



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

143rd IPU Assembly and related meetings

26 – 30 November 2021
Madrid, Spain

Results of the proceedings



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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143rd Assembly

1. Inaugural ceremony

The inaugural ceremony of the 143rd IPU Assembly took place at the IFEMA Palacio Municipal, Madrid at 18:30 on Friday, 26 November 2021, with His Majesty King Felipe VI of Spain in attendance.

Ms. Isabel Díaz Ayuso, President of the Community of Madrid, welcomed delegates to Madrid and noted that the IFEMA conference centre, the venue of the Assembly, had been the site of the city's first temporary hospital to deal with COVID-19 cases in March 2020. Spain had a long tradition of parliamentary democracy, going back to the *Cortes de León* in 1188. Spain's modern democratic era had begun in 1978 and the monarchy, represented today by King Felipe VI, was key to the country's stability.

She thanked the IPU for choosing Madrid for its Assembly and wished delegates well in their essential work to spread peace and understanding. Parliaments existed for the common good, to protect the people against abuses of power, to engage in dialogue to overcome difficulties and to ensure peaceful coexistence. The citizens of the world were counting on the delegates at the Assembly to cooperate and find consensus in the interests of democracy and freedom. She hoped that delegates would also have the opportunity to explore Madrid during their stay.

In a video message, **Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the United Nations General Assembly**, spoke of his time as a parliamentarian and the important role played by parliaments in bringing United Nations agreements to fruition. The Assembly was an opportunity to build on the declaration adopted at the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Vienna in September 2021 to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, build resilience and reinforce a shared commitment to the rule of law, sustainability, democracy and human rights.

In a video message, **Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations**, emphasized the vital role of parliaments in addressing the many serious challenges the world was facing: the climate emergency, inequality and continued conflict around the globe. His recent report, *Our Common Agenda*, stressed the importance of building a more inclusive form of multilateralism, bringing together parliaments, civil society, the private sector and others for global decision-making. Discussions at the Assembly on gender equality, public engagement and the promotion of interfaith dialogue were all essential considerations in promoting peaceful and resilient communities and societies.

Members of the Spanish National Ballet performed a traditional flamenco dance.

Mr. Ander Gil García, President of the Senate of Spain, welcomed delegates on behalf of the *Cortes Generales* and noted that parliamentarians were united by the current challenges facing the world. Parliamentarians needed to lead by example, promote goodwill and respect, and overcome their differences through dialogue, in order to strengthen the confidence of their citizens in democratic systems. Inequalities between rural and urban areas, and the separation between central decision-makers and the periphery, were issues that needed to be addressed in many countries.

Violence and abuse against women in parliaments remained disturbingly commonplace, with male parliamentarians often the main perpetrators. Parliaments needed to work to ensure that their chambers were safe and respectful places, with true gender equality and free of all violence. Parliaments needed to represent their citizens and preserve democratic values. The IPU Strategy for 2022-2026, due to be adopted later that week, set out a range of strategic objectives and policy areas, which would guide the Organization's activities and encourage parliaments to work together over the coming five years to strengthen their impact.

Ms. Meritxell Batet Lamaña, President of the Congress of Deputies of Spain, welcomed delegates to Madrid in the name of the Congress of Deputies. The 143rd Assembly was the fourth held in Madrid and marked a return to face-to-face meetings after nearly two years of living with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Spanish parliament acknowledged its special responsibility to ensure that the Assembly would take place in the safest conditions possible. The COVID-19 virus was now held in check in many countries but a huge task still lay ahead, particularly in ensuring full access to vaccines everywhere and for everyone.

The pandemic had been a great challenge for parliaments, as it had imposed new working methods, often relying on new technologies, and required parliaments to formulate and approve emergency responses in a continuously evolving situation. The crisis had created a great deal of mistrust, putting democracy at risk. Parliaments had therefore needed to be consistent, united and open to radical solutions. People's dissatisfaction with politics had led to polarization, exclusion and populism in many countries, undermining democratic institutions. The theme of the Assembly, *Contemporary challenges to democracy: Overcoming division and building community*, was therefore most timely. The world would be looking to the debates and outcome of the Assembly to provide hope for the future of democracy.

Mr. Duarte Pacheco, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, thanked the Spanish Parliament for having agreed to host the Assembly and for its organization in a much shorter timeframe than usual. Since the last in-person Assembly in Belgrade in October 2019, the IPU had been able to continue its work thanks to remote meetings, but in-person interactions were vital for true parliamentary diplomacy. The COVID-19 pandemic had shown how interdependent the world had become and how it was necessary to work together to find global solutions to global problems. More than 5 million people had lost their lives to the virus, including many parliamentarians, and the pandemic had led to backsliding in hard-won progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The past two years had also been marked by dangerous regressions in democracy and human rights, with an epidemic of military coups and direct attacks on parliaments, notably in Afghanistan, Guinea, Mali, Myanmar and Sudan. Parliaments had a responsibility to build back better and bolder. The Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament had conveyed a strong message that business as usual was not an option. More needed to be done to combat the climate crisis, effectively and with accountability. The pandemic had disproportionately affected women and youth, and it was crucial to ensure that they were represented in all aspects of society and decision-making, including in parliaments. Technology allowed people to be better connected than ever before but had also enabled a huge rise in extremism, polarization and disinformation. Parliamentarians had a duty to listen to one another, to promote cooperation and trust through a message of hope not hate, and to safeguard democracy.

His Majesty King Felipe VI of Spain welcomed delegates and expressed his condolences for the huge loss of life worldwide over the past two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Spain was proud to have been chosen to host the Assembly and was taking every step to ensure that it took place in the safest possible conditions. UNESCO had recognized Spain as the cradle of parliamentarianism, with the *Cortes de León* of 1188 considered the first documented parliamentary system in Europe. Dialogue between countries and institutions was the basis for agreements and cooperation. The IPU had been founded on the conviction of Sir William Randal Cremer and Frédéric Passy that parliaments needed to face global challenges together.

The focus of the Assembly's General Debate on threats to parliaments and democracy was very much in line with the intentions of the IPU's founders. In the days ahead, parliamentarians would need to work hard to reconcile their different perspectives and build a consensus on the way forward. Parliaments had many shared challenges, most notably the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate emergency. Parliaments had a responsibility to draw on the talents and skills of all sectors of society, and improving the representation of women and young people was vital.

He extended a particular welcome to parliaments from Latin America, with whom Spain shared a historical cultural bond, as well as to fellow parliaments around the Mediterranean and in other European Union states. It was a particular honour for Spain to host the first IPU Assembly held in the European Union in over 20 years. He welcomed members of parliament from around the world and expressed his conviction that their interest and vigour in the deliberations to come would yield a fruitful outcome. He thanked the Spanish National Ballet for the flamenco performance and encouraged delegates to partake in the many other cultural and leisure activities that Madrid had to offer.

His Majesty King Felipe VI of Spain declared the 143rd IPU Assembly open.

2. Participation

Delegations from 117 Member Parliaments took part in the work of the Assembly:*

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chile, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Eswatini, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The following six Associate Members also took part in the Assembly: the Arab Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (PABSEC), and the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie (APF).

Observers included representatives of:

(i) the United Nations and related organizations: Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH);

(ii) parliamentary assemblies and associations: African Parliamentary Union (APU), Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR), G5 Sahel Inter-Parliamentary Committee, Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC), Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament (PNND), Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries (TurkPA), Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia, Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PF-SALW), Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States (PUIC), Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF);

(iii) worldwide non-governmental organizations: the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria;

(iv) international political party federations: Socialist International;

(v) other IPU partner organizations: International IDEA, the Sovereign Order of Malta.

Of the 936 delegates who attended the Assembly, 515 were members of parliament (509 from Member Parliaments and 6 from Associate Member delegations). Those parliamentarians included 39 Presiding Officers, 31 Deputy Presiding Officers, 200 women MPs (38.8%) and 128 young MPs (24.9%).

3. Hybrid component

Although the 143rd Assembly was an in-person event, some of the meeting rooms were equipped for hybrid sessions in order to allow access to participants unable to travel to Madrid due to COVID-19 restrictions. This set-up was particularly useful for the closed meetings of the Executive Committee and Bureaus, and it enabled panellists and guest speakers to take the floor remotely in some Standing Committee sessions as well as various workshops. The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians was also able to hold a series of hearings remotely.

* For the complete list of IPU Members, see page 38

The Forum of Women Parliamentarians, the Inaugural Ceremony, and the Assembly General Debate were all live streamed in English. In total, 45 remote participants connected to various meetings and almost 200 observers followed open sessions.

4. Choice of an emergency item

On 27 November 2021, the President informed the Assembly that the following five requests for the inclusion of an emergency item had been proposed:

- *Global parliamentary support for the humanitarian situation of the Palestinians* (Indonesia);
- *Stopping human trafficking, halting human rights abuses and working towards free and fair elections in Belarus* (Germany, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom);
- *Impetus to regional development of countries with high levels of international migration* (Mexico);
- *The vital necessity of ensuring uninterrupted parliamentary activities during pandemics* (Russian Federation);
- *Harnessing global parliamentary support for vaccine equity in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic* (African Group).

After presenting its emergency item, Germany, supported by the seven other European co-sponsors, withdrew its proposal and transferred its support to the proposal on vaccine equity from the African Group. The Russian Federation did the same and requested that the African Group add the Russian Federation as a co-sponsor of its proposal. After the presentation from the African Group, Indonesia and Mexico also withdrew their proposals and transferred their support to the proposal from the African Group, leaving the Assembly with only one proposal for an emergency item.

In accordance with Article 16.1 of the IPU Statutes which stipulates “Voting at the Assembly shall be conducted by roll call, except when the decision before the Assembly meets with no opposition”, the Assembly decided by acclamation to include the proposal from the African Group on the agenda as Item 7.

Meanwhile, Belarus requested the floor to express its opposition to the item proposed and then withdrawn by Germany with the support of seven European countries. The IPU President explained that it was not possible to hear a contrary opinion on an item which had been withdrawn. After the presentations of all items, the IPU President gave the floor to Belarus, which exercised its right of reply in accordance with Rule 22.2 of the Rules of the Assembly.

5. Debates and decisions of the Assembly and its Standing Committees

- (a) General Debate: *Contemporary challenges to democracy: Overcoming division and building community* (Item 3)

During the three days of deliberations, some 110 legislators from 92 Member Parliaments, including 31 Presiding Officers and 13 young parliamentarians, as well as representatives of 3 Associate Members and 6 observers, contributed to the General Debate. A keynote address was delivered by Mr. Danilo Türk, former President of Slovenia, at the opening of the General Debate.

Ms. Meritxell Batet Lamaña, President of the Congress of Deputies of Spain, said that, although democracy had faced many challenges in its history, parliaments, the central institution of democracy, could now be found in most countries around the world. Parliamentary democracies needed to be based on a consensus of shared values and common goals, be representative of the political pluralism of the societies they represented, and accommodate the presentation of alternative or minority views. The failure to recognize alternative views was among the greatest threats to democracy, as embodied by the rise of polarization and populism.

The world was facing many crises: the climate emergency, inequality, economic turmoil and migration. Success in finding solutions was dependent on people’s trust in parliaments as institutions, fostered through inclusivity, social cohesion, respect, and guarantees of safety, freedom and prosperity. Parliaments needed to find agreement and consensus but also recognize the legitimacy of alternative positions. Scientific consensus and the rule of law must be respected with a view to blocking populist attempts to spread fake news and alternative facts. Whenever public institutions were weakened, democratic power was weakened and non-democratic powers were strengthened.

Mr. Duarte Pacheco, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, said that the General Debate would provide an opportunity to hear from the diverse voices of all IPU Members, including young MPs, to not only examine problems but also to propose concrete solutions, and to listen to each other and learn from each other's experiences. Delegates were invited to be respectful and constructive in their interventions, and to focus on what parliamentarians could and should do to strengthen democracy.

The debate would focus on four main topics: new approaches to politics to address the various challenges facing democracies around the world, measures to counter the spread of disinformation and hate speech while maintaining appropriate conditions for free speech, ways to reduce polarization and hostility, and ways to connect people with their democratic institutions through increased public engagement, participation and inclusivity.

Special guest Mr. Danilo Türk recalled his extensive interactions with the IPU over the course of his career, as Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs at the United Nations from 2000 to 2005, President of Slovenia from 2007 to 2012, and in his current role as President of the Club de Madrid, an organization bringing together former presidents and prime ministers from around the world to promote democracy and international cooperation.

