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Governing Council
Item 5

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**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE IPU ON HIS ACTIVITIES
SINCE THE 189th SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

1. My dear colleagues, this is my first report to the Council since taking up office as IPU President last October. During this initial period, I have carried out a number of activities to steer and represent the Inter-Parliamentary Union, both in its institutional and political challenges and in keeping with the duties deriving from the high office which the parliaments of the world have conferred on me.
2. In the months immediately following the Bern Assembly, much of my time was taken up by the election campaign in my country which culminated in general elections at the end of that month.
3. Just before the end of year holidays, I paid a visit to IPU Headquarters in Geneva to receive initial briefings on upcoming activities. I returned to Geneva on 23 January and spent two days talking with IPU staff who briefed me on the vast array of activities undertaken by the various Divisions in the course of the year.
4. At that time, the IPU Committee on Middle East Questions was meeting at IPU Headquarters and I was very pleased to have the opportunity to meet the members and learn about the Committee's discussions. The Committee held very interesting talks with legislators from Israel, Palestine and Jordan about the Arab Peace Initiative. It intends to resume that dialogue in Kampala during the 126th Assembly. I am encouraged by these developments. I firmly believe that the IPU must play its role of peacemaker in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by promoting dialogue between parliamentarians from both sides.
5. My sense of encouragement was tempered, however, by the fact that on 19 January the Israeli authorities arrested the Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), as well as another PLC member and a former Palestinian Minister. I issued a statement expressing concern that almost 20 per cent of the Palestinian Parliament was in detention. Beyond and above the implications this has for the functioning of the Palestinian Parliament, I believe that this situation puts a serious strain on the peace process.
6. In mid-February, I travelled to Tunisia and had meetings with the President, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of Parliament and a number of other parliamentary authorities. The Secretary General and two IPU officers accompanied me on this visit which was aimed at offering continued support to the National Constituent Assembly that was elected in November last year.

7. At the invitation of the Shura Council of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, I travelled to Riyadh on 24 February to attend the third Consultative Meeting of the Speakers of the Parliaments of the G20 Member States. I delivered a speech that focused on dialogue and tolerance as a means of promoting peace and understanding among peoples. In the margins of the Conference, I met with the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Indonesia and with the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea.

8. I subsequently travelled to Geneva, where I delivered a statement to the United Nations Human Rights Council. From there I travelled to New York where I presided over the Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 56th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I also had talks with a number of high-level UN officials and Ambassadors, notably with the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon. My last port of call before returning to Morocco was Kuwait, venue of the 18th AIPU Conference. In addition to delivering a speech on the situation in the Arab world, I took the opportunity to exchange views with many of my parliamentary colleagues, including the Speaker of the Parliament of Bahrain and the Speaker of the Parliament of the United Arab Emirates.

9. In the last six months, I have felt compelled to take a public stance on behalf of the IPU on political developments around the world, particularly in the Arab region. In November I issued a statement calling for an end to the violence in Syria to open the way for a credible Syrian-led process of comprehensive political change that would address the democratic aspirations of the Syrian people. Continuing violence in Egypt during that same month was a cause of deep concern and led me to call publicly on the transitional authorities to guarantee the protection of human rights and civil liberties, including the right to peaceful protest, for all Egyptians.

10. I had the pleasure of receiving in Rabat the Speakers of the Hellenic and the Hungarian Parliaments. I welcomed the members of the delegation of the British IPU Group, who were in Morocco to discuss questions related to IPU activities.

11. Since my election, I have been in permanent contact with the Secretariat in order to exchange information and follow up questions such as providing assistance to Tunisia, Egypt, Myanmar and the Maldives, as well as other issues falling within the purview of the IPU.

12. On the eve of my visit to Kampala, at the invitation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean, I delivered an address on the importance the IPU attaches to the Mediterranean region.