

GOPAC DAILY NEWS

A Daily Summary of the 1st GOPAC Conference

Issue 3

Ottawa, 16 October 2002

“GENUINE PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT IS...ESSENTIAL”

CANADA'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER GIVES TUESDAY KEYNOTE

Day Two of the GOPAC conference was extremely busy, and delegates were able to close the last full day of the conference by attending a dinner and keynote address by Canada's foreign affairs minister, the Hon. Bill Graham.

Graham, a long-time advocate of parliamentary oversight and effectiveness, and former Chair of the Foreign Affairs committee, said: "Parliaments play a critical role in good governance by ensuring that state institutions are account-



The Hon. Bill Graham, P.C., M.P.
Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs

able, by representing the policies and legislation. Further-
population, and by help- More specifically, parlia- more, corruption destroys
ing formulate and enact ments can play an im- the legitimacy of the gov-
portant role in helping ernment itself, and in low-
curb corruption by exer- ering a country's own
cising oversight over credibility and prestige,
the executive branch, makes it less likely that it
building political will to will be able to bring to
combat corruption, and bear its best sources of
enacting anti- expertise from all facets
corruption legislation." of its society."

"When good govern- Graham concluded his
ance is thwarted by cor- speech by indicating his
ruption, the effects are support for GOPAC. He
corrosive to an entire said, "Let me again con-
society," continued grate everyone here
Graham. "Corruption today for the commitment
undermines and dis- and effort that has gone
torts the economy, dis- into the launching of
couraging local entre- GOPAC.
preneurs and diverting
the flow of investment
capital to more stable
Continued on page two...

NEWS AND NOTES FROM WORKSHOPS AND BREAKOUTS...

Day two workshops and breakouts featured lively debate on various issues, including how to go about putting structure to the "bones" of GOPAC.

"Make corruption risky," advises Augustine Ruzindana. The veteran Uganda parliamentarian says that

in certain countries, like his own, corruption is not risky. He sees Parliament as setting standards and making sure that government policies don't encourage corruption. The best way Parliament can fulfill its over-

Continued on back page...



GOPAC Daily News

Produced and edited by:
Garry Keller
Submissions by:
Jeffrey Holmes
Photos by:
Steve Blais

To submit an item, contact:
Phone: 613.996.4724
Cell: 613.222.5391
Fax: 613.995.8880
Email: willij@parl.gc.ca

We're on the web...
www.parlcent.gc.ca

GOPAC

Global Organization of
Parliamentarians Against Corruption

Interim Secretariat:
Parliamentary Centre of Canada
#802, 255 Albert Street
Ottawa, Canada
K1P 6A9
Tel. 613.237.0143
Fax: 613.235.8237
E-mail: campbme@parl.gc.ca

Graham, continued...

"The creation of GOPAC reflects a common objective: to address our shortcomings where we see them, build better institutions, and inspire others to strive to eliminate all forms of corruption. In seeing the truly impressive turnout for this event, and experiencing your enthusiasm, I believe this goal is within our grasp, and I can assure you of the support of the Government of Canada as you build this organization into an entity that will bring real benefits to our constituents whose interests, in the end, we all seek to serve."

WORKSHOPS AND BREAKOUTS CONTINUED...

oversight role, he says, is "to create an awareness in our society of the bad effects of corruption". Every country does at least one thing right, he explained. The trick, he added, is to share this with colleagues in other parliaments and not re-invent the wheel.

A senator from the Philippines also discussed the need to not forget the party system. Electoral finance encourages corruption, he noted, and provides a conduit for drug and other illegal money. We must, he concluded, go back to the electoral system to fight corruption,



since a costly election encourages winners to try to recover the money spent.

Many participants were particularly keen on good conduct. One wanted a code of ethics for Parliament. Another said democracy must prevail in a global system and agreed that a too expensive election campaign was a source of corruption. She also noted the difference between law and practice. A third, Margarita Stolbizer from Argentina, insisted on full campaign fund disclosure and on the importance of mechanisms of control. She

wanted a code of conduct for elections and called for just and fair procedures.

Al-Nibari, a Kuwaiti parliamentarian, insisted on the importance of the justice system in the fight against corruption. He was vocal about knighted ministers "who are corrupt" and use their criminal gains to buy media outlets – which they then use to counterattack anti-corruption activities – and election votes. He spoke, too, of an assassination attempt on a now-paralyzed colleague.

The election system was a point of discussion in the final session of Workshop 'C', chaired by Senator Juan Adolfo Singer, of Uruguay. A Malaysian participant, though, was proud of her country's anti-corruption agency but deplored the power and money of developed nations. If big brother can do it, she said, describing the thoughts of her junior colleagues, so can little brother.

KOREA TO HOST 11TH TI ANTI-CORRUPTION CONFERENCE

In related news, Seoul, S. Korea will be the venue for the 11th International Anti-Corruption Conference, to be held from May 25 – 28, 2003.

For more information, please go to:
<http://www.11iacc.org>