Democracy had shown considerable resilience in the face of numerous threats but there was a danger of complacency. The world was facing many overlapping challenges: the rise of authoritarian tendencies, an epidemic of coups d'état, the emergence of a new information ecosystem with no normative framework, increases in income disparity and inequalities leading to discontent and polarization, and the unchecked rise of ideologies such as nationalism. Democracy remained the best hope for finding solutions to such challenges.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Club de Madrid had formed a Global Commission on Democracy and Emergencies, of which the IPU Secretary General was a member. The Commission would soon release its report but it was already clear that it would focus on three cornerstones of democratic resilience: the mechanisms of democracy and fundamental rights, social inclusion and cohesion, and effective leadership and democratic culture. The growth of polarization was a particular concern, and human rights needed to be protected as basic prerequisites of democracy.

Parliaments had played a central role during the pandemic and had adapted through increased efficiency, transparency, inclusion and innovation. Several areas had emerged as needing particular attention in future: the need to review constitutional frameworks for emergencies, to establish a clear and accessible process for emergency legislation, to be prepared for future emergencies and flexible enough to allow parliaments to continue working, to approach digital technologies as an opportunity, to adapt to the new information ecosystem and limit the monopolistic practices of technology companies, to adopt new mechanisms of participation and capitalize on the growing appetite for civic engagement, to increase the representation of women and other underrepresented groups, and to pay greater attention to the aspirations and needs of young people.

Ms. Lesia Vasylenko (Ukraine), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, said that increased polarization had led to a culture of hate and intolerance, much of which was directed at women. The problem had been exacerbated by the accessibility and anonymity of online platforms and social media. Parliaments needed to recognize and value the role of women in building trust and working across party lines. Women's parliamentary caucuses had been proven to unite women of all political persuasions around priorities that they could all support.

The equal representation of men and women was a vital step towards making parliaments more representative of the people. Positive measures were required to increase the numbers of women in leadership roles and to tear down the barriers that limited women's political participation, including discrimination, sexism, harassment and violence. Gender-balanced parliaments led to gender-responsive policies that were often drivers for growth, sustainability and empowerment for all.

In a video message, **Ms. Sahar Albazar (Egypt), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians**, said that young people had been particularly affected by the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and deprived of their right to lead the way towards a resilient, prosperous and just future. Young MPs had made their voices heard at the virtual 142nd IPU Assembly and the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament and would continue to impress upon their fellow parliamentarians the need to increase youth participation and take account of youth perspectives in politics.

The IPU's *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament* campaign, launched earlier in 2021, had galvanized the support of an impressive number of changemakers from around the world, and efforts would be stepped up to ensure that the campaign continued to inspire transformative action. The widespread distrust of politics among young people led to disengagement, marginalization and polarization. Increased youth engagement in democracy would make it stronger and more resilient, improving the lives of young people and bridging the generational divide.

(b) Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security held two sittings on 28 and 29 November 2021 with Mr. J.I. Echániz (Spain), acting President of the Committee, in the Chair.

On 28 November, the Committee held an expert hearing on the theme *Rethinking and reframing the approach to peace processes with a view to fostering lasting peace*. The Committee had chosen this theme for its next resolution to be negotiated at the 144th IPU Assembly. The aim of the hearing was to offer the Committee members a comprehensive insight into the topic and its relevance. Sixteen speakers, including the two co-Rapporteurs, one observer organization, and five experts took part in the debate.

On 29 November, the Committee examined its second substantial item through a panel discussion on the theme *Parliament's role in addressing the risks of diversion in arms transfers*. The panel opened with the statements by three experts, each speaking from a different point of view. The aim of the presentations was to offer the Committee members a thorough insight into the topic. Following the experts' interventions, a total of 11 speakers took the floor.

The Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security met on 28 November 2021. Nine out of 18 members and the representative of the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians were present. During the meeting, the new IPU Strategy for 2022-2026 was presented and the Bureau's workplan was discussed. It was decided to devote all the time allocated for the 144th Assembly to negotiating the resolution. The proposal was subsequently approved by the Standing Committee at the end of its last plenary sitting on 29 November.

On 29 November, the Committee held elections to the Bureau. Elections for the Committee President and Vice-President for the 2022-2023 cycle were also held.

The Committee report on the panel and hearing was presented to the Assembly at its last sitting on 30 November by the acting President of the Standing Committee, Mr. Echániz (Spain).

(c) Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

The Standing Committee held its sittings on 27 and 29 November. The sittings were chaired by the Bureau member Mr. W. William (Seychelles).

The Committee discussed the subject item of the next resolution entitled *Leveraging Information and Communication Technology as an enabler for the education sector, including in times of pandemic*. Ms. I. Kharkova of UNESCO's Future of Learning and Innovation Team introduced the theme and key issues for consideration and discussion. The co-Rapporteurs, Ms. H. Järvinen (Finland) and Mr. S. Patra (India) shared their initial ideas about the content of the draft resolution. Also, the new IPU publication, *Guidelines for parliamentarians on budgeting for the SDGs: Making the most of public resources* was launched during the Committee's first sitting.

In its second sitting, the Committee held a discussion on the theme *Impact of climate change on natural resources: How can parliaments ensure inclusive water access and availability?* Expert contributions came from Mr. D. Muruven, Global Policy Lead on Freshwater, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and Mr. Lifeng Li, Director of the Land and Water Division, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The Committee held elections to the Bureau and elected its new President and Vice-President.

The Committee approved the Bureau's proposal to dedicate the Committee's sessions at the 144th IPU Assembly to drafting the resolution.

The Committee report was presented to the Assembly at its last sitting on 30 November by Mr. W. William.

(d) Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

The Standing Committee held sittings on 27 and 29 November 2021, with member of the Bureau Mr. D. Marie (France) in the Chair.

The Committee considered the draft resolution *Legislation worldwide to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse*. The resolution was introduced by the co-Rapporteur, Ms. A. Gerkens (Netherlands) on behalf of the three co-Rapporteurs, as Ms. J. Oduol (Kenya) and Mr. P. Limjaoenrat (Thailand), were not able to be present in person.

When examining the draft resolution, the Committee considered 80 amendments submitted by 16 parliaments (Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Cuba, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Russian Federation, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Arab Emirates). One amendment was proposed by the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.

The co-Rapporteurs Ms. Oduol (Kenya) and Ms. Gerkens (Netherlands) presented the revised draft resolution to the Committee at its final sitting. The draft resolution was adopted by acclamation.

The Committee Bureau met on 29 November. It considered proposals for the future work programme of the Committee. Five proposals for the subject item of the Committee's next resolution had been submitted before the deadline by Germany, India, the Maldives, the Russian Federation and Uruguay. Each proposal was presented by the corresponding delegation, with the exception of the Indian proposal.

Following a unanimous recommendation by the Bureau, the Committee approved the proposal put forward by Germany entitled *Parliamentary impetus to local and regional development of countries with high levels of international migration and to stopping all forms, including state-sponsored, of human trafficking and human rights abuses* as the subject of its next resolution. A preparatory debate would take place at the 144th Assembly and the resolution would be finalized at the 145th Assembly in October 2022.

The Committee approved the Bureau's unanimous recommendation to hold a panel discussion at the 144th Assembly on the theme *The role of parliaments in reconciling health measures during a pandemic with the preservation of civil liberties*.

The Committee also recommended that two workshops be organized at the 144th Assembly, if the schedule allows, on the themes of artificial intelligence and the combat against female genital mutilation.

The draft resolution on combating online child sexual exploitation and abuse was presented by Ms. Gerkens (Netherlands) to the Assembly at its plenary sitting in the afternoon of 30 November and was adopted by acclamation.

The Committee also held elections to the Bureau and elected its new President and Vice-President.

(e) Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

The Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs met in plenary session on 29 November with Mr. P. Katjavivi (Namibia) as interim Chair. The session consisted of two panel discussions with high-level UN officials.

The first panel on the global vaccination campaign to end the COVID-19 pandemic featured representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). Dr. S. Swaminathan, Chief Scientist, and Dr. K. O'Brien, Director of the Department of Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals spoke for the WHO, and Mr. E. Gomez, Chief of Staff, representing UNAIDS, discussed vaccine equity and accessibility, as well as the general pandemic response of their respective agencies. Thirty-four parliamentary delegations comprising some 80 parliamentarians attended and 14 speakers posed questions to the panel.

The global goal of immunizing 70 per cent of the population by June 2022 is off track given the limited vaccine manufacturing capacity and, to a lesser extent, vaccine hesitancy. There is inherent difficulty in expanding production of a highly sophisticated medical product and the transfer of technical know-how due to the constraints on intellectual property rights under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement). Parliamentarians emphasized the need for greater global solidarity and for a much stronger pandemic response. More than one speaker noted, "no one is safe until all are safe". The recent emergence of the potentially more aggressive Omicron variant of the virus was a stark reminder of the need to scale up the global response to the pandemic.

The second panel was on the UN Secretary-General's Report *Our Common Agenda*. Ms. M. Griffin, Policy Advisor, Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General, discussed the Secretary-General's September 2021 report on the Common Agenda adopted at the conclusion of the High-level Meeting to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations (UN75 Summit). The Common Agenda's 12 commitments address growing threats to the sustainability of the world, from climate change to future pandemics, as well as to peace and security. Countries reaffirmed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the need to strengthen multilateralism as best illustrated more recently by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ten delegations spoke in response to Ms. Griffin's presentation and emphasized the representative, oversight and legislative role of parliaments as key to the implementation of international agreements such as the Common Agenda and to the ratification of international treaties. Speakers generally recognized the importance of multilateral solutions in an increasingly interdependent world.

The Committee also held elections to the Bureau and elected its new President and Vice-President.

(f) Debate on the emergency item

Harnessing global parliamentary support for vaccine equity in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic

The debate on the emergency item was held in the morning of Sunday, 28 November 2021, with Ms. F. Zainal, Speaker of the Council of Representatives of Bahrain, in the Chair.

Thirteen speakers took the floor during the debate, namely Russian Federation, India, South Africa, Bahrain, Turkey, Yemen, Morocco, Suriname, Uruguay, Portugal, Chile, Democratic Republic of the Congo and United Republic of Tanzania.

All speakers expressed their support for the emergency item proposal and underscored the importance of international cooperation and solidarity to accelerate the vaccination programme in low-income countries. Such solidarity had been demonstrated by the sponsors of the four other proposals, who had withdrawn their proposals and transferred their support to the proposal on vaccine equity.

Many delegates referred to the importance of international cooperation and contribution to the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) and African Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT) programmes, and emphasized the need for effective policies to accompany vaccination programmes.

Delegates also deplored the tragic passing of their fellow parliamentarians due to COVID-19 and extended their condolences to those affected.

At the end of the debate, Mr. J.K. Mhagama (United Republic of Tanzania), the originator of the proposal on behalf of the African Group, thanked all speakers as well as the authors of other proposals who had decided to withdraw their proposals and transfer their support to the African Group's proposal. He invited his fellow parliamentarians to reflect on key questions such as why the poorest countries had been left behind on vaccination and how developed countries could help others.

The Assembly referred the emergency item to a drafting committee made up of representatives of Belgium, Germany, Mexico, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Zambia.

(g) Adoption of the resolution on the emergency item

In the afternoon of 29 November 2021, the plenary sitting of the Assembly heard several amendment proposals from the Speaker of Zimbabwe. After clarification that some of the proposed amendments would change the nature and scope of the resolution, the plenary sitting unanimously adopted the resolution without the proposed substantive amendments. It was agreed that those of a linguistic nature would be incorporated into the resolution by the Secretariat prior to publication (see page 47).

6. Concluding sitting of the Assembly

At the concluding sitting on 30 November, the **IPU President** introduced the Madrid Declaration on *Contemporary challenges to democracy: Overcoming division and building community* (see page 40). The Declaration encouraged parliamentarians to take a new approach to politics and to work to counter

disinformation and hate speech. Parliamentarians needed to lead by example, to reduce the polarization in their debates and to show respect for one another, with the overall aim of connecting people with their democratic institutions. They needed to show leadership, particularly in times of crisis, and to take an inclusive approach to their work. The Assembly unanimously endorsed the Madrid Declaration.

Ms. A. Gerken, *Vice-President of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights*, presented the Committee's resolution, *Legislation worldwide to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse* (see page 43). The Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution.

The Assembly took note of the Reports of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development and the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs (see page 49).

The Assembly approved the subject item for the resolution to be drafted by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights for adoption at the 145th IPU Assembly, together with the rapporteurs that would be working on the draft resolution (see page 35).

Ms. P. Maharani, *Speaker of the People's Representative Council of Indonesia*, warmly invited all IPU Members to attend the 144th IPU Assembly, which would be taking place from 20 to 24 March 2022 in Nusa Dua. A short video was shown.

