



Global Parliamentarians on HABITAT

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Minutes of the Meeting

Board of Directors of the Global Parliamentarians on Habitat

4th of November 2008

10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Nanjing, China

Agenda

1. To give an update of the work accomplished in each region
2. To talk about future of GPH, in general and in terms of concrete actions to take

Participants

Hon. Peter Götz, MP, President of the GPH and representative of GPH Europe

Senator Eloy Cantú Segovia, Vice-President GPH and President GPH Americas

Senator Rodolfo Biazon, Vice-President GPH and President of GPH Asia

Hon. Mariam Nalubega, MP, representative of GPH Africa

Ms. Marianne Latesse, Head of Regional Office – Eastern Africa, EUWEPA (Association of European Parliamentarians in Africa)

Ms. Carmen Razon-Arceño, Director-General, Office of International Relations and Protocol

Dr. Markandey Rai, Coordinator GPH, UN-Habitat

Ms. Birte Leinius, General Secretary GPH

I. Organisational issues

Hon. Traian Irgas was elected as the new president GPH Europe in Bucharest in April. Since neither he nor his vice-presidents could attend this meeting, Hon. Götz as former President GPH for Europe, represented the European continent.

II. State of affairs in each region

The members of the board each detailed the problems resulting from climate change in their respective region and what initiatives they had started to implement changes.

III. Discussion of the future of the GPH

1. Composition of the Board of Directors

The African and the Asian chapter of GPH both expressed the need to convene a regional meeting to elect new presidents.

- Africa does not currently have a President or Board. Hon. Nalubega has offered to provide the interim leadership and to prepare the elections of the new African Board.
- The current President of the Asian Chapter, Senator Biazon, has been president for the past 8 years and would like to pass on this function but has been unable to do so because it has not been possible to organise an Asian Regional Assembly Meeting for the past 8 years to pass on the leadership. Malaysia and India have both indicated interest in this position.

It was decided to attempt to hold both an African and an Asian meeting after the Round Table for Parliamentarians in the afternoon in order to reorganise themselves.

2. Institutionalising the GPH

The need to institutionalise the GPH was discussed.

2.1 Funding and registration

The issue was raised that many parliamentarians were finding it difficult to secure funding for their engagement for the GPH from their governments and parliaments. It was suggested that the GPH should have a funds, but since it was not clear who would provide this funds with money, the idea was not followed up upon.

Instead, it was suggested that the GPH decide on a topic for each meeting in order to make it easier for parliamentarians to obtain the permission to travel.

Furthermore, it was suggested that the GPH be registered. This will make it easier to secure funding in the future and will give the GPH a better standing in general. It was agreed that the General Secretary contact Ms. Latesse from EUWEPA in order to find out how to go about the registration process for the GPH.

2.2 By-laws

Senator Biazon suggested reworking the current by-laws and constitution. Especially the clauses on membership and the voting system needed to be looked at.

The office of the President of the GPH was asked produce a new set of by-laws in the form of a proposal. This should then be sent out to the regional

offices for discussion. The changes can then be voted on at the next General Assembly.

2.3 Structure of the GPH

The possibility of the GPH joining other parliamentary bodies, such as the Parliamentarians for Global Action, the Asia Pacific Parliamentarians Forum (APPF), the Common Wealth Parliamentary Institution (CPI) or the International Parliamentary Union (IPU). The benefit of this would be an existing network and mechanism for interaction, as well as a better attendance of the GPH.

Senator Biazon suggested contacting the IPU if the Board was interested in becoming an observer in or joining the IPU. Hon. Götz and Senator Cantú declared that it was problematic to join another organisation because the danger was great that the GPH would simply cease to exist and because the topics of the GPH would not receive the attention they deserve within the IPU. It was decided that the matter of becoming an observer in the IPU should be put onto the agenda of the next GPH Board Meeting.

2.4 Other matters

Hon. Götz introduced the new secretariat of the GPH, which is based at the German Bundestag in Berlin. This should provide a measure of stability and guidance to the GPH. The new Secretary General is Ms. Birte Leinius.

The General Secretariat was requested to function as a “Bridge of Knowledge”, in that it should collect relevant information from the regional chapters and disseminate it.

A clearer definition of the roles of the GPH and UN-Habitat was deemed necessary. UN-Habitat offered its full support to GPH. This support also needs to be more clearly defined.

3. Organisation of the next assembly meeting

Because of structural and financial constraints, it is impossible for the General Secretariat to organise a world conference all on its own. The General Secretariat can only work properly if it enjoys the fullest support of both the regional chapters and the host countries.

Senator Cantú agreed to find out whether Argentina or El Salvador were prepared to organise the next meeting.

Senator Biazon agreed to find out whether the Philippines or China could host the next meeting.

The next meeting should be convened next year, at the very latest on the occasion of the Governing Council meeting in Nairobi. Hon. Götz agreed to

look into the possibility of holding an earlier meeting in Brussels, possibly together with the European Board of Directors.

IV. Organisational comments regarding the round table

It was agreed to inform the parliamentarians attending the round table of the mission of the GPH.

They will be requested to attend a GPH meeting in the same venue after the closure of the round table.

This GPH meeting should then be succeeded by separate meetings for Asia and Africa.

End