
- the 198th session of the IPU Governing Council.

Meetings of geopolitical groups

The IPU has six geopolitical groups that meet immediately prior to, and during, each Assembly to 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.

Most member countries are members of at least one geopolitical group. Australia is a member of two geopolitical groups: the Asia-Pacific Group and the Twelve Plus Group and participated in meetings of both groups at the 133rd IPU Assembly.²

² The IPU Statutes stipulate that Members that belong to more than one geopolitical group should indicate which geopolitical Group they represent for the purposes of submitting candidatures for positions within the IPU. Australia usually exercises its voting rights through the Asia Pacific Group.

Asia Pacific Group³

The Asia Pacific Group met twice during the Assembly and received a report from the ASEAN +3 Group as well as a briefing by the IPU President and executive committee members. The meeting considered nominations for a number of vacancies to be filled during the 134th Assembly including the Presidency of the Standing Committee for Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade. Ms Marino who has been an active member of this committee's bureau (or steering committee) since March 2014, nominated for this vacancy but was defeated in a ballot which was won by the Cambodian candidate, Ms S. Tioulong.

The Group also considered the various topics proposed for debate as an emergency item by the Assembly and nominations to the drafting committee. In addition, the Group also considered the IPU Strategy for 2017-2021.

Twelve Plus Group⁴

The Twelve Plus Group met three times during the Assembly. The meeting received a report of the executive committee and its finance and gender partnership sub-committees, reports on the meeting of chairs of geopolitical groups and the IPU President, and considered various nominations for a number of vacancies to be filled during the 134th Assembly. A ballot was held to determine the Group's candidates for positions on the bureaux of two standing committees and the Co-ordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians. Senator Bernardi was asked to be one of two scrutineers at these ballots.

Following the Group's Declaration on the Ukraine issued in Hanoi at the 132nd Assembly in March 2015, the meeting noted that there had been little change in the situation. In light

³ The membership of the Asia Pacific Group is available on the IPU website: <http://www.ipu.org/strct-e/geopol.htm>

⁴ The membership of the Twelve Plus Group is available on the IPU website: <http://www.ipu.org/strct-e/geopol.htm>

of the current situation in the Ukraine (which is a member of the 12 Plus Geopolitical Group), the meeting also discussed a proposal put forward by the Russian Federation to hold an IPU Assembly in Saint Petersburg in October 2017.

The Group considered reports from various IPU meetings including the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, the Advisory Group on HIV/AIDs and Maternal, Newborn Health and Child Health, and the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus.

Reports on resolutions proposed by three of the standing committees were considered as well as work being undertaken on the Standing Committee for United Nations Affairs in relation to the appointment of the next UN Secretary-General.

The Group considered the proposal for an emergency item which is covered in more detail below, and while supportive of the proposal put forward by France, agreed that a combined proposal with Uruguay had merit. Nominations for the drafting committee were also finalised.



Senator Lines, Mr Ferguson, Mr Scott and Senator Bernardi at the 12 Plus Group meeting

IPU – debates in the Assembly and other activities

A key focus of Assembly business are two major debates in the plenary: (i) the general debate, and (ii) the debate on an emergency item.

The General Debate

The topic of the general debate was *Rejuvenating Democracy, giving voice to youth*. Opening keynote contributors included Mr Patrick Matibini (Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia), Ms M Mensah-Williams, (Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia), and Ms Y Chaka Chaka (UN Goodwill Ambassador for the Roll Back Malaria Partnership and artist) who commenced her contribution in song.

Following a ballot to determine the order of speaking, Mr Scott was one of the first speakers in the debate and made his contribution on Sunday, 20 March. In his speech, Mr Scott discussed issues related to participation in the electoral and parliamentary process in Australia and outlined the steps being taken by the Australian Parliament and the Electoral Commission to identify barriers and promote democratic participation⁵.



Mr Scott participating in the general debate

Emergency Item

The IPU Rules provide that any member country may propose a topic for inclusion as an emergency item to be debated. The matter must:

...relate to a major event of international concern on which it appears necessary for

⁵ Mr Scott's speech has been published on the IPU website at <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/134/speeches/spklist.htm>

the IPU to express its opinion. Such a request must receive a two thirds majority of the votes cast in order to be accepted [for debate]." (Assembly Rule 11-2(a))

On 20 March, the IPU President informed the Assembly that four proposals had been received for consideration as emergency items as follows:

Giving an identity to the 230 million unregistered children without a civil status: One of the major challenges of the humanitarian crisis in the 21 st century	France/Uruguay
Completing the process for international recognition of a viable, independent and sovereign Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital: The role of parliaments	Morocco
Human trafficking: An act of terrorism, a grave violation of human rights and human dignity, and a threat to regional and international peace and security	Sudan
Parliamentary powers in democracies and the importance of the oversight function	Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

The delegations from Morocco and Bolivia withdrew their proposals before the vote and a roll-call ballot was held between the remaining two items proposed by France/Uruguay and Venezuela. In the ballot, Australia exercised its 14 votes in favour of the proposal put forward by France/Uruguay. This proposal obtained the necessary two thirds majority and was adopted.