At the conclusion of the Assembly, the representatives of the geopolitical groups took the floor: **Mr. K. Barkiya Abdullahi (Nigeria)** on behalf of the Africa Group, **Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates)** on behalf of the Arab Group, **Mr. B. Mahtab (India)** on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, **Mr. M. Yerman (Kazakhstan)** on behalf of the Eurasia Group, **Mr. B. Llano (Paraguay)** on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, and **Ms. A. Gerken (Netherlands)** on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group. They conveyed their thanks to the Spanish parliament and the many local teams that had made the Assembly possible and safe, particularly those involved in the extensive COVID-19 testing provision. They thanked the IPU President for his perseverance in ensuring that the Assembly went ahead, and the Secretary General and Secretariat for their work preparing a fruitful programme of meetings. The consensus among Member Parliaments on the emergency item on COVID-19 vaccines had been a particular highlight and, in adopting the corresponding resolution, parliamentarians had demonstrated exemplary solidarity in the face of an unprecedented global crisis. The geopolitical groups pledged their commitment to follow up on the important decisions of the Assembly and looked forward to meeting again in Nusa Dua in March 2022.

In his concluding remarks, the **IPU President** congratulated the Spanish parliament for the successful organization of the first in-person Assembly in two years, which had brought together almost 1000 participants from almost 120 countries. He thanked all delegates for their participation and expressed his belief that the deliberations had led to concrete solutions and actions that would provide hope for citizens around the world.

In her concluding remarks, **Ms. M. Batet Lamaña**, *President of the 143rd Assembly and President of the Congress of Deputies of Spain*, congratulated the Secretary General, Mr. M. Chungong, on his reappointment by the Governing Council for a further four-year term. She thanked all those who had spoken during the closing session to convey their affection, recognition and gratitude to the Spanish Parliament and she would pass on those kind wishes to the many people involved in the organization of the Assembly. The strong consensus around the emergency item on COVID-19 vaccines had made the considerable efforts that had gone into holding the Assembly all the more worthwhile. She believed that the 143rd Assembly would be remembered as the Assembly of democracy and hope.

Two moments during the Assembly had stood out for her as symbolic of the importance of the IPU's work. First, the 32nd session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, which she had chaired and which had been attended by the IPU President and the Prime Minister of Spain, Mr. P. Sánchez, who had both recognized the importance of the participation of women in parliament in the interests of equality for all. Second, the General Debate on challenges to democracy, overcoming division and building community, which were issues that all parliaments would face at some point. To defend democracy, parliamentarians needed to recognize pluralism and diverse ideologies but also reject polarization, confrontation and exclusion. She thanked delegates again for their participation, wished them a safe return home and declared the 143rd IPU Assembly closed.

208th session of the Governing Council

1. Election of the President of the 143rd Assembly

At its first sitting on 27 November, the Governing Council proposed that Ms. M. Batet Lamaña, President of the Congress of Deputies of Spain, be elected President of the 143rd IPU Assembly.

2. Report of the IPU President

The Governing Council took note of the report of the President on his activities since its 207th session. It welcomed the President's initiative to expand the membership of the IPU. The Governing Council concurred with the President that the strategy to achieve increased membership should include personal contact with parliaments which are not yet IPU Members. The Governing Council agreed to provide any support needed to that end.

3. Interim report by the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU since the 207th session of the Governing Council

The Governing Council took note of the interim report of the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU since the 207th session of the Governing Council. Members of the Governing Council noted that the report marked the conclusion of the IPU Strategy for 2017-2021, which had been implemented successfully with the strong and unwavering support of the Secretary General and his team, including during the difficult context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of the Governing Council believed that the interim report of the Secretary General was an illustration of the accountability they were promoting both within the Organization and in their national parliaments. They warmly congratulated the Secretary General and his team for their commitment to implementing the 2017-2021 Strategy, on which the upcoming 2022-2026 Strategy had been built.

4. Adoption of the new IPU Strategy for 2022-2026

The IPU Strategy for 2022-2026 was unanimously adopted by the IPU Governing Council at its session on 30 November. The draft Strategy had previously been presented on 27 November; separate presentations had also been organized within the geopolitical groups and various other bodies of the IPU for wider dissemination, consultation and buy-in. As a result, the final document adopted had taken into account comments received earlier in the week from the Forum of Young Parliamentarians as well as from the Twelve Plus Group, which had endorsed a proposal from France to include a sentence on the importance of science. The comments made were aimed at reinforcing and clarifying content already present in the text presented to Members at the first sitting of the Council.

The 2022-2026 Strategy was the result of a nearly year-long consultative and Member-driven process led by the IPU Executive Committee, under the leadership of the IPU President. The process had begun with an assessment of the 2017-2021 strategic period and the impact of the Organization in that regard. The result of the preliminary assessment had then been used as the basis for consultations with Members and partners to gather views on the Organization's value-add and priorities for the years to come. The strategic consultation process had been the most extensive in the history of the IPU, with more than 900 individuals from more than 100 countries participating via surveys, focus group discussions and interviews.

The feedback received had served to elaborate a strategic framework which had been validated by the Executive Committee and further developed by the IPU Secretariat under its guidance and that of the Sub-Committee on Finance. The draft Strategy had then been shared with all IPU Members ahead of the 143rd IPU Assembly for comments before a final version had been submitted to the Governing Council for approval.

The Strategy identifies five strategic objectives reflecting how the IPU makes positive change in the world, namely:

- Building effective and empowered parliaments
- Promoting inclusive and representative parliaments
- Supporting resilient and innovative parliaments
- Catalysing collective parliamentary action
- Strengthening the IPU's accountability.

The five objectives will contribute to building parliamentary ecosystems for democracy, for everyone.

The parliamentary ecosystems approach represents a shift from the previous Strategy and an attempt to move away from looking at parliaments in isolation towards looking at parliaments in a broader way that includes the wider set of actors and dynamics that influence them.

Members identified four policy areas that they will contribute to as a priority. These are, in alphabetical order to show their equal importance:

- Climate change
- Democracy, human rights, gender equality and youth participation
- Peace and security
- Sustainable development for all.

In addition, the 2022-2026 Strategy stresses inclusion, broadening the approach to lay special emphasis on vulnerable and marginalized populations (both in terms of access and representation and equity for all); resilience (so parliaments can better absorb, adapt and transform in the face of crisis/external shock) and IPU accountability (Members and secretariat).

Drivers of change and efficiency include youth participation, communications and an enhanced monitoring and evaluation system.

5. Financial situation

The Governing Council received a report on the financial situation of the IPU as at 30 September 2021 and an updated list of unpaid assessed contributions. As at 26 November 2021, eight Member Parliaments (Comoros¹, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Saint Lucia, Sudan and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)) and two Associate Members (the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, and the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States) were in arrears for three full years and therefore liable for suspension of their membership rights under Article 5.3 of the Statutes. Five Members (Central African Republic, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Tuvalu) and two Associate Members (Andean Parliament and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC)) were two full years in arrears and were subject to participation and/or voting sanctions. The Governing Council took note that the Secretary General was making intensive efforts to follow up with all of the Members whose countries were subject to sanctions which limited their ability to conduct international financial transactions, and that progress was being made despite the challenging financial situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Heads of geopolitical groups were encouraged to follow up on the arrears of any Members within their respective groups.

The Secretary General reported that the current financial situation of the IPU was both stable and sound. The Governing Council took note that the income and expenditure of the IPU were on track for the period to 30 September 2021 and were projected to remain so until the end of the year.

6. Consolidated budget for 2022

The Council was presented with the consolidated draft budget for 2022. Reporting on behalf of the Executive Committee, Ms. C. Widegren, Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, explained that the draft budget had been prepared under the supervision of the Sub-Committee on Finance and was in accordance with its guidance. The Sub-Committee had met remotely several times to prepare the budget, during which time it had studied detailed analyses and received explanations from the Secretariat. Ms. Widegren thanked the Secretary General and the Secretariat finance team for their work and for the high quality of the documents prepared.

Ms. Widegren described how the budget was designed to enable the transition into the first year of the new IPU Strategy for 2022–2026 and implement its five interconnected objectives, in accordance with the guidelines and decisions of the governing bodies. The focus on integration between programmes would be supported by the continuing digital transformation of the IPU and its working practices and by the enhancement of its monitoring and evaluation framework in order to measure results and impact. The budget included an allocation for in-person Assemblies in Indonesia and Rwanda in 2022, including support to the Parliament of Rwanda towards its hosting costs.

¹ At its second sitting, the Governing Council took note with gratitude of the intention expressed by the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates to pay the arrears owed by Comoros in the interests of parliamentary solidarity.

There was no increase in the IPU's scale of contributions in the budget proposal. Ms. Widegren underlined that the Members' assessed contributions to the IPU were still at the same level in 2022 as they had been in 2007 and she invited Members to consider how much their national budgets had increased in that same period. While the Secretariat worked very hard to make savings and to keep costs to a minimum every year, it was clear that the IPU would need to consider increasing the total amount of its assessed contributions in the coming years. At the same time, successful efforts were being made to attract external funding, which represented approximately one quarter of the total budget income in 2022.

The Governing Council approved the 2022 consolidated budget.

7. Membership of the IPU and observer status

The Governing Council approved the recommendation of the Executive Committee to upgrade the status of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) from permanent observer to Associate Member. The Governing Council also welcomed and approved the requests for observer status received from the G5 Sahel Inter-Parliamentary Committee; the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons; the International Parliamentary Network for Education, and the Sovereign Order of Malta. For the last of those, the Governing Council took note of a reservation expressed by Belgium.

The Council was apprised of the situation of certain parliaments and endorsed the related recommendations made by the Executive Committee with regard to each of those parliaments, notably Afghanistan, Myanmar and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

In the case of Afghanistan, the members of the Governing Council expressed their deep concern about the continued assault on the human rights of the Afghan people, especially women, girls and children. They therefore appealed for greater efforts to protect women, especially women MPs and their families. Measures suggested included opening up humanitarian corridors to welcome Afghan people and an IPU mission to Afghanistan to gather first-hand information should the conditions allow. The Secretary General noted that he and his colleagues were actively monitoring events in Afghanistan. The IPU had issued a statement expressing concern over the plight of Afghan MPs, especially women. It was coordinating parliamentary efforts to find refuge for MPs whose lives were in danger. It was difficult to engage in any meaningful dialogue with the new authorities in the country given the prevailing confusion.

On Myanmar, the Governing Council endorsed the Executive Committee's recommendation to continue to recognize the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) as the legitimate interlocutor of the IPU, to monitor developments in Myanmar and to look for opportunities to foster political dialogue.

On Venezuela, the Governing Council approved the Executive Committee's recommendation to defer the decision on the status of Venezuela's membership until further consultations had taken place in follow-up to the IPU's mission to the country in August 2021 and to continue to promote inclusive dialogue between the two parties in conflict that laid claim to Venezuela's seat at the IPU, elected in 2015 and 2020 respectively.

The Governing Council also approved the recommendation of the Executive Committee to suspend the Parliament of Sudan, as there was neither a parliament in place nor any indication that one would be established soon.

In light of the IPU's role to promote peace through political dialogue, the Governing Council concurred with the Executive Committee on the importance of maintaining channels of dialogue with the parliaments of the countries in crisis. Such an approach would help the IPU to be part of the solutions that would facilitate a return to constitutional order and restore lasting peace in those countries. In that view, the Governing Council, welcoming and supporting the Secretary General's ongoing initiatives in those countries, entrusted him to engage in further actions to achieve the aforementioned objective.

The Governing Council supported the Executive Committee's appeal to Member Parliaments and Associate Members to make the necessary arrangements to pay their arrears, including those liable for suspension of their rights under Article 5.3 (namely Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Libya, Saint Lucia, Sudan, Venezuela, the Inter Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, and the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States), and those liable to be deprived of voting rights under Article 5.2 (namely Equatorial Guinea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tuvalu, the Andean Parliament, and the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa).

The Governing Council also made the following recommendations to address the issue of arrears: discuss with the countries concerned in order to better understand their situation and consider providing financial support to help with payment. As an illustration to this, the United Arab Emirates informed the Council that it had paid the arrears of Comoros. The Governing Council expressed its gratitude to the United Arab Emirates for this good example, which was worthy of replication by others.

8. Recent IPU specialized meetings

The Governing Council took note of the outcomes of the following specialized meetings:

- [Virtual World e-Parliament Conference 2021](#);
- [Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the UN Food Systems Summit](#);
- [Sustainable approaches to COVID-19 recovery in Central Asia: The role of parliaments](#);
- [COVID-19 pandemic recovery through a human rights lens: What contribution from parliaments?](#);
- [Empowering youth in a time of pandemic – UN Chamber Music Society](#);
- [Parliamentary Forum at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum](#);
- [13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament](#);
- [Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament](#);
- [First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism](#);
- [First Global Parliamentary Meeting on Achieving the SDGs](#);
- [Pre-COP26 Parliamentary Meeting](#);
- [Workshop for members of Parliamentary Human Rights Committees from French-speaking countries](#);
- [Parliamentary Meeting at the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference \(COP26\)](#);
- [Parliamentary Conference on the WTO: Webinars in the context of the 12th Ministerial Conference](#);
- [Disarmament, public health, and pandemics webinar](#).

