

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IPU STRATEGY 2012-2017

Proposals to enhance the functioning of Standing Committees and their Bureaux

Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 192nd session
(Quito, 26 March 2013)

Decision of the Governing Council	Possible options for implementation
<p>2. It is recommended that the three Standing Committees meet on the occasion of both annual IPU Assemblies.* In this way, Members will have an opportunity within any given year to address topics of their choice and adopt at least three resolutions on highly relevant political issues.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Responsibilities and functions of Standing Committees</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each Standing Committee meets twice per year, during both annual Assemblies. 2. Each Standing Committee adopts one resolution per year. 3. A system of rotation between the Standing Committees will be put in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Standing Committees meet to adopt a resolution at the first Assembly of the year. The remaining Standing Committee may hold debates and hearings or take up any other item that is placed on its agenda. • The programme of the Standing Committees will be rotated at the second Assembly of the year. The two Standing Committees that adopted resolutions at the first Assembly may hold debates and hearings or take up any other item on its agenda. The remaining Standing Committee will meet to adopt a resolution. 4. The method of choosing the subject of future resolutions remains unchanged. The Bureau makes a proposal to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee's decision is submitted for the approval of the Assembly. The subject is debated and a resolution is adopted at the following Assembly. 5. Standing Committees set their own agenda for the Assembly where they do not adopt a resolution. Agenda items may relate to any subject that falls within the mandate of the Committee. One agenda item should normally be dedicated to follow-up action taken by parliaments on one or more previous resolutions. 6. Standing Committees may decide, for example, to carry out activities such as commissioning research, organizing field missions, holding hearings with UN and other officials, or other activities of their choice. Parliaments would be required to defray the cost of their members' participation in field missions organized by the Standing Committees. 7. Standing Committees may choose to establish a long-term work plan.
<p>9. The Standing Committees should be given broader responsibilities. This could include planning and implementing activities in their areas of competence, starting to develop institutional expertise, holding hearings with heads of international organizations and senior UN officials, undertaking field missions, preparing and submitting reports and reporting on good practices and progress in implementing IPU resolutions resulting from their Committee work.</p>	

* Due primarily to cost implications there is little support for the option of convening Standing Committees outside the bi-annual Assemblies (which would have allowed the participation of parliamentarians from relevant committees in their own parliaments to take part in the proceedings).

Decision of the Governing Council	Possible options for implementation
<p>10. In order to be able to carry out a more ambitious programme of work, the Standing Committees would need to receive support by way of both financial and human resources. It is proposed that, within the regular budget, funds be identified to support the work of the Standing Committees. In turn, the IPU Secretariat will need to devote more time and effort to providing the assistance required to sustain such activities.</p>	<p>8. In the interest of continuity, Member Parliaments will be encouraged to designate in advance the MPs who will be following the items placed on the Standing Committee agenda. These MPs will also play an important role in ensuring follow-up to IPU resolutions in their national parliaments.</p> <p>9. Standing Committees currently do not receive any financial allocation from the IPU budget, and little substantive support from the IPU Secretariat. Human and financial resources will have to be found to implement the reforms set out in this document. It is proposed that an initially limited financial allocation be made to each Standing Committee from within existing resources, and that staff resources be reorganized in order to begin to provide substantive support to the work of the Standing Committees.</p>
<p>11. The Bureaux should play an active role in planning, guiding and directing the work of the Standing Committees. They should be encouraged to adopt a multiyear programme of work and invite the membership to propose items for debate and rapporteurs to help prepare them. The Bureaux should also play an active role in monitoring follow-up to resolutions, including in terms of encouraging the systematic reporting by Members on any action they have taken.</p> <p>14. Bureau members would also be encouraged to interact with the geopolitical groups, with a view to preparing the groundwork for multiyear programmes of work, identifying the best possible office-holders, and enhancing the contribution by Members to the work of the Standing Committees.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Role of the Bureaux</p> <p>10. The Bureaux of the Standing Committees meet at each Assembly to prepare the work plan and agenda for the future meetings of the Committee. The Bureau reviews implementation of the Committee's work plan and proposes adjustments as necessary.</p> <p>11. The Bureau of each Standing Committee may propose subject items for the agenda of the other Standing Committees. Joint meetings of the Bureaux of the Standing Committees will take place regularly to avoid duplication and to enhance coordination.</p> <p>12. Geopolitical groups are encouraged to place a regular item on their agenda on the work of each Standing Committee, during which Bureau members would report to their geopolitical group on the Committee's activities and agenda proposals.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Decision-making</p> <p>13. The Bureau takes decisions by a simple majority of members present.</p> <p>14. The rules on decision-making in the plenary of the Committee remain unchanged.</p>

