

## DELEGATION REPORTS (118th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Cape Town, South Africa and Bilateral Visit to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan) – 28<sup>th</sup> August 2008

**Mrs VALE** (Hughes) (9:09 AM) —by leave—Mr Speaker, as deputy leader of the delegation under your leadership, I pay tribute to all members of the delegation for their commitment, diligence and professional conduct as active participants. Together with the Speaker and me, the member for Shortland, the member for Chifley and the member for Barker made up a delegation team in which each of us made a significant contribution. We were expertly supported in our work by the delegation secretary, Mr Neil Bessell, from the Department of the Senate; Ms Debra Biggs, adviser to the Speaker; Ms Alison Purnell, Director, Ministerial and Parliamentary Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, at the IPU; and Federal Agent Michael Jackson in Jordan. It is appropriate that our gratitude for their fine efforts be recorded in the *Hansard*.

There were many notable contributions that were made by our delegation at the assembly but, before I attempt to highlight some of these, mention must be made of the generosity and warmth with which the government of South Africa received the national delegates. Their hospitality was abundant and unrestrained and, besides the many functions, meetings, conferences and receptions provided to welcome delegates from 150 nations, their program for the partners of the delegates was outstanding. I take this opportunity to thank South Africa, the host nation, for its matchless generosity and hospitality. The impressive Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, Ms Baleka Mbete, was elected as president of the IPU assembly.

The Speaker participated in the general debate on the theme of the assembly: 'Pushing back the frontiers of poverty'. The member for Barker took an active role in the debate in the First Committee on Peace and International Security. The member for Shortland undertook to debate in the Third Committee on Democracy and Human Rights. I joined the debate in the Second Committee on Sustainable Development, the topic being: 'Parliamentary oversight of state policies on foreign aid'. I was also elected to the drafting committee to refine the resolutions on this topic for adoption by the IPU assembly and was elected rapporteur of the drafting committee and presented its final resolutions at the closing general assembly. The member for Chifley was elected to the drafting committee of the third committee to finalise the resolutions of the debated topic—'Migrant workers, people trafficking, xenophobia and human rights'—for adoption by the general assembly.

Our delegation also lodged a proposal that at the 120th assembly, in 2009, the first committee consider the topic 'Advancing nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament, and securing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty: the role of parliaments'. We were supported by the United Kingdom, Japan and Zambia, and the proposal was adopted by the committee and endorsed by the assembly. The member for Chifley and the delegate from Zambia were appointed as co-rapporteurs for this topic to draft a report and resolution to be discussed at the 120th assembly. I congratulate the member for Chifley for his contribution and this honour.

Together with the member for Shortland, I attended the meeting of women parliamentarians. The member for Shortland was nominated by the Asia-Pacific geopolitical group, one of the two groups which Australia attends—the other being the Twelve-Plus Group—and was subsequently elected as a titular member of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians and attended its meeting.

There was a roll-call vote on the inclusion of an emergency item on the agenda of the assembly, and our delegation participated in that vote. Our delegation also welcomed the presidential declaration on the Zimbabwe situation, which was made by the president of the assembly. The delegation attended several bilateral meetings at which we commended Australia's candidature for a seat on the United National Security Council in 2013-14.

Following that, the bilateral visit to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan by the delegation was also marked by the warmth and generous hospitality of our Jordanian hosts. We were all edified by meetings with the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the Jordanian House of Representatives and several other ministers and their staff. We were received with outstanding hospitality by the Jordanians, and special mention must be made of the affable Dr Hani Al Nawafleh and his delightful wife, Attica, who went to extraordinary lengths to ensure our comfort and satisfaction at all times, including inviting us to their private home to meet their family.

My sincere appreciation goes to the Jordanian parliament for an outstanding program, which included focused discussions on the many complex and challenging issues that face the Middle East today. Some issues, like access to water and energy resources, are shared by Australia. Our delegation was immensely impressed by the intelligent and measured approach adopted by the Jordanian ministers in what has rightly been described as a 'hard neighbourhood'.

This visit was highly informative and our delegation considers that Australian parliamentarians should take every opportunity to increase engagement with embassies in the Middle East in order to increase our understanding of its history and the dynamics of the complex challenges that impact on the peoples in this troubled part of the world. It was a privilege and an honour to have been part of the Australian delegation to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. I thank my colleagues and commend the report to the House. I seek leave to move a motion in relation to the report.

Leave granted.

**Mrs VALE** —I move:

That the House take note of the report.