9. Future inter-parliamentary meetings

The Governing Council approved the list of future meetings and other activities to be funded by the IPU's regular budget and by external sources (see page 81).

The Governing Council, reiterating its appreciation for the arrangements made to allow the IPU to hold remote meetings, encouraged the Secretariat to maintain the momentum in that regard in light of the ongoing uncertainty of the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Governing Council endorsed a parliamentary message to the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Doha, Qatar, on 23-27 January 2022.

10. Reporting by Members on IPU-related activities

The Governing Council heard a report on [follow-up action by Member Parliaments to IPU resolutions and other initiatives](#). Members were encouraged to actively engage in this annual exercise, which was not only a statutory duty but also a key component of the new Strategy, with its focus on accountability at all levels. Joint action in this regard would help render the IPU a more effective and prominent organization.

11. Reports of committees and other bodies

The Governing Council approved the recommendations contained in the reports on the activities of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, the Committee on Middle East Questions, the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, the Gender Partnership Group, the Advisory Group on Health, the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus, the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG) and the Working Group on Science and Technology. The Governing Council endorsed the new appointments to those bodies.

The Governing Council approved 12 decisions concerning 289 parliamentarians (including 25 per cent women) in 13 countries submitted by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. The Governing Council took note of the willingness of the delegation of Cambodia to facilitate a mission to the country, of comments from Chile regarding the Chilean case, and of comments from Paraguay commending the Committee on its work on Venezuela.

12. Elections to the Executive Committee

The Governing Council elected the following members to the Executive Committee for a four-year term ending in October 2025:

- Mr. Ahmed Kharchi (Algeria) from the African Group, and
- Ms. Olga Kefalogianni (Greece) and Mr. José Ignacio Echániz (Spain) from the Twelve Plus Group.

The Governing Council appointed two Internal Auditors for the 2022 fiscal year:

- Mr. Andries Gryffroy (Belgium), and
- Ms. Heli Järvinen (Finland).

13. Reappointment of the Secretary General

At its sitting on 30 November, the Governing Council unanimously approved the recommendation of the Executive Committee to reappoint the incumbent Secretary General for a third term of office starting on 1 July 2022 and ending on 30 June 2026. On the basis of the incumbent's excellent performance, the Governing Council invoked Rule 3 of the Secretariat stipulating that the Executive Committee may propose to the Governing Council that it waive the procedure for a formal election and reappoint the incumbent Secretary General.

14. The IPU Cremer-Passy Prize

The Governing Council approved the recommendations of the Executive Committee to set the deadline for receipt of nominations for the Cremer-Passy Prize as 30 April to allow the selection board and the Secretariat sufficient time to process the nominations in order for the winner to be announced on 30 June, International Day of Parliamentarism and the anniversary of the foundation of the IPU.

286th session of the Executive Committee

1. Debates and decisions

The Executive Committee held its 286th session over six sittings that took place virtually on 21 July, and 2, 9 and 17 November, and in-person in Madrid on 24 and 25 November.

The President of the IPU chaired the meetings and the following members took part in at least one sitting:

Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté, Vice-President (Senegal), Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), Mr. J.P. Letelier (Chile), Mr. Chen Guomin (China), Mr. M.R. Rabbani (Pakistan), Mr. M. Grujic (Serbia), Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden), Ms. L. Fehlmann Rielle (Switzerland), Ms. P. Krairiksh (Thailand), Ms. E. Anyakun (Uganda), Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), Ms. B. Argimón (Uruguay), Mr. A. Saidov (Uzbekistan), Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe), Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) in her capacity as President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, and Ms. S. Albazar (Egypt) in her capacity as President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU.

The Secretary General attended all the sittings, assisted by staff members of the Secretariat where relevant. Ms. F. Martonffy (Consultant for the IPU Strategy) attended the sessions on 21 July, and 2 and 9 November.

The Executive Committee took note of the report of the President on his activities since the 142nd Assembly. He had participated in 81 meetings and undertaken 14 official visits in the framework of the following objectives:

- (a) To consolidate the principles of good governance and the IPU's relevance and universality;
- (b) To reinforce the IPU's visibility and status as an actor on the international political stage;
- (c) To reinforce democratic principles and human rights in all geographical regions.

The Executive Committee commended the President's efforts to achieve those objectives, especially through his extensive travels in the difficult context of restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The President emphasized that the visits had allowed him to promote the IPU's desire to achieve universal membership.

The Executive Committee took note of the interim report of the Secretary General and agreed that it was comprehensive and anchored on the strategic objectives of the 2017-2021 Strategy. The members of the Executive Committee encouraged the Secretary General to show the same commitment to the implementation of the 2022-2026 Strategy. Particular attention was given to the successful launch of the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament* campaign, which would encourage efforts not only to increase the number of young parliamentarians but also to bring youth issues to the top of the parliamentary agenda. In light of the interest that this campaign had generated, the Executive Committee encouraged IPU Members to relay the campaign within their own parliaments, with the support of the Secretary General.

In conformity with the procedure whereby, one year before the end of his term, the Secretary General must inform the Executive Committee of whether he was available for another term, Mr. M. Chungong had confirmed his availability for another term in a letter to the Executive Committee through the President. Therefore, in accordance with the IPU Statutes and Rules and taking into account his personal and professional skills, as well as the benefit of having the incumbent oversee the transitional period of the IPU into its new Strategy, the members of the Executive Committee unanimously decided to recommend to the Governing Council the reappointment of Mr. Chungong for a new term of four years as of 1 July 2022.

In line with Rule 5.2 of the Executive Committee and with due regard to its tradition of ensuring gender balance between the offices of President and Vice-President, the Executive Committee received two candidatures for the position of Vice-President, from Ms. B. Argimón, Speaker of the Parliament of Uruguay, and from Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Senegal. Ms. Argimón subsequently decided to withdraw her candidature and the Executive Committee thus unanimously elected Ms. Mergane Kanouté as Vice-President of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee was briefed on the arrangements for the 143rd IPU Assembly in Madrid. It was informed of the commendable commitment and coordination of both the parliamentary and executive authorities in Spain, notably the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to ensure a successful IPU Assembly. Attendance was expected to be very strong, with over 100 national parliaments and over a dozen partner organizations confirmed to attend. As part of its efforts to develop a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation, the IPU was supporting the establishment of a parliamentary network of the Non-Aligned Movement, which would be launched in the context of the Madrid Assembly.

Among the organizational arrangements, the Executive Committee was informed of the IPU's initiative to insist upon regular COVID-19 testing of all delegates every 48 hours to avoid the spread of the virus within the context of the Assembly. This service entailed an additional cost of 120,000 EUR. Considering that the health and safety of participants was critical to the success of the Assembly, the Executive Committee, on the advice of the Sub-Committee on Finance, approved the additional cost of testing being covered by the IPU. The Executive Committee requested that, based on the experience of the Madrid Assembly, careful planning be undertaken to identify any extra costs related to health measures for the upcoming 144th IPU Assembly in Indonesia.

The Executive Committee was also informed that, despite the best efforts of the Secretariat, many IPU office holders had not been included in their national delegations to the Assembly in Madrid. The Executive Committee decided to request the support of the geopolitical groups to remind IPU Members that when an MP put forward his or her candidature, it was with the expectation that, if elected, the office holder would be supported by their parliament in the exercise of his or her functions, including in terms of ensuring that they were included in the delegation of their parliament to IPU Assemblies.

Further to the decision of the Governing Council, the Executive Committee endorsed the terms of reference for a working group, composed of six members, to implement the IPU Transparency Report. Regarding the composition of that group, some members of the Executive Committee were of the view that the mandate of the Sub-Committee on Finance could be broadened to include oversight of the implementation of the recommendations of the Transparency Report. Others believed the working group would be required to conduct in-depth analysis of all IPU activities, including the work of the Sub-Committee on Finance, and should thus be a separate entity. Following the discussion, the Executive Committee decided that the working group should be a separate entity to the Sub-Committee on Finance and be composed of one member from each geopolitical group selected from within the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee expressed its solidarity with Uganda following the suicide bomb attacks that had occurred on 16 November. The Executive Committee strongly condemned the attacks, which were a reminder that terrorism, although overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, remained a permanent threat to peace. The Executive Committee appealed therefore to Member Parliaments to further engage in efforts – including supporting the IPU programme on countering terrorism and violent extremism – against the scourge of terrorism, which undermined global sociopolitical stability.

The Executive Committee was apprised of the deliberations of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, the 13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament, and the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism that had taken place in Vienna in September 2021. The Executive Committee extended its gratitude to the parliamentary authorities of Austria for the arrangements that had facilitated the organization of these events, the first major in-person meetings since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Executive Committee urged Member Parliaments to take ownership of the recommendations of the Vienna events.

The Executive Committee discussed and endorsed the list of future inter-parliamentary meetings. The members of the Executive Committee welcomed the invitation of the Parliament of Uruguay to host a session of the Executive Committee in Montevideo in 2022 (possibly June) on the occasion of an IPU regional event on climate change.

The Executive Committee also encouraged the Secretary General to continue making the necessary arrangements to facilitate remote participation in IPU events in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The Executive Committee was informed of staff movements at the IPU, including the retirement of the Organization's long-standing receptionist, Ms. Susanna Ortiz, as of December 2021. The Executive Committee thanked her for her contribution to the IPU and wished her all the best for her retirement.

2. IPU Strategy for 2022-2026

The Executive Committee continued to oversee preparation of the 2022-2026 Strategy, based on an agreed road map. At its sittings held between July and November 2021, it reviewed the results of consultations of IPU Members, agreed on a proposed model for the Strategy and reviewed and approved the final draft text of the Strategy itself for submission to the IPU Governing Council for adoption.

Throughout the process, the Executive Committee was keen to ensure that the Strategy was action-oriented, value-driven, Member-driven, and allowed parliaments themselves to be vehicles for change. Members stressed: the importance that the Strategy be human-centred, putting people first and be adaptable to different regional and national contexts; the need for more integrated and fewer thematic priorities; the need to build on key strengths (in particular youth participation and gender equality) and apply the lessons learned throughout all areas of work; and finally the need to focus on specific policy priorities.

The Executive Committee stressed the importance of developing a monitoring and evaluation matrix to follow progress and achievements. In the same vein, the Executive Committee recommended the definition of a refreshed communication strategy, as a key driver of change, including providing barometers on how the visibility of the IPU could be increased through the 46,000 parliamentarians worldwide.

The Executive Committee also stressed the importance of keeping the wording of the Strategy very simple and focused on the core values of the IPU in order to get the buy-in of all 179 Member Parliaments.

The consolidated draft of the Strategy was sent out to all IPU Members for comments on 11 November. A revised draft was approved by the Executive Committee on 24 November and presented to the IPU membership on 27 November. The IPU Strategy for 2022-2026 was adopted by the Governing Council at its sitting on 30 November.

3. Questions relating to the IPU membership and the situation of certain parliaments

The Executive Committee supported the President's strong wish that all the 193 countries in the world with parliaments be represented within the IPU. It believed that the IPU should make every effort to maintain the current level of membership of the Organization and encourage new Members to join. It

commended the related initiatives implemented, including raising awareness of the Organization's work, the offer of assistance – through the parliamentary solidarity fund – to strengthen the ability of the parliaments concerned to engage with the global parliamentary community, and the President and the Secretary General's joint efforts to encourage non-Members to join the IPU. The Executive Committee believed that a well-articulated strategy of personal contact with the parliaments concerned, including the US Congress, was required. In that view, the Executive Committee congratulated the President and the Secretary General on their joint initiative to meet with Ms. N. Pelosi, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the US Congress, on the occasion of the P20 in Italy to reinforce the IPU's strong desire to see the US Congress return to the Organization.

In light of similar efforts currently under way to mobilize and encourage non-Member Parliaments in the Caribbean to join, the Executive Committee made an appeal to all Member Parliaments to join this mobilization to broaden the IPU's parliamentary community. It encouraged Members who wished to join this effort to inform the Secretary General, who would gladly provide relevant documentation on membership.

In line with increasing interest in IPU activities, the Executive Committee endorsed a request for associate membership from the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and entrusted the Secretary General to co-operate with the PAP to promote common objectives building on foundations of joint work on refugee management and health-related issues.

In the same vein, the Executive Committee endorsed requests for permanent observer status from:

- The G5 Sahel Inter-Parliamentary Committee
- The Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons
- The International Parliamentary Network for Education, and
- The Sovereign Order of Malta.

The Executive Committee was apprised of the situation of certain parliaments, comprising three categories: parliaments which were not functioning at all, those which had experienced a major political crisis and those which the IPU was monitoring in the light of other political crises.