Decision of the Governing Council	Possible options for implementation
<p>12. Members of the Bureaux should be appointed for a two-year period, renewable once, on the basis of their competences and ability to take part in all meetings. All candidates for Bureaux membership should submit a brief biography, specifying their Committee membership in parliament and familiarity with the issues covered by the Committee. This should be accompanied by a commitment from their parliament that they will be supported in their work and included in future delegations to Assemblies.</p> <p>13. Both titular and substitute members of the Bureau would be encouraged to attend its meetings. It is proposed that attendance be strictly monitored, that quorums be enforced, and that simple majorities be used for decision-making.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Composition of the Bureaux</p> <p>15. Each geopolitical group is represented on each Bureau by at least two members. The larger geopolitical groups may have additional seats on the Bureau. The allocation of seats would be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · African Group: 4 members · Arab Group: 2 members · Asia-Pacific Group: 3 members · Eurasia Group: 2 members · Latin America and Caribbean Group: 3 members · Twelve Plus Group: 4 members <p>16. The current system of titular and substitute members will be replaced by a unified system, whereby all members of the Bureaux are titular members.</p> <p>17. Members of the Bureaux are elected by the Standing Committee for a two-year period, renewable once, at the first Assembly of the year. Bureau vacancies are communicated by the IPU Secretariat in the Convocation to Standing Committees.</p> <p>18. Candidatures for the Bureaux are normally submitted by the geopolitical groups. Candidatures should demonstrate the necessary experience and expertise in the Committee's area of work. The principle of gender equality shall be strictly observed: geopolitical groups entitled to two members shall designate one man and one woman, and those entitled to three or four members shall designate no more than two members of each sex.</p> <p>19. Every effort will also be made to include young parliamentarians among the Bureau members. In addition, it is recommended that the geopolitical groups encourage candidatures from new Member Parliaments and parliaments that do not hold other offices in the IPU.</p> <p>20. Submission of candidatures for the Bureaux should be accompanied by an assurance from the respective parliament that the candidate will receive the necessary support and be included in delegations to IPU Assemblies for the duration of his/her mandate.</p> <p>21. A member of the Bureau who is unable to participate in a session may be replaced by another representative of the same Member Parliament, duly mandated for that purpose and for the duration of that session only.</p> <p>22. Each Bureau shall have one President and one Vice-President. The geopolitical groups shall coordinate so as to ensure an equitable distribution of leadership functions within the Bureaux. The principle of gender equality shall be observed in leadership positions of the Standing Committees.</p> <p>23. In addition to his existing responsibilities as set out in the Rules, the President of the Bureau is responsible for monitoring attendance and enforcing the quorum at Bureau meetings. If the Bureau is unable to meet twice for lack of quorum, decisions at the subsequent meeting can be taken by simple majority of members present.</p> <p>24. Bureau members who are absent for two consecutive sessions without reasonable explanation will be excluded from the Bureau and a new election will be held to fill the respective vacancy with a member of the same sex.</p>
15. When considering subject items to	Selection of items for the agenda of the Standing Committee

