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Meeting of Women Parliamentarians
Item 4

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Amendments to the Rules of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and to those of its Coordinating Committee

In 2014 and 2015, the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians debated and held consultations with the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians on means to improve both bodies' functioning. The objective was to identify concrete ways to enhance the effectiveness and visibility of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and of its Coordinating Committee.

Consultations highlighted several challenges whose resolution requires amending the Rules of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and of its Coordinating Committee.

At its 35th session (Hanoi, 28 March 2015), the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians discussed a number of proposed amendments, which it consolidated and approved at its 36th session (Geneva, 17 October 2015), and subsequently presented to the 22nd Meeting of Women Parliamentarians (Geneva, 20 October 2015).

The adoption of amendments to the Rules of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians requires their approval by the Meeting and their subsequent consideration and approval by the Governing Council (Rule 38.6 of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians). Amendments to the Rules of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians require the approval of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians only (Rule 16 of the Coordinating Committee).

In compliance with the Rules of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians (Rule 38.2), the draft amendments are thereby submitted to the IPU membership within the statutory deadline of three months prior to the 23rd Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and to the 198th session of the Governing Council (Lusaka, March 2016).

Any sub-amendments (Rule 38.2) must be addressed to the IPU Secretariat by 15 February 2016, so as to be circulated no later than one month before their consideration by the relevant bodies.

The proposed amendments will come into force upon their adoption.



#IPU134

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES OF THE MEETING OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS
AND TO THOSE OF ITS COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

The Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians recently discussed its Rules and those of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, so as to identify means to enhance the respective roles and the visibility of the Meeting and its Coordinating Committee, and revise their functioning in line with that of other IPU bodies. The following are proposed amendments made as a result. In addition, the Coordinating Committee debated ways to enhance gender mainstreaming throughout the IPU. For the time being no proposals have been formalised to meet that objective, and consultations are still underway.

I. Enhancing the effectiveness of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and of its Coordinating Committee

A. Objectives of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

Concerned by the fact that the Meeting did not effectively serve as a platform to engage more men on gender equality issues, the members of the Coordinating Committee proposed the following amendment to Rule 2 of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians:

Proposal: Add a new Rule 2 (f) in the section on Objectives of the Meeting to read:

(f) to sensitize men to gender equality issues by encouraging their participation in the Meeting.

B. Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians

In order to encourage sustained participation of all elected members and enhance its efficiency, as well as to align its rules with those of other IPU bodies, the Coordinating Committee suggests amending provisions in Chapter X of the Rules of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and in Chapters V, VI and VII of the Rules of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, with a view to:

- Removing the categories of titular and substitute members of the Coordinating Committee;
- Including the standard paragraph used in the rules of other bodies highlighting that parliaments are asked to ensure and support the participation of elected members to IPU bodies;
- Clarifying how a member can be temporarily replaced (for one time only);
- Clarifying the Rules related to the quorum of the Coordinating Committee.

i. Proposed amendments to the Rules of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians¹

Chapter X (Coordinating Committee)

Rule 31

1. The Coordinating Committee shall be composed of the following persons:
 - (a) The women members of the Executive Committee, who shall be ex officio members during their term of office on the Executive Committee;
 - (b) The former Presidents of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, who shall be ex officio members for two years from the time when they chaired the Meeting;
 - (c) ~~Two~~ **Four** representatives from each of the geopolitical groups which meet on the occasion of IPU meetings; these representatives shall be elected ad personam by the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians for a four year term of office; ~~a substitute for each regional representative shall be elected at the same election;~~ a retiring member shall not be eligible for re-election for two

¹ Approval of these amendments is subject to the provisions of Rules 36 and 37 of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians:

Rule 36: The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians shall establish its own Rules, which shall then be presented to the Governing Council for its approval (cf. Statutes, Article 22).

Rule 37: The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians shall adopt its Rules by a majority of the votes cast (cf. Rule 23).