In the first category, the Executive Committee heard a report from the Secretary General on the situation of the Parliament of Afghanistan since the Taliban had come to power. The IPU had not been officially informed of the dissolution of the parliament, but it was apparent that it was no longer functioning, since many of its members had fled the country. In solidarity with the Afghan people and taking due account of the IPU's conviction that democratic processes needed to be followed and that dialogue with the Afghan people should be maintained, the Executive Committee agreed that an Afghan delegation could observe the proceedings of the 143rd Assembly if such a delegation was able to travel to Madrid.

The Executive Committee was briefed on the report of the mission to Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), which had been led by the President. The delegation had comprised members of both the CHRP and the Executive Committee, in view of the complexity of the political situation and the recurrent finding that the individual human rights cases of parliamentarians were part of a broader context of institutional and political crisis. Following receipt of an official invitation from Venezuela, the IPU delegation had travelled to the country from 23 to 27 August 2021. Among its other objectives, defined by the Executive Committee, the mission had aimed to gather information which would allow the Executive Committee to make a recommendation to the Governing Council regarding Venezuela's representation in the IPU, in light of Article 3 of the IPU Statutes.

After discussing the findings and conclusions of the mission, the Executive Committee expressed the view that neither of the two National Assemblies (elected in December 2015 and December 2020) could be considered a national legislative body "constituted in conformity with the laws of a sovereign State" as required for affiliation to the IPU under Article 3.1 of the Statutes.

In this regard, the Executive Committee recommended to defer the decision on the status of Venezuela's membership until further consultations had taken place. In the meantime, the Executive Committee recommended accepting a delegation from Venezuela as observers to the 143rd Assembly only if it was composed of members from both National Assemblies. The Executive Committee also decided to continue to promote inclusive dialogue between the two parties in conflict.

In conformity with the Governing Council's recommendation on Myanmar during its 207th sitting, the Executive Committee decided to continue to recognize the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) as the legitimate interlocutor of the IPU. The IPU would continue to monitor developments in Myanmar and look for opportunities to foster political dialogue.

As there was currently no parliament in place in Sudan and no indication that one would be set up in the near future, the Executive Committee decided to recommend the suspension of the Parliament of Sudan to the Governing Council.

In light of the similarity of the situation in Guinea to that of Mali, the Executive Committee decided to proceed in a similar manner, and not automatically recommend the suspension of the Guinean parliament. The information received so far indicated that a transitional council (legislative body) would be established in the country as soon as possible.

Regarding the countries in the second and third categories, namely Chad, Eswatini, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Libya, Mali, Palestine, South Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and Yemen, the Executive Committee recommended that the Secretary General continue monitoring the situation in those countries and provide an update during the next session of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee was apprised of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina for information only, as a crisis was developing in that country.

4. Sub-Committee on Finance

The Sub-Committee on Finance had met on 18 November 2021 to prepare and facilitate the Executive Committee's consideration of the financial situation of the IPU, the draft programme and budget for 2022 and the voluntary funding situation. The Sub-Committee advised the Executive Committee to recommend the 2022 budget to the Governing Council, having been closely involved in overseeing its preparation throughout the year.

The Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden), noted that the Secretary General had made every effort to follow up with all those Members and Associate Members subject to sanctions due to arrears of payment. The list was longer than usual, but progress was being made despite the challenging financial situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chairs of the geopolitical groups were encouraged to follow up on any arrears among the Members within their respective groups.

Forum and Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

The 32nd session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians was held on 26 November 2021. It brought together 197 participants, including 114 parliamentarians (86 women and 28 men) from 62 countries and representatives from various international organizations.

The President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine), opened the session and the Forum proceeded to elect Ms. M. Batet Lamaña, President of the Congress of Deputies (Spain), to the Presidency of its 32nd session. The President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. D. Pacheco, and the Prime Minister of Spain, Mr. P. Sánchez, welcomed participants to the Forum and to the 143rd IPU Assembly. The IPU Secretary General, Mr. M. Chungong, was also in attendance.

As a contribution to the Assembly, the participants considered, from a gender perspective, the draft resolution on the agenda of the 143rd IPU Assembly, *Legislation worldwide to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse*. After a brief overview of the draft resolution by Ms. A. Gerkens (Netherlands), co-Rapporteur, the Forum divided into two groups to consider specific aspects of the draft resolution. One group discussed *Gender-responsive and survivor-centred legislation to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse* and the second group discussed *Age and gender-sensitive strategies to empower and educate children to protect themselves and report online sexual exploitation*. The Forum subsequently proposed one amendment, which the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights incorporated into the draft resolution, and supported several amendments proposed by national delegations which helped enhance the draft resolution from a gender perspective.

The Forum had a panel discussion on strategies for gender-responsive law making. Participants shared experiences and called for the adoption of rights-affirming laws to protect and benefit all women and girls and the assessment of those laws' impact on a regular basis. Discussions focused on laws and policies in the areas of family and marriage, land ownership, employment and equal pay rights, and nationality and citizenship, as well as eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. Participants agreed that successful strategies included building alliances, investing in parliamentary mechanisms and enhancing capacities in gender mainstreaming. They stressed the effectiveness of mechanisms such as standing committees on gender equality and women's parliamentary caucuses. They called specific attention to the implementation of laws, as well as budget scrutiny through a gender lens and gender-responsive budgeting.

The Forum organized a Parity debate entitled *Are men and women MPs equally engaged in gender equality?* (see page 28).

The Bureau of Women Parliamentarians met on 26 and 30 November. It took stock of the results of the Assembly from a gender perspective and identified future activities, including setting the agenda of its next session and that of the next session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians at the 144th Assembly. On the proposal of its President, the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians expressed its support for the reappointment of the IPU Secretary General.

Forum and Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU

The Forum of Young Parliamentarians held its sitting on 27 November 2021. It was co-presided by a woman and man member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians – Ms. O. Rudenko (Ukraine) and Mr. M.A. Rakotomalala (Madagascar), replacing the President of the Board, Ms. S. Albazar (Egypt), and the youngest member of the Board, Ms. M. Vasilevich (Belarus), who were both absent. Mr. U. Lechte (Germany) acted as the Rapporteur of the Forum.

The meeting brought together 72 participants, including 59 parliamentarians from 45 countries. There were 26 women and 33 men among the parliamentarians who attended the Forum (44% women). The average age of the participating parliamentarians was 38.

Reviewing the theme of the Assembly's General Debate, the young parliamentarians agreed that for democracy to be strong it needed to be more inclusive and more youth responsive. The IPU youth movement was contributing its share through the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign.

On the IPU resolution *Legislation worldwide to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse* from a youth perspective, they highlighted the need for: cooperation, criminalization of online sexual exploitation, and efforts to place children at the centre of the policy response.

They exchanged country-level information on progress in youth participation through new measures such as reserving seats for youth in parliament, as well as experiences and lessons learned on the creation of forums and networks of young MPs.

On the proposal of the Board of the Forum, the young parliamentarians agreed that the IPU Global Conference of Young MPs in 2022 should focus on youth for climate action. They also agreed to a new youth empowerment series consisting of online briefings and training courses to be organized by the IPU in 2022. They made a strong call to have youth participation included in its own right as a policy area of the IPU's new five-year Strategy. They appointed Mr. M.A. Rakotomalala (Madagascar) and Mr. P. Kemper (Paraguay) to prepare youth overview reports on the resolutions to be considered at the 144th Assembly. The Forum also expressed its support for the reappointment of the incumbent Secretary General, Mr. M. Chungong, for another term.

Subsidiary bodies of the Governing Council

1. Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

The Committee held its 166th session from 25-29 November 2021. Mr. N. Bako-Arifari (Benin), President, Mr. S. Cogolati (Belgium), Mr. S. Spengemann (Canada), Ms. L. Dumont (France), Ms. L. Quartapelle (Italy), Ms. C. Urbano de Sousa (Portugal) and Ms. C. Asiaín (Uruguay) participated in the session. Ms. A. Reynoso (Mexico), Vice-President, Mr. B. Mbuku-Laka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Mr. A. Caroni (Switzerland) were unable to attend.

During the session, the Committee examined the situation of 297 parliamentarians (25% of whom are women) in 13 countries. Of these cases, 41 parliamentarians were under examination for the first time by the Committee in the following countries: Colombia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Tunisia. The Committee also held seven hearings with several delegations and complainants.

The Committee submitted decisions to the Governing Council for adoption on the situation of 289 parliamentarians in the following countries: Brazil, Cambodia, Chile/Argentina, Colombia, Gabon, Iraq, Libya, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tunisia and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

2. Committee on Middle East Questions

One sitting of the Committee was held on 29 November 2021, with seven members attending. The Committee members elected Mr. G. Migliore (Italy) as the President of the Committee. The Committee discussed the importance of respectful dialogue, putting differences aside and working together in order to achieve peace as part of their mandate.

The Committee heard from the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Yemen, Mr. M.A. Al-Shadadi, about the situation on the ground in his country. The situation was dire, with widespread hunger and suffering after seven years of war. Mr. Al-Shadadi appealed to the Committee and the international community for their support, asking for concrete actions, for the war to end, national dialogue and the enacting of democratic political solutions. The IPU Members were also asked to exert pressure on parliaments of countries that were supporting militias causing the crisis. The Committee was saddened by the situation and the tragedy occurring in Yemen. Members expressed their solidarity with the people of Yemen and pledged their support for efforts to prevent the continuation of this humanitarian disaster.

The IPU President briefed the Committee on his visit to the Middle East in November 2021, notably to Israel and Palestine. In Israel, he had held meetings with the Speaker of the Knesset and the Minister of Foreign Affairs; and in Palestine he had held meetings with the President of the Palestinian Authority, members of the Palestinian National Council, and other Palestinian officials. It was the IPU President's clear impression that both parties were committed to a two-state solution. The commitment of both Israel and Palestine to the achievement of peace was encouraging. However, the Israeli officials had expressed their concern that the Palestinian Authority did not have control in the Gaza Strip, nor over Hamas, and had denounced the lack of cooperation from the Palestinian Authority. On the other hand, the Palestinian officials argued that Israel could not claim it was committed to peace while continuing its settlement activities. The latter had also raised the issue of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and administrative detention.

The IPU President recommended that the Committee hold a meeting in the Middle East. The President of the Committee welcomed the recommendation while allowing for the changing circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Palestinian member of the Committee, Mr. A. Al-Ahmad reiterated that the Palestinian side was ready to start immediate peace negotiations with Israel in an international conference and to implement international resolutions that would guarantee the enactment of sustainable and just peace.

Regarding the Committee's Rules on the gender balance of its membership, the Committee reviewed and adopted a proposed amendment on its composition submitted by the IPU Secretariat. The amendment would be submitted to the Governing Council in Nusa Dua, Indonesia, for approval in March 2022.

3. Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

The Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law met on 27 November 2021. The meeting was chaired by the Committee's President, Ms. A. Vadai (Hungary). It agreed to hold consultations regarding the humanitarian situation in Myanmar and Afghanistan in virtual format (online) in December and also expressed its intention to possibly renew its practice of carrying out on-site visits, if overall health and security conditions allowed.

The Committee went on to discuss a specific workplan on actions to be taken to end statelessness by 2024. It decided to focus its efforts in the coming years on the following:

- Addressing gender discrimination in nationality law by engaging with parliamentarians in the 25 countries that retain gender discrimination in their nationality laws (see: www.refworld.org/docid/604257d34.html).
- On regional levels, building parliamentarians' knowledge and capacity on statelessness and fostering networking and exchange with other actors, such as relevant regional bodies seized with statelessness, NGO networks and stateless activists themselves.
- Supporting follow up in the 32 priority countries identified by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the #IBELONG Campaign (pledges delivered at the High-Level Segment are available at: www.refworld.org/docid/5ec3e91b4.html).

The Committee welcomed the offer of its member from Kenya to host the first virtual regional gathering on the topic of statelessness and looked forward to further engagement on the subject from other members.

The Committee discussed actions aimed at the universalization and implementation of the Additional Protocols (AP) to the Geneva Conventions in view of the celebration of their 45th anniversary in 2022. The Committee agreed to:

- Organize a global virtual raising awareness event for parliaments on the AP in 2022 – possibly on 8 June (anniversary date) – with the ICRC
- Compile tools/factsheets for MPs to support them in their raising awareness efforts
- Carry out sensitization efforts through letters addressed by the IPU to parliaments of non-signatory countries to encourage them to discuss the Additional Protocols
- Where possible, provide a parliamentary contribution to ICRC events marking the 45th anniversary of the AP at regional levels
- Monitor and report regularly to the IPU Members on progress on accession to the AP

With regard to the Ottawa Convention (or the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention), the Committee hosted an open session on 29 November on the theme *Supporting a mine-free world: Universalization and implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention*. The debate concluded with the need to strengthen parliamentary engagement in the matter, with a particular focus on assistance to victims; securing budgetary allocations; and facilitating the exchange of good practices. The Committee agreed to pursue work on anti-personnel mines in the years to come.