Following debate, the emergency item was referred to a drafting committee and the final resolution was adopted unanimously.

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

The 23rd Meeting of Women Parliamentarians was held during the Assembly and Senator Lines participated in these proceedings which involved 98 delegates from 72 countries in addition to representatives from various international organisations.

During its two sittings, the meeting considered reports from the Co-ordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, the Gender Partnership Group and a briefing on recent IPU activities in the area of gender equality. Participants then discussed the resolution proposed by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security on *Terrorism: the need to enhance global co-operation against the threat to democracy and individual rights*.

Following this, the meeting held a panel discussion on women's participation in politics and young women's political empowerment in preparation for the General Debate on the topic of *Rejuvenating Democracy, giving voice to youth*.

At the second sitting the meeting adopted amendments to its rules so that, among other things, the group will henceforth be known as the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, and the Co-ordinating Committee will be known as a Bureau (similar to the standing committees). The Forum also held elections for senior positions.



Senator Lines at the meeting of Women Parliamentarians

Standing Committees

The IPU has four standing committees that met during the Assembly to consider the following matters:

- Debate, drafting and adoption of the resolution *Terrorism: The need to enhance global cooperation against the threat to democracy and individual rights* (first Standing Committee on Peace and International Security);
- Debate and drafting the resolution *Ensuring lasting protection against destruction and deterioration for the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of humanity* (second Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade);
- Debate on the resolution *The freedom of women to participate in the political processes fully, safely, and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective*. (third Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights); and
- Interactive debate on the appointment process for the UN Secretary General (fourth Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs).

Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

The first standing committee held four sessions which involved debate and drafting the resolution *Terrorism – the need to enhance global cooperation against the threat to democracy and individual rights*. Mr Ferguson attended these meetings and contributed to proceedings which finalised the resolution adopted by Assembly on 23 March 2016.

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade

The second standing committee held three sittings at this Assembly and commenced proceedings by holding elections to vacancies

on the Bureau based on nominations received from the geopolitical groups (see page 2 above).

A key item of business was debate and drafting of the text of the resolution on *Ensuring lasting protection against destruction and deterioration for the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of humanity*. Ms Marino chaired these sessions and her work in ensuring this detailed task was completed within the deadline and to the satisfaction of all present was roundly applauded by committee members when the task was completed. This resolution was adopted by the Assembly at its final session on 23 March 2016.



Ms Marino chairing the second standing committee's consideration of the resolution on protecting cultural heritage

Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

At its first session, the third standing committee worked on its draft resolution *The freedom of women to participate in the political processes fully, safely, and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective*. This resolution had been proposed by the Australian delegation at the 133rd Assembly in Geneva in October 2015. Senator Lines was participated as a panellist supporting a preparatory debate on this resolution which will be considered at the 135th Assembly in October 2016.

At its second session, the committee hosted a debate on *Open parliaments – building an association on accountability*. Various speakers made the case for openness and

transparency as a necessity in modern parliaments and shared experiences as to how this can be achieved.

Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

The fourth Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs held one sitting to debate the appointment process for the next Secretary-General of the United Nations and also received a briefing on institutional arrangements for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Other meetings

A key benefit of attending the IPU Assembly is the opportunity for Australian parliamentarians to meet their international colleagues in both formal and informal settings. By assembling representatives from such a large number and diverse range of parliaments in one place, the IPU offers a unique opportunity for delegations and individual parliamentarians to discuss issues of mutual interest, to develop an understanding of different parliamentary models and to strengthen parliament-to-parliament relationships.

The opportunities for informal discussions are complemented with bi-lateral meetings and the Senators Bernardi and Lines met the Fijian Delegation on Tuesday 22 March. At that meeting, the delegation leader, Hon Jilia Kumar MP, provided an update on reconstruction and recovery measures in place since Cyclone Winston devastated parts of Fiji on 20 February 2016. The Fijian delegation expressed its sincere appreciation for the prompt assistance provided by the Australian Government including \$15 million in humanitarian aid, relief flights which delivered more than 500 tonnes of humanitarian support and equipment, and the provision of additional assistance from HMAS Canberra.



Senators Bernardi and Lines with the Fijian delegation

On the same morning, Mr Scott and Mr Ferguson visited St Paul's School as the guest of Sister Loice Kashangura. Located in the Chipata compound which is a high density area in the northern part of Lusaka, this combined primary and secondary school provides support and education to some of Lusaka's poorest children, and offers two programs a day so that one set of students attend in the morning, and another in the afternoon. The Australian High Commission to Zambia (which is based in Harare, Zimbabwe) has funded projects at the school to establish guttering and tanks for water collection and the construction of a staff room building which was opened by Mr Scott.