In addition, these amendments are subject to final adoption by the Governing Council according to Rule 38.6:

Rule 38.6: After hearing the opinion of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians expressed through a simple majority vote, the Governing Council shall decide on such proposals by a two-thirds majority.

years **and shall be replaced by a representative belonging to another IPU Member Parliament;**

- (d) Should a regional representative ~~or a substitute regional representative~~ die, resign or lose her seat in Parliament, the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians shall proceed with the election of a replacement from the same geopolitical group; the person thus elected shall hold the office for the remainder of the term;
 - (e) Members of the Coordinating Committee may not be members in two capacities: as ex officio members and as regional representatives. A member holding both positions will lose her mandate as a regional representative to the Coordinating Committee and will be replaced in that position in accordance with the provisions of Rule 31.1 (d).
2. The regional representatives ~~and their substitutes~~ shall be elected by the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians on the proposal of women parliamentarians from the respective geopolitical groups, which must present as many candidates as there are seats to be filled. Elections to the Coordinating Committee shall be held every two years, to renew half of the Committee's membership whose four-year term has come to an end. ~~One titular and one substitute representative~~ **The seats of two representatives** for each geopolitical group shall therefore be renewed every two years.
 3. **(new) Elected members of the Coordinating Committee shall be supported by their respective Parliaments in carrying out their function as members of the Committee. Every effort will be made to ensure their participation in IPU Assemblies for the duration of their mandate as members of the Committee.**

Rule 31 (bis)

1. **Members of the Coordinating Committee who are unable to participate in a session may be replaced by other duly mandated women representatives from the same Member of the IPU, for the duration of that session only.**
2. **Members of the Coordinating Committee who are absent for two consecutive sessions without a valid reason may lose their seat on the Committee by a decision of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians upon recommendation of the Committee. In such cases, a new election will be held at the next session of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians to fill the respective vacancy.**

Rule 32

1. After each renewal of half of the regional representatives, every two years, the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians shall, on the proposal of the Coordinating Committee, elect the President, First Vice-President and Second Vice-President of the Coordinating Committee from among parliamentarians of different regions. Any parliamentarian who is a member of the Committee may be elected to one of these three posts; ~~with regard to the regional representatives, only titular members may be so elected.~~

(...)

6. Should a Vice-President die, resign, lose her seat in Parliament **or become President of the Coordinating Committee**, the Coordinating Committee shall nominate to the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians a candidate from **among the members of the Committee** to replace her. The person thus elected shall serve as Vice-President for the remainder of the term.

ii. Proposed amendments to the Rules of Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians²

Chapter V: Deliberations - quorum - voting

Rule 9

The Coordinating Committee may ~~only~~ deliberate and take decisions ~~considered to be valid if at least half of its members are present~~ **irrespective of the number of Committee members present.**

² Approval of these amendments is subject to the provisions of Rule 16 of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians:

Rule 16: The Coordinating Committee shall establish its own Rules, which shall then be presented for approval by the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians (cf. Statutes, Article 22).

However, a vote may take place only if at least half of the Committee members or their duly mandated replacements (Rule 31bis) are in attendance.

Chapter VI: Report and recommendations to the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

Rule 13

(...)

3. Should the appointed Rapporteur be unable to present the report, she shall be replaced by another ~~titular or substitute~~ member who took part in the sittings to be covered by the report. The Committee may appoint this substitute at the same time as the Rapporteur.

Chapter VIII: Adoption and amendment of the rules

Rule 17

1. **Subject to the provisions of Rule 9**, the Coordinating Committee shall adopt its Rules by the majority of the votes cast by the members ~~or substitutes~~ present at the time of voting.

(...)

II. Enhancing the visibility of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and of its Coordinating Committee

Coordinating Committee members have underscored the importance of the work done by the Meeting to ensure that gender equality issues were taken into account in IPU as well as at the global and national levels, and discussed how to increase the visibility and influence of that work. They consider that the name of the Meeting and of its Coordinating Committee may be misleading for the external eye and does not reflect the true nature and roles of these important structures.

The Coordinating Committee therefore proposes the following:

- a. Amend the name of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians to read as follows:
~~Meeting~~ **Forum** of Women Parliamentarians

in order to better reflect its function of being a permanent structure of women parliamentarians of the world, as well as in view of harmonizing the designation of IPU bodies of a similar nature, as is the case of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

- b. Amend the name of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians to read as follows:
~~Coordinating Committee~~ **Bureau** of Women Parliamentarians

in order to better reflect the role of the Coordinating Committee as a structure in charge of organizing the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and carrying forward the recommendations and plans crafted by women parliamentarians.

- c. Replace the current references to the Bureau of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians to read as follows:
~~Bureau~~ **President and Vice-Presidents**

so as to avoid any confusion with the new designation of the Coordinating Committee as Bureau of Women Parliamentarians.

Once these proposals are approved, the old designations will be amended accordingly throughout the Statutes and Rules of the IPU, including the amendments contained in the present document.