Finally, the Committee highlighted the importance of building synergies with the IPU's work in the area of peace and security and suggested organizing a joint meeting with the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security to enhance cooperation and coordination.

4. Gender Partnership Group

The Group held its 44th session on 29 November 2021. In attendance were Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal), Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) and Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates). The Group elected Mr. Al Nuaimi as Chair.

The Group reiterated its commitment to ensuring that IPU Member Parliaments enhance the representation and effective contribution of women, both in national parliaments and at the IPU, the aim being to achieve gender parity. The Group stressed that representation required both equality in numbers and in access to leadership positions. Building a favourable environment was equally important as could be seen from the IPU Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments.

As per its mandate, the Group reviewed the composition of national parliament delegations at the 143rd IPU Assembly. As at 30 November 2021, 38.9 per cent of the delegates at the Assembly were women (see page 78) which was a record high. Previously, the percentage at in-person Assemblies hovered around 30 per cent. Women's participation reached 38 per cent for the first time at the virtual 142nd Assembly. The Group noted that the new record was partly due to the reduced size of delegations at the current Assembly. The Group commended the gender-balanced delegations attending the 143rd Assembly. In Madrid, 44 delegations out of 117 (37.6%) were composed of 40 to 60 per cent women, which was an improvement from previous in-person Assemblies (23.8% in April 2019 and 19.6% in October 2019). The 44 delegations are listed on page 79.

Of the 117 delegations present, 107 were composed of at least two delegates, of which 10 were all-male (9.3%). In addition, three delegations of two or more delegates were composed entirely of women. These 13 single-sex delegations were from the parliaments of the following States: Cambodia, Guinea-Bissau, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kuwait, Latvia, Madagascar, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Panama, Paraguay, Tunisia and Yemen. Furthermore, there were 10 single-member delegations attending the Assembly. All in all, four delegations were subject to sanctions.

The Group made the point that being a Member of the IPU came with expectations to make efforts to achieve progress towards achieving gender parity. It pointed out that it would be monitoring that closely, in particular in the framework of the new IPU Strategy. As per its mandate, the Group would engage in dialogue with delegations from all geopolitical groups where there were parliaments with less than 10 per cent women members, as well as those that failed to ensure there were men and women on their delegations to IPU Assemblies. Likewise, those parliaments that made progress and strove for gender parity would be praised for such efforts.

5. Advisory Group on Health

The IPU Advisory Group on Health met on 27 November with eight out of ten members in attendance. Also present were the Group's technical partners from the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), UNAIDS and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The Advisory Group discussed the implementation of the new IPU Strategy for 2022-2026. The Group agreed on the importance of focusing on resilience and supporting parliamentarians in continuing responding to the needs of the people in uncertain circumstances. It highlighted accountability as a key factor to ensure impact of the IPU and parliamentary action in the area of health. The Strategy should be based on the Sustainable Development Goals and help bring them closer to parliamentarians and people.

As the focal point for parliamentary accountability on the 2019 IPU resolution *Achieving universal health coverage by 2030: The role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health*, the Group exchanged experiences on how to improve access to health care services for vulnerable and marginalized populations with the Parliaments of Italy and Zimbabwe. It learned of different practices on health response to COVID-19; budgetary measures for more sustainable funding of the health sector; and legislative initiatives to improve access to health for key populations.

The Group noted with concern the existing disparities in accessing COVID-19 vaccines within and between countries; the impact of the pandemic on sexual and reproductive health, and violence against women; as well as the misinformation and polarization around COVID-19 measures and vaccines. It therefore recommended that parliamentarians strengthen their role in sensitizing communities and better account for the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations. The Group laid emphasis on the need to be better prepared to anticipate future emergencies and crises, including through accountable budgetary measures and increased domestic financing for health. For greater vaccine equity, health considerations should drive discussions on patent rights and vaccine distribution. Reliable data and sharing of practices among parliaments could support these efforts. The Group was encouraged to learn that the IPU Secretariat would continue facilitating parliamentary exchanges and was documenting practices on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Group further reflected on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic across all sectors, noting that synergies should be built between health and climate change. The IPU should play a role in ensuring better preparedness and building resilience in health and related sectors.

6. Group of Facilitators for Cyprus

The Group of Facilitators for Cyprus met on 27 November 2021. The meeting was attended by two Facilitators, Ms. L. Quartapelle (Italy) and Mr. M. Mijatović (Serbia), two members of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus and five representatives of the Turkish-Cypriot political parties.

The parties expressed their determination to overcome the present stalemate and resume negotiations as soon as possible, aiming at a solution of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions, and the values and principles of the European Union. They underlined the fact that a functional and viable solution would not only benefit the future of all Cypriots, but also safeguard the stability, security and prosperity of the Eastern Mediterranean region.

7. High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG)

The High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG) held the following three meetings: seventh meeting on 17 May (virtual), eighth meeting on 9 September in Vienna, and ninth meeting on 26 November 2021 in Madrid.

During the meetings, HLAG reviewed the following areas of the IPU Secretariat's work: progress in development of products to be launched; activities regarding victims of terrorism, and cooperation and projects with regional parliaments. Members stressed the importance of addressing the situation in the Sahel region, as well as the importance of supporting the victims of terrorism, and addressing hate speech.

HLAG was updated on the activities regarding the Sahel region such as the IPU Secretary General's and G5 Sahel Inter-Parliamentary Committee's joint work on the webinar for the G5 Sahel members, and the Group's ongoing work with the Executive Secretary of the G5 Sahel aimed at identifying activities to strengthen parliamentarians' capacity in the global effort to counter terrorism.

During the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism (GPSCT-1) held on 9 September in Vienna, a session was dedicated to the situation in the Sahel region. The Summit adopted the declaration entitled *Call of the Sahel* agreed between IPU, the Arab Parliament, Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, the Interparliamentary Committee of the G5 Sahel. This initiative creates a parliamentary bloc that shares a strong commitment and genuine solidarity with the people of the Sahel region. The aim is to listen, not duplicate actions, and avoid holding meetings without any impact. The *Call of the Sahel* provides for a holistic and inclusive plan of action. GPSCT-1 was also an opportunity to listen to victims of terrorism from different regions and discuss the role of parliaments in the prevention of terrorism, radicalization and hate speech.

On 15 November, the IPU Secretary General convened the first virtual coordination meeting to discuss the follow-up in the *Call of the Sahel* implementation. The different actors in this process were heard. The main sponsors of the *Call of the Sahel* agreed that they would work together with other key partners to develop an action plan that would engage all regional stakeholders, including leaders, NGOs and women. It was agreed to hold a *Call of the Sahel* summit in 2022 to present the plan of action and discuss how the *Call* would be implemented.

HLAG was briefed on the three IPU products aimed at helping parliamentarians in their efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism: The Global Parliamentary Network, the Interactive Map, and the Mobile Application for parliamentarians. The last two tools would be launched at the 144th IPU Assembly to be held from 20 to 24 March 2022 in Nusa Dua, Indonesia.

These tools utilize communication technology to help parliamentarians obtain first-hand information about counter terrorism from around the globe. The products had been developed thanks to funding by the National People's Congress of China. The IPU would start developing the second phase of the mobile application that would enable parliamentarians to have online conversations and video conferences. It would be available in Arabic and Spanish and is to be funded by the Arab Parliament.

The members heard a presentation on the work carried out jointly by the IPU, the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on model legislative provisions to support and protect the rights and needs of victims of terrorism. The drafting of these provisions is expected to be finalized at the end of 2021.

8. Working Group on Science and Technology

Three sittings of the Working Group were held, on 13 July, and 18 and 28 November 2021.

During its meeting on 13 July, the Group elected Mr. M. Larive (France) as its Chair and Ms. S. Attia (Egypt) as Vice-Chair. The Working Group agreed that its mandate entailed two main items, firstly, to inform parliamentarians about developments and challenges in science and technology and to explore solutions to these challenges, and secondly, to offer advice in this field.

The IPU Secretariat provided an overview of its science and technology work streams, including its partnerships with the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN). The Working Group was also briefed on the existing *Science for Peace School* initiative, organized in collaboration with CERN to encourage participants from parliaments to work together and experience models of scientific cooperation.

The Working Group urged the inclusion of science and technology in the IPU Strategy for 2022-2026, in order to achieve real change. The Working Group agreed to request the inclusion of a mention of science and technology in the IPU Strategy, specifically the phrase “building bridges between politics and science should help support good governance and trust, as the scientific values of rationalism and transparency can be a common language in diplomatic exchanges”.

During its sitting on 28 November, the Working Group agreed upon a work plan for the year 2022. The key threads of the work plan were: Ethics; Sustainable Development: Poverty Alleviation, Gender Equality, Climate Change and the Right to Science; Science in Parliaments and Decision-Making; Peace; and COVID-19: Vaccine Inequity. To facilitate and support the work of the Working Group, it was agreed to build partnerships with relevant scientific and technological organizations and to collaborate with other relevant IPU bodies.

During its sittings, the Working Group began deliberating on a proposed International Charter on Technoscience Ethics, which would be an ethical framework on the application and use of science and technology. The Charter would be submitted as a resolution at the 144th IPU Assembly in Nusa Dua, Indonesia, in March 2022, for validation by the Governing Council.

Other activities and events

1. Meeting of the Chairs of the Geopolitical Groups

On 18 November, the IPU President and Secretary General held a virtual meeting with the Chairs and Secretaries of the Geopolitical Groups. The meeting was attended by Mr. A.H. Fulata (Nigeria), Chair of the African Group; Mr. S. Ghobash (United Arab Emirates), Chair of the Arab Group; Ms. H. Kim (Republic of Korea), on behalf of the Chair of the Asia-Pacific Group; Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation), Chair of the Eurasia Group; Mr. B. Llano (Paraguay), President of GRULAC; and Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium), Vice-Chair of the Twelve Plus Group.

An independent consultant, Ms. F. Martonffy, introduced the draft IPU Strategy for 2022-2026, which had been circulated to all Members and was expected to be adopted on the occasion of the Madrid Assembly. The IPU President encouraged all the Chairs to discuss the new Strategy in their respective Groups, with a view to building awareness and ensuring broad support for its effective implementation.

The President drew attention to the situation of the IPU Members in arrears in the payment of their assessed contributions and encouraged the Chairs of the Groups to reach out to the respective parliaments so as to avoid sanctions or the suspension of membership rights. The President shared the list of future IPU meetings for 2022 and asked the Group Chairs to help identify possible hosts for the regional and other events for which the venue was not yet confirmed.

The President referred to modalities for the IPU Cremer-Passy Prize for the MP(s) of the year, which would be awarded as of 2022. As per the rules that had been approved by the Governing Council, the Prize Selection Board would be composed of seven members including the current President, IPU Honorary Presidents Ms. G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico), Mr. S. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Mr. A. Radi (Morocco), and Mr. P.F. Casini (Italy). The African and Eurasia Groups were invited to nominate a retired Speaker to serve on the Board, as these two groups did not have any living honorary presidents. The Chairs were also encouraged to present the initiative to their respective Groups and invite nominations of strong candidates.

The Chairs of the Groups examined the modalities for the rotation of the Standing Committee Presidencies and Vice-Presidencies among the Geopolitical Groups over the next two-year cycle. In order to ensure predictability and allow Groups the time to identify the best possible candidates for these important decisions, the Chairs of the Geopolitical Groups agreed on a formula for the rotation of these positions over the next six cycles, until 2033 (see page 35).

When considering the distribution of positions, the following key principles were taken into account:

- The positions of President and Vice-President should be shared equally between women and men.
- Over a given period, every Geopolitical Group should have the opportunity to chair each of the Standing Committees once.

- The profile of the candidates for the IPU leadership positions: it was agreed that candidates for the leadership positions should be parliamentarians with attested experience, a deep commitment to the issues falling within the purview of the respective Committee, and the willingness to devote time and energy to the exercise of this function. A working knowledge of one of the official languages of the IPU (English and French) and a certain prominence at the national and international level would also be an important asset. The support of his/her Parliament in the exercise of the function would also be crucial.

2. Open session of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law – Supporting a mine-free world: Universalization and implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

The Open session of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law was held on 29 November and focused on the topic *Supporting a mine-free world: Universalization and implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention*. The debate was launched by interventions from: the Implementation Support Unit, Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention; the Mines Advisory Group, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Anti-personnel mines are devastating weapons that destroy lives indiscriminately, during and long after conflict has ended. They touch many civilians, innocent men, women and children, who as a result find their lives completely overhauled, affected by disability, insecurity and incapacity to simply live “normally”. The debate recalled that the 1997 Ottawa Convention had raised great hopes for change. Since its entry into force in 1999, the Convention, which is the first treaty to include provisions for survivors and victims of anti-personnel mines, had helped reduce the number of civilian casualties over the years and contributed to decreasing the trade and use of anti-personnel mines. States Parties have also developed a wide array of initiatives to provide support to these survivors and victims including by reintegrating them successfully into the socioeconomic life of their societies.

However, despite significant progress achieved, anti-personnel mines continue to make victims – the latest figures reference 7,000 a year, the great majority being civilians. Recent figures also tend to show an increase in the number of victims and the use of such weapons. Stagnation in terms of new ratifications and implementation efforts was also noted.

The debates focused on the need to reengage parliamentarians, political will and leadership for the universalization and effective implementation of the Convention. A comprehensive approach, building on partnerships across society and countries was required for sustainable impact as the Convention not only touched upon disarmament related issues, but also on human rights, victims’ rehabilitation, arms trafficking and the root causes of conflict, etc. Participants insisted on the need to place victims and humans at the centre and ensure that parliaments developed a conducive and forward-looking framework to facilitate and provide victims with the best assistance possible, including through the use of new technologies. Initiatives such as the parliamentary campaign against explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas (EWIPA) were referenced. In concluding, participants agreed that the IPU should continue work in this area; pursue mobilization to that effect; focus on assistance to victims; and facilitate sharing of experience between parliaments.

3. Parity debate: Are men and women MPs equally engaged in gender equality?

On 29 November, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians organized a parity debate with 45 participants, including 30 MPs (22 women and 8 men) from 21 countries and representatives of two IPU Associate Members.

The debate focused on how men could become more effective gender equality champions. Four men MPs and six women MPs contributed their views and experiences.

The discussion pointed out the different ways to better engage men and how to work in partnership with them towards gender equality.

Participants agreed that gender equality was a universal societal issue. Men and women parliamentarians must promote and defend gender equality together. To do so an entire mentality had to be reconsidered and both men and women should question themselves. While men who do not recognize their historical privileges are part of the problem, stereotyped mentality and behaviour of both men and women can maintain the status quo of gender inequality.

The discussion also highlighted that men parliamentarians who walk the talk on gender equality must do so out of conscious determination. When speaking out in support of gender equality, men can face bullying from male colleagues as is also often the case with women parliamentarians standing up for gender equality.

The participants underscored some good, convincing practices to increase the active participation of men in advancing gender equality, such as: hold annual general debates on the state of progress of gender equality in parliament; address the gender dimension and emphasize the benefits of equality on topics such as the economy, defence and security; ensure balanced participation of both men and women on committees, panels and hearings in parliaments; engage in dialogue with religious leaders with a focus on highlighting how religious texts and practices can reflect gender equality.

In order to be sustainable and leave no one behind, it was recommended that the advancement of gender equality should be part of more global efforts to combat all forms of discrimination and inequality.

4. Knowledge exchange on climate crisis: *Parliaments as agents of change in the climate emergency*

The objective of the workshop held on 28 November was to inform delegates about the latest status of climate negotiations and to allow them to exchange views and experiences on climate action. Around 60 delegates from approximately 30 countries joined the event.

The session was opened by Ms. A. Mulder (Netherlands) who chaired and moderated the event. She stressed the instrumental role of parliamentarians in addressing the climate emergency and briefed participants on the outcomes of the parliamentary meetings co-organized by the IPU, the Italian Chamber of Deputies, and the British Group of the IPU on the occasion of COP26. She also encouraged IPU fellow members to embrace the new IPU Strategy and work together towards its implementation while focusing on climate related objectives.

Ms. C. Kinuthia-Njenga, Director of the Intergovernmental Support and Collective Progress Division, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), who connected remotely, gave a presentation on UNFCCC processes, on climate negotiations and on the annual meetings of parties to monitor the implementation of the Paris Agreement including on the latest such meeting at COP26. She gave a summary of the key elements of the Glasgow Climate Pact and shared her reflections on the pivotal role of parliamentarians in its implementation.

Even though reaching a consensus in Glasgow had been an intense negotiation journey it was a success. The different elements of climate action, such as mitigation, adaptation and finance had been strengthened in a balanced way. One of the major achievements of COP26 was the pledge to phase out fossil fuels and to establish a dialogue on funding for loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change. Keeping the target of 1.5°C alive and achieving resilience required that pledges be translated into accelerated and ambitious action right away. Much of that action would depend on the laws and policies approved and implemented at the national and local levels, which gave parliamentarians around the world a key role to play in the fight against climate change.

A total of 18 participants from (in order of appearance) the United Kingdom, Zimbabwe, Seychelles, Finland, Greece, Bahrain, Egypt, Zambia, Gabon, France, Norway, Uruguay, India, Algeria, Pakistan, Andorra, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Mexico, took part in the discussion. They emphasized the importance of applying the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities when it came to supporting developing countries to reach their climate objectives. It was necessary to strengthen the means of implementation of climate change objectives, through capacity building, finance, technology transfer and technical assistance which the global community needed to reinforce and back up with more tangible measures.

The recently published toolkit co-produced by the IPU and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) entitled *Disaster Risk Reduction to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals: a toolkit for parliamentarians* was introduced in a short video. The toolkit aims to show why it is important that parliamentarians consider disaster risk reduction when they address sustainable development issues.

In conclusion, Mr. Y. Tsolov, IPU consultant, shared the preliminary findings of a desk review of existing parliamentary practices in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The aim of the review was to help parliaments build their capacity in SDGs implementation with a focus on SDG 13 on climate action.

5. Workshop: *Good parliamentary practices to promote interfaith dialogue*

On 28 November, a workshop was held on good parliamentary practices to promote interfaith dialogue. Building on the outcome of the 137th Assembly held in 2017 in St. Petersburg, the workshop aimed to bring together parliamentarians and experts working in different religious, geographical and cultural contexts to share insights into the important role of parliaments in promoting the peaceful coexistence of people of different faiths and those of no faith.

The workshop was moderated by Ms. A. Sabaté Gauxachs, Deputy Director of the Blanquerna Observatory on Media, Religion and Culture, Ramon Llull University in Barcelona, and included panellists from different cultural and religious backgrounds as follows: Mr. K. Kosachev, Deputy Speaker of the Council of the Federation of the Russian Federation; Mr. P.S. Rudana, MP from Indonesia; Mr. D. Verga, Ambassador, Diplomatic Counsellor, Sovereign Order of Malta; Ms. M. Al Suwaidi, MP from the United Arab Emirates; and Mr. M. Omar, Senior Advisor to the IPU Secretary General.

The panellists and participants underscored the critical role of parliaments in this area, especially in passing legislation that guaranteed freedom of religion or belief, the promotion of equal rights for all religious communities, and provided measures to prevent and counter hate speech and promote a culture of tolerance and understanding. They shared the good practices that were being implemented at the national and regional level, as well as the different challenges they faced.

From this perspective, participants acknowledged, on the one hand, the positive examples of peaceful coexistence between different faith communities in many societies (Indonesia, for instance, has “unity in diversity” enshrined in its national policy); on the other hand, the important role parliaments could play in passing legislation to protect religious minorities and to fight discrimination and hatred was observed, as was the need for dialogue and cooperation between religious and political actors. The need to focus on intra-faith, specifically intra-Muslim, relations was highlighted (with the Middle East and the Sahel as a primary example), as well as on the importance of protecting citizens against the misuse of religious concepts which can be a threat to society. Lack of education was also seen as a key threat to peaceful and harmonious societies. Panellists also pointed to the responsibility of parliaments to consider the rights of non-citizens, and the relationship between freedom of religion and freedom of speech, both of which were fundamental human rights which should be upheld.

Further to the discussions, there was broad agreement on the:

- Importance of the theme of the workshop as a key issue for parliaments
- Importance of legislation to fight discrimination and hatred, protect minorities, protect freedom of religion/belief and freedom of expression
- Need to increase cooperation between religious and political actors, in particular parliamentarians
- Need for parliaments to involve religious leaders to promote values of coexistence, tolerance and fraternity
- Need for parliamentarians to uphold citizenship and promote education about citizenship.

6. Workshop: *Public engagement in the work of parliaments: Challenges, opportunities and good practices*

The workshop, which was held on 29 November, was jointly organized by the IPU and the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) in partnership with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It brought together parliamentarians and Secretary Generals to discuss and share experiences on the practice of public engagement in the work of parliaments.

The meeting opened with a presentation by the IPU about the upcoming Global Parliamentary Report on public engagement followed by an intervention by Mr. C. Chauvel, Global Lead and Asia-Pacific Focal Point, UNDP. The discussion was moderated by Ms. P. Tyawa (South Africa).

Participants acknowledged that there was a decrease in trust in legislative institutions, that there was a need to listen more closely to the public and to better engage them in decision-making processes. They shared information about engagement mechanisms in their parliaments and the challenges they faced.

Representatives from Peru and Bahrain underscored the leading role of parliamentarians in communicating with the public. The discussion also emphasized the challenge of engaging meaningfully with the many thousands of people that one parliamentarian may represent even though parliamentary administration supported parliamentarians by, among other things, providing financial resources to maintain offices in their constituencies.

Participants gave examples of their public engagement practices. For example, the Indian Parliament informs the public about draft laws by publishing information briefs. It also receives e-petitions, organizes field visits and invites relevant stakeholders to meetings in Parliament.

The representative of the Parliament of the United Kingdom gave an example of how parliamentary petitions significantly influence the policy development process. Referring to a specific case he explained that once the many petitions reached Parliament a debate on the subject was launched. After the debate, the Government made important new policy announcements to address the issue even before legislation was tabled in Parliament. That particular case had not been part of the legislative agenda and would probably not have reached Parliament in the near future without public impetus.

An MP from South Africa addressed the need to better mainstream public engagement across Parliament's entire work and to collect disaggregated data on participants engaged in activities. Participants expressed interest in cooperating with the IPU and other parliaments to enhance their work on public engagement.

7. Launch of the *Handbook on gender-responsive law-making*

According to World Bank data, many countries still have discriminatory laws or provisions on their statute books. For example:

- Almost 40 countries do not have legal protections against domestic violence
- More than 100 countries do not have legislation criminalizing marital rape
- In 45 countries, women cannot get a divorce in the same way as men.

The new [Handbook on gender-responsive law making](#), published by the IPU and UN Women, contains case studies of good parliamentary practice from around the world, either in undertaking legal reforms or the ways in which parliaments approach gender equality.

The handbook was launched at the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and during a dedicated segment of the Assembly.

8. Launch of the regional report on *Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Africa*

The IPU and the African Parliamentary Union (APU) launched the new handbook [Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Africa](#).

This is the second in a series of IPU regional studies, following a 2018 report on European parliaments. The African study reveals:

- 80 per cent of the women parliamentarians interviewed have experienced psychological violence in parliament
- 67 per cent have been subject to sexist behaviour or remarks
- 40 per cent have been sexually harassed and 23 per cent have endured physical violence.

The report was launched at the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and during a dedicated segment of the Assembly.

9. Launch of the *Guidelines for parliamentarians on budgeting for the SDGs*

The financial strains caused by the COVID-19 pandemic risk derailing progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

To help mitigate this risk, the IPU has published a new tool for parliamentarians: [Guidelines for parliamentarians on budgeting for the SDGs](#). From cracking down on tax loopholes to using national statistics to track progress, parliamentarians have a range of options at their disposal to finance the SDGs.

The guidelines were launched at the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development and promoted during the Assembly.

10. *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament! Campaign*

Using the opportunity of an in-person Assembly, it was possible to mobilize parliamentarians from around the world to sign up to the campaign to rejuvenate parliaments everywhere.

A dedicated booth provided the focal point for intensive lobbying and distribution of flyers to encourage parliamentarians to pledge to the campaign.

Close to 150 new parliamentarians pledged to encourage more youth participation in parliament.

Elections and appointments

1. Executive Committee

The Governing Council elected the following three members to the Executive Committee for a four-year term ending in October 2025:

African Group

- Mr. Ahmed Kharchi (Algeria)

Twelve Plus Group

- Ms. Olga Kefalogianni (Greece)
- Mr. José Ignacio Echániz (Spain)

2. Gender Partnership Group

The Executive Committee appointed the following members:

- Ms. Adji Diarra Mergane Kanouté (Senegal)
- Mr. Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates)
- Mr. Akmal Saidov (Uzbekistan)
- Ms. Lesia Vasylenko (President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians)

3. Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

The Forum of Women Parliamentarians elected the following regional representative to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians:

Asia-Pacific Group

- Ms. Undram Chinbat (Mongolia)

The Forum also elected a Second Vice-President:

- Ms. Wilma Piedad Andrade Muñoz (Ecuador)

The Bureau welcomed new Ex-Officio members:

- Ms. Olga Kefalogianni (Greece)
- Ms. Meritxell Batet Lamaña (Spain)

4. Committee on Middle East Questions

The Governing Council elected the following four members for a four-year term ending in October 2025:

- Mr. Karim Abdel Karim Darwish (Egypt)
- Ms. Nadia Essayan (France)
- Mr. Mardani Ali Serah (Indonesia)
- Ms. Sheikha Al Taneiji (United Arab Emirates)
- *Vacancy*

The Committee elected Mr. Genaro Migliore (Italy) as its next President.

5. Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

The Governing Council elected the following three members for a four-year term ending in October 2025:

African Group

- Ms. Francine Muyumba Furaha (Democratic Republic of Congo)

Eurasia Group

- Mr. Eugeniu Sinchevici (Republic of Moldova)
- Ms. Elena Afanasieva (Russian Federation)

6. Group of Facilitators for Cyprus

A vacancy remains for a Facilitator in this Group.

7. High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG)

The Governing Council elected seven members for a four-year term ending in October 2025:

African Group

- Mr. Monder Bouden (Algeria)
- Mr. Mahamadou Karidio (Niger)

Asia-Pacific Group

- Ms. Eva Abdulla (Maldives)

Eurasia Group

- Mr. Sergei Rachkov (Belarus)
- Vacancy

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Ms. Alina González (Panama)

Twelve Plus Group

- Mr. Avi Dichter (Israel)

Arab Group

- Mr. Karim Darwesh (Egypt) (April 2023)
The group decided to nominate Mr. Karim Darwesh to replace Dr. Ali Abdel Aal Sayed Ahmed to complete the mandate until April 2023 (Egypt)

8. Working Group on Science and Technology

The Governing Council appointed the following member for a four-year term ending in October 2025:

Eurasia Group

- Mr. Victor Spînu (Republic of Moldova)

9. Internal Auditors for the 2022 accounts

The Governing Council appointed the following Internal Auditors for the 2022 accounts:

- Mr. Andries Gryffroy (Belgium)
- Ms. Heli Järvinen (Finland)

10. Standing Committees

Further to consultations within the Geopolitical Groups on the agreed formula for the distribution of the positions of Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the Standing Committees, the following office holders were elected for the next two-year cycle, November 2021 – October 2023:

Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

President: Mr. Mohammed Bin Mahdi Al-Ahbab (Qatar)
Vice-President: Ms. Hasmik Hakobyan (Armenia)

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

President: Ms. Agnes Mulder (Netherlands)
Vice-President: Mr. Waven William (Seychelles)

Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

President: Mr. Asiskumar Gajadien (Suriname)
Vice-President: Ms. Batsukh Saranchimeg (Mongolia)

Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

President: Ms. Sophia Abdi Noor (Kenya)

Vice-President: Mr. Laurent Wehrli (Switzerland)

The Standing Committees also elected the following members to their respective Bureaus for a two-year term (renewable) ending in October 2023:

Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

African Group

- Mr. Zakariyau Mohammed Galadima (Nigeria) to complete the second term of Nigeria (April 2023)

Eurasia Group

- Ms. Hasmik Hakobyan (Armenia) to complete the second term of Armenia (April 2023)

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Ms. Corina Cano Córdoba (Panama) – first term

Mr. Ahmed Touizi (Morocco) was elected to complete the first term of Morocco (April 2023).

Mr. Etienne Blanc (France) was elected to complete the second term of France (October 2023).

Mr. Mohammed Bin Mahdi Al-Ahbab (Qatar) was elected for a second term (October 2023).

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

Arab Group

- Mr. Hamad Al Matar (Kuwait) – first term
- Mr. Nedal Al Alou (Syrian Arab Republic) – first term

Eurasia Group

- Ms. Tsovinar Vardanyan (Armenia) – first term

Asia-Pacific Group

- Mr. Kraisd Tontisirin (Thailand) to replace Mr. I. Sereewatthanawut and complete the second term for Thailand

Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

African Group

- Ms. Esther Nicholas Matiko (United Republic of Tanzania) – first term

Arab Group

- Mr. Ali Fetais Almarri (Qatar) to complete the term of Mr. Dahlam Al-Hamad (Qatar)

Eurasia Group

- Mr. Hayk Konjoryan (Armenia) – first term

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Mr. Asiskumar Gajadien (Suriname) – first term. Mr. Gajadien replaces Mr. Gabriel Boric (Chile), whose mandate has been terminated, as member of the Bureau.

Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

Eurasia Group

- Ms. Heriknaz Tigranyan (Armenia) – first term
- Ms. Ersilia Qatravi (Republic of Moldova) – first term

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Ms. Cinthia López Castro (Mexico) – first term

Twelve Plus Group

- Ms. Eva Lindh (Sweden) – first term

Arab Group

- Mr. Abaid Almutairi (Kuwait) to complete the term of Mr. Ahmad Al-Hamad (Kuwait)

11. Rapporteurs to the 145th Assembly

As co-Rapporteurs for the subject item *Parliamentary impetus to local and regional development of countries with high levels of international migration and to stopping all forms, including state-sponsored, of human-trafficking and human rights abuses*, the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights appointed:

- Mr. Johann Wadephul (Germany)
- Mr. Fadli Zon (Indonesia)
- Ms. Silvia Nane (Uruguay)

12. Rotation of the presidencies of the IPU Standing Committees until 2033

The geopolitical groups adopted a proposed rotation system, and the Governing Council subsequently took note. The system will ensure that:

- Every geopolitical group holds the presidency and vice-presidency of each Standing Committee once
- Every Standing Committee alternates gender for its leadership positions (female President and male Vice-President, followed by a male President and female Vice-President, or vice versa)
- Every two-year cycle has an equal number of male and female Presidents and Vice-Presidents

Date	Standing Committee	Presidency	Sex	Vice-presidency	Sex
2021-2023	Peace and International Security	Arab Group	Male	Eurasia Group	Female
	Sustainable Development	Twelve Plus Group	Female	African Group	Male
	Democracy and Human Rights	GRULAC	Male	Asia-Pacific Group	Female
	United Nations Affairs	African Group	Female	Twelve Plus Group	Male
2023-2025	Peace and International Security	Eurasia Group	Female	Asia-Pacific Group	Male
	Sustainable Development	African Group	Male	Arab Group	Female
	Democracy and Human Rights	Asia-Pacific Group	Female	Eurasia	Male
	United Nations Affairs	Twelve Plus Group	Male	GRULAC	Female
2025-2027	Peace and International Security	Asia-Pacific Group	Male	Twelve Plus Group	Female
	Sustainable Development	Arab Group	Female	GRULAC	Male
	Democracy and Human Rights	Eurasia Group	Male	African Group	Female
	United Nations Affairs	GRULAC	Female	Arab Group	Male
2027-2029	Peace and International Security	Twelve Plus Group	Female	African Group	Male
	Sustainable Development	GRULAC	Male	Asia-Pacific Group	Female
	Democracy and Human Rights	African Group	Female	Twelve Plus Group	Male
	United Nations Affairs	Arab Group	Male	Eurasia Group	Female
2029-2031	Peace and International Security	African Group	Male	GRULAC	Female
	Sustainable Development	Asia-Pacific Group	Female	Eurasia Group	Male
	Democracy and Human Rights	Twelve Plus Group	Male	Arab Group	Female
	United Nations Affairs	Eurasia Group	Female	Asia-Pacific Group	Male
2031-2033	Peace and International Security	GRULAC	Female	Arab Group	Male
	Sustainable Development	Eurasia Group	Male	Twelve Plus Group	Female
	Democracy and Human Rights	Arab Group	Female	GRULAC	Male
	United Nations Affairs	Asia-Pacific Group	Male	African Group	Female

Media and communications

Press and traditional media

The novelty of an in-person meeting – the first in over two years – combined with the presence of HM The King of Spain, the Spanish Prime Minister, and the two Speakers of Parliament, as well as the substantial issues under discussion, generated extensive coverage.

Spanish mass-media TV and radio, as well as quality broadsheets such as *El País*, *La Vanguardia* and *El Mundo*, covered the Assembly. The Assembly was also reported on by the international media, particularly in Latin America and the Arab world.

By timing the launch of two important gender publications, the *Handbook on gender-responsive law-making* and the study on *Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Africa*, to coincide with the Assembly and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, it was also possible to generate some great coverage, particularly in the African press.

A media advisory and a closing press release was issued to thousands of journalists in four languages. The closing press release was also sent to some 8,000 IPU contacts from the IPU database as a news flash.

Digital

Livestreaming of the main plenary events and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, as well as IPU editorial coverage of the Assembly, generated many hits on the IPU website. There were more than 4,000 views of the live feed.

For the two-week period covering the Assembly, ipu.org was viewed more than 62,600 times. 15,500 users accessed the website for the first time. Notably, the event page, used to watch the live stream or access information about the Assembly, outranked the home page.

Social media

The communications team produced a toolkit in English and French with several social media assets to encourage engagement from Assembly participants. A [Trello board](#) with further assets and images was also refined for MPs.

A record number of posts were published on our social media platforms in the second half of November on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) as well as many photos on [Flickr](#) and videos on [YouTube](#). MPs from all over the world posted about IPU143 and reshared from the corporate accounts. Of note, the Speakers from Bahrain, Indonesia, Kuwait, South Africa, Spain and Turkey were particularly active. Content was also shared from the Prime Minister, royal family official channels and Spanish media.

On Twitter, engagement over the fortnight was also significantly higher than usual. [@IPUParliament](#) received more than 500 clicks, 600 shares and 1000 likes. 660 followers were added in November, more than double the average monthly increase. Account mentions increased 470 per cent in November, and 65,000 profiles visited the profile page – a 350 per cent increase on average monthly visits. Impressions for the month were also up more than 100 per cent.

The novelty of a [social media wall](#), using the event hashtag #IPU143, encouraged MPs and participants to post frequently as well as stimulating healthy “competition” between MPs to appear on the wall.

Communications stand

A beautifully designed and visible communications stand helped give visibility to IPU publications.

There was strong demand for recent publications such as [Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Africa](#), and the [Handbook on gender-responsive law-making](#).

Exhibition

To accompany the report on sexism in African parliaments, we exhibited illustrations by [Annick Kamgang](#) to shine a light on the issues. The exhibition was strategically placed in front of the room where the Forum of Women Parliamentarians met and was also featured on the website and social media.

Polling Members on IPU communications

Using the opportunity of an in-person Assembly, we encouraged Members to give us feedback on IPU communications to help us prepare the next Communications Strategy, which will be aligned with the overall IPU Strategy for 2022-2026.

Some 60 parliamentarians responded either in-person through one-to-one interviews with communications staff or online by using a dedicated QR code.

Membership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union*

Members (178)

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, the Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras**, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea**, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Associate Members (14)

Andean Parliament, Arab Parliament, Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), European Parliament, Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS), Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO), Pan-African Parliament, Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Parliament of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie (APF).

* As at the close of the 143rd Assembly.

** Non-participating Members (all rights suspended)

Agenda, resolutions and other texts of the 143rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 143rd Assembly
2. Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
3. General Debate on the theme *Contemporary challenges to democracy: Overcoming division and building community*
4. *Legislation worldwide to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse*
(Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights)
5. Reports of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security; Standing Committee on Sustainable Development; and Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs
6. Approval of the subject item for the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights at the 145th IPU Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs
7. Emergency item: *Harnessing global parliamentary support for vaccine equity in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic*

Madrid Declaration

Contemporary challenges to democracy: Overcoming division and building community

*Endorsed by the 143rd IPU Assembly
(Madrid, 30 November 2021)*

As members of parliaments and representatives of the people, we have an overriding responsibility to serve our communities through a system of democratic governance where every voice counts. The world is striving to overcome a wide array of challenges created by social, political, economic and health-related upheavals. Societal divides and the deterioration of social peace are having an impact on the state of democracy, and in particular on the institutions that put democratic values into practice.

In the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the world's governments committed to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels. As parliaments, we share the commitment to achieving those objectives.

In doing so, we will strengthen democracy at the national and global levels. We are convinced that overcoming social divisions, uniting instead of dividing, fostering hope not hate, joining forces and seeking common ground are vital to addressing the contemporary challenges to democracy.

These challenges are numerous. A growing perception that the political establishment is losing touch with the population has fuelled the rise of populism and deepened societal divides. Decreasing trust in political systems, rising economic gaps, structural inequalities, growing disengagement and increasing polarization are being experienced around the world. Young people under 30 make up about half of the world's population but are disproportionately absent from the decision-making process. As today's young people become tomorrow's adults, failure to engage with them meaningfully will further undermine the cohesion of our societies.

Technological advancements such as social media have made incredible contributions to public access to information and new forms of exchange. However, the same tools have also facilitated the flow of disinformation, spreading anger and frustration and impacting the very fabric of society. In the context of