Mr Scott and Mr Ferguson at St Paul's School, Lusaka

Other functions and receptions

The delegation attended the inaugural ceremony hosted by the Zambian Government on Saturday 19 March, an informal dinner with the Australian Deputy High Commissioner on Sunday 20 March and a reception hosted by the 12 Plus Group on Monday 21 March. Each of these informal gatherings provided further opportunities for the Australian travelling party to continue discussions with a wide range of parliamentary colleagues.

Overall conclusions

The delegation departed at an eventful time in the Autumn session and both Mr Scott and Ms Marino were unavoidably delayed by the late sitting of the Parliament on the evening of Thursday 17 March and which continued into Friday 18 March. Nonetheless they both arrived in Lusaka by Saturday 19 March and were able to take part in the Assembly program.

Again, the Australian travelling party continued to build on the work of previous delegations. Formal and informal comments received at the Assembly from standing committees, other parliamentarians and IPU officials again proved that the Australian delegation maintains its reputation as an effective contributor to the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The Australian travelling party also valued the formal and informal opportunities to participate in the various parts of the IPU program. Of course, one of the most valuable benefits is the chance to meet parliamentary colleagues from a wide range of backgrounds and share experiences and concerns.

Finally, the delegation acknowledges the support provided by the Australian Deputy High Commissioner to Zambia, Mr Joel McGregor, who is based in Harare, Zimbabwe. Mr McGregor provided advice in the lead up to the Assembly and travelled to Zambia to be in Lusaka during the Assembly. His practical advice and support were appreciated by all delegation members.

Thanks are also due to Mr Matthew Neuhaus, Assistant Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Africa Branch, who briefed the travelling party prior to departure, and his colleague, Ms Natalie Boyes from DFAT in Canberra, who co-ordinated background briefing materials. Ms Cat Barker from the Parliamentary Library also provided additional briefing papers for the delegation.

Bruce Scott MP
Delegation Leader

Meetings of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments

Introduction

Ms Claressa Surtees, Deputy Clerk of the House of Representatives, attended the meetings of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP), of which she is a member, held in conjunction with the deliberations of the 134th Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly in Lusaka, Zambia. In addition, Ms Surtees participated in the meetings of the ASGP Executive Committee, of which she is a member. The meetings of the ASGP and of its Executive Committee were held from 19 to 23 March 2016.

Relations between the ASGP and the IPU

Ms Kareen Jabre, of the IPU Secretariat, attended a meeting and reported on a range of activities supported by the IPU to achieve its current strategy.

In relation to setting standards and knowledge generation, Ms Jabre commended the Global Parliamentary Report developed from the results of survey responses from hundreds of parliamentary administrations and parliamentarians. She also reminded the meeting of the conference on E-Parliament to be held in Chile in June 2016.

Ms Jabre remarked on the important roles that members of the ASGP play in institution building. She referred to Myanmar and the induction program for new parliamentarians, in early 2016, provided with the cooperation of UNDP and individual parliaments, including Australia.

She also highlighted the particular focus for the IPU on raising the awareness of parliamentarians of the 17 sustainable development goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015
<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

The IPU Annual Report 2015, and other information in relation to the IPU, is available on the IPU

website <http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm>

Consideration of parliamentary matters

General debates

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

- Overburdening the statute book in response to current events; which proceeded by way of the presentation of several prepared papers and interventions from the floor; and
- The budget of the Parliament; which proceeded by way of an initial plenary presentation, then participants breaking into small groups for informal discussions, on a language basis for practical reasons, and concluding with reports to the plenary from each group:

Group A (English): The decision-making process: who sets the budget for Parliament? What is the procedure? How is the Government implicated in the process?

Group B (English): Implementation: who is charged with managing the budget? How is it managed?—Ms Surtees reported to the plenary on the discussion in this group.

Group C (French): Scrutiny: is the management of the budget subject to scrutiny (either internal, or by an independent, outside body)?

Group D (Spanish): Transparency: what degree of transparency applies to the management of Parliament's budget and its accounts?

Group E (Arab): Response to crisis situations: how are crisis situations managed in budgetary terms? Do secret reserve funds exist?

Communications

There were also presentations and related interventions on specific parliamentary topics which proceeded on a thematic basis.

The powers and procedures of parliaments

- The elective function and checks on nominations to Parliament: Federal Assembly of Switzerland;
- The issue of quorum in relation to accusations made against members of the Government and the President of the Republic: National Assembly of Chad;
- Crossing the floor in Uganda;
- The powers of the Parliament of Spain vis-à-vis an acting Government following a general election;
- Parliamentary privilege and citizen's right of reply—presented by Ms Surtees;
- The leaven that leaveneth the whole lump: Filibuster in the Icelandic Parliament, Althingi;
- The election of the Speaker by preferential ballot: House of Commons, Canada; and
- Separation of powers: Relationship between Parliament and the Judiciary, with a focus on the internal arrangements of Parliament.

Communicating

- The role of social media in spreading awareness about Parliament: Consultative Council of Oman;
- Training ambassadors for parliamentarianism – the German Bundestag's International Parliamentary Scholarship Programme; and
- Taking pride in Parliament: reflections after the 200th anniversary of the Parliament of the Netherlands.

A parliament for tomorrow

- The House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Morocco: toward an electronic Parliament;

- The Lok Sabha Secretariat and its journey towards a paperless office; and
- An environmentally-friendly Parliament: Knesset, Israel.

Other presentations and activities

The first presentation at this assembly was from Mrs Cecilia Mbewe, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly of Zambia, who provided an introduction to the Zambian parliamentary system. This was followed up later with a visit to the Parliament, with opportunities to inspect the chamber, committee rooms and library.

Administrative matters

New members

A number of new members were admitted to the ASGP, most were replacing previous members who had retired or moved to other employment. One new member was admitted from the Parliament of Fiji because that parliament had recently re-joined the ASGP after an absence of some years. In addition, three new associate members were admitted, the Secretary General of the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) Parliament, replacing the previous member, the Secretary General of the Andean Parliament and the Secretary General of the CEMAC Parliament (Inter-Parliamentary Commission of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa).

Retired members

Seventeen members had recently retired from the ASGP. One of those retired members, Dr Hafnaoui Amrani, Secretary General of the National Council of Algeria and former President of the ASGP, was admitted as an Honorary Member.

Elections for members of the Executive Committee

Nominations for the post of ordinary member of the Executive Committee were invited during the course of the meetings. As only one member nominated to the vacant post, Ms Maria Alajoe, Secretary General of the Riigikogu of Estonia, she was elected to the Executive Committee.

Additional languages used at meetings

In addition to the two official languages of English and French, Arabic interpretation was used during meetings for formal interventions and speeches. The Executive Committee agreed that current arrangements for meetings are to be modified to facilitate Arabic and Spanish interpretation to be available for future meetings. Further, the permanent documents of the ASGP available through the website are to be translated into Arabic and Spanish.

Related meetings

There were a number of related meetings between secretaries general and clerks addressing issues of mutual interest and exploring means of future cooperation with one another.

Panel discussion on Leading by example on Climate Change: a lighter carbon footprint for parliaments

In the afternoon on Wednesday 23 March, Ms Surtees attended a meeting arranged for both the IPU and ASGP members to consider how parliaments can make the most effective contribution to a more sustainable future as exemplars of responsible environmental management and serve as role models to their communities.

The Israel Knesset made a presentation on its efforts to become a green parliament. The project it implemented was developed after studying measures implemented at other parliaments, and the presentation specifically

referenced the Parliament of Australia and its use of solar panels to generate electricity.

Next meetings

A draft agenda for the next session, from 23 to 27 October 2016 in Geneva, Switzerland, was circulated. When further developed it is to be placed on the ASGP website <http://www.asgp.co>

Attendance at the 134th IPU Assembly

19 – 23 March 2016

The Hon Bruce Scott MP, Mr Laurie Ferguson, Ms Nola Marino, Senator Cory Bernardi, and Senator Sue Lines

Friday 18 March 2016

Main delegation arrived Lusaka

Country briefing by Australian Deputy High Commissioner Joel McGregor

Saturday 19 March 2016

Asia-Pacific Geopolitical Group meeting

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group meeting

Meeting of advisers and secretaries to delegations

Inaugural ceremony hosted by the Zambian Government

Sunday 20 March 2016

Meeting of the IPU Governing Council

General Debate in the Assembly on *Rejuvenating democracy, giving voice to youth* (including contribution by Mr Scott)

Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade

Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

Assembly – decision on the emergency item

Monday 21 March 2016

Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group Meeting

Assembly: debate on the emergency item and continuation of the general debate

Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

Asia-Pacific Geopolitical Group Meeting

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade

Reception hosted by the Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group

Tuesday 22 March 2016

Meeting of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade

Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

Meeting with the Fijian Delegation

Visit to St Paul's School

Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

Assembly – adoption of the resolution on the emergency item and continuation of the general debate

Wednesday 23 March 2016

Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group meeting

Governing Council – Resolutions on the human rights of MPs, and reports from specialized meetings

Assembly – Adoption of resolutions, reports of the Standing Committees, Outcome Document of the General Debate, and Closing Sitting

Departure of delegation from Lusaka