Decision of the Governing Council	Possible options for implementation
<p>be taken up by the Standing Committees, the Bureaux should invite the proponents of the various items to present and make the case for their proposal. When the discussion on proposed subject items is inconclusive, the Bureaux should be able to submit more than one proposal to the full Committee for its decision.</p> <p>16. Each proposal for a rapporteur should be accompanied by an assurance from the parliament concerned that it will provide the necessary support and assist the rapporteur in his or her tasks. When deciding on subject items, consideration should be given only to those proposals that are accompanied by the name of at least one rapporteur.</p> <p>17. Once the Standing Committees have selected a subject item, Members should be encouraged to provide input and suggestions <u>before</u> a first draft of the reports(s) and resolution is formulated by the rapporteurs and circulated to the membership. The second Assembly of the year would allow for hearings and a first exchange of views and proposals on the item under consideration, with resolutions expected to be adopted at the first Assembly of the following year.</p> <p>18. It is proposed that the Presidents and First Vice-Presidents of the Standing Committees meet and consult on possible guidelines and modalities of work to ensure the resolutions are sharp, focused, and action-oriented. According to the IPU Statutes, the purpose of the exercise is to</p>	<p>25. Member Parliaments are invited to make written proposals on the future work of the Committee. The deadline for submission of proposals is 15 days before the start of each Assembly.</p> <p>26. Member Parliaments are entitled to present their proposals to the Bureau when it meets to consider the future work of the Committee.</p> <p>27. Bureau members are expected to consult with the geopolitical groups about the proposals on the Committee's work plan.</p> <p>28. The Bureau is entitled to make proposals on the work plan and agenda as it sees fit. The Bureau may, for example, select from among the proposals made by Member Parliaments, combine two or more suggestions into a single proposal, or put forward any other subject item that it so chooses. The Bureau may also submit more than one proposal to the Standing Committee.</p> <p>29. Every effort will be made to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in proposals for agenda and subject items.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Appointment of co-Rapporteurs of resolutions</p> <p>30. Two co-Rapporteurs are normally appointed by the Assembly at the same time as the subject item of a future resolution is adopted. The principle of gender equality shall be observed in the appointment of co-Rapporteurs. Every effort will also be made to appoint young parliamentarians as co-rapporteurs. Candidatures for co-Rapporteurs are only considered if they are accompanied by a brief biography.</p> <p>31. If it proves to be impossible to appoint two co-Rapporteurs before the end of an Assembly, the President of the IPU is given a mandate to pursue consultations in order to appoint the missing co-Rapporteur(s) at the earliest possible opportunity, with due regard for gender and geopolitical balance.</p> <p>32. The parliament of the co-Rapporteurs shall make every effort to support them in their work and include them in future delegations to Assemblies for the duration of their mandate as co-Rapporteurs.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Preparation of resolutions</p> <p>33. Member Parliaments are invited to provide written input to future resolutions after the adoption of the subject item. Input must be provided in one of the official languages of the IPU and must not exceed two pages in length. It is proposed that resolutions follow a 6-month cycle.</p> <p>34. Guidelines for co-Rapporteurs will be developed. The Guidelines may, for example, recommend good practices in areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct communication and cooperation between co-Rapporteurs • working with input and suggestions from parliaments • gender-mainstreaming • consulting experts during the research phase • drafting resolutions

Decision of the Governing Council	Possible options for implementation
<p>"bring about action by parliaments and their members."</p> <p>19. Every effort will be made to have the draft resolutions finalized in the Standing Committees. Only when necessary should they be referred to a drafting committee. The composition of the drafting committees needs to reflect a gender and regional balance and should not exceed 15 members, with a recommended geopolitical distribution of seats similar to that applied by the IPU Executive Committee.</p>	<p>35. Preliminary draft resolutions are published online before the resolution is taken up for debate and adoption. Preliminary draft resolutions will be brief (no more than two pages) and action-oriented.</p> <p>36. Preliminary draft resolutions are accompanied by an explanatory statement from the co-Rapporteurs of no more than five pages.</p> <p>37. Member Parliaments are invited to submit one set of amendments (as opposed to two sets currently).</p> <p>38. The discussion of amendments normally takes place in the plenary of the Standing Committee. Rules will be developed, as necessary, to ensure the smooth functioning of this process. A drafting committee may be established, if deemed necessary.</p>
<p>20. The IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs should be maintained as a plenary body open to all IPU Member Parliaments. Its programme of work should be more focused and regular. The Committee should concentrate more on priorities and planning of activities to avoid duplication with other IPU bodies and to promote more productive relations with the United Nations.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Committee on United Nations Affairs</p> <p>39. The Committee on UN Affairs will be established as a fourth Standing Committee and will be guided by the same rules and regulations. The time allocated for discussion will be aligned with the time allocated to the other Standing Committees, to the extent possible.</p> <p>40. The Advisory Group to the Committee on UN Affairs will be transformed into a Bureau functioning grosso modo according to the same guidelines as the Bureaux of the other three Standing Committees. The principle of gender equality shall be strictly observed in terms of its composition.</p> <p>41. The Committee on UN Affairs will maintain its unique mandate to give direction to the evolving relationship between the United Nations and the IPU and to assist in the elaboration of parliamentary input to major UN processes. As such, it will not be expected to adopt resolutions on a regular basis.</p>
<p>22. Lastly, in order to enhance the overall impact of IPU Assemblies and encourage the engagement of as many parliamentarians as possible, the IPU Secretariat will examine possibilities to better utilize available ICT tools, including Twitter, webcast and online delegates' forums. This would allow participants to contribute to on-going and emerging debates, and hence enrich the outcome of such debates.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Making better use of ICT</p> <p>42. The following documents will be published on the IPU website, in addition to those which are already published:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Work plans and agenda of the Standing Committees · Input from Member Parliaments to the preparation of resolutions <p>43. The Bureaux will consider other options for publicizing the work of the Standing Committees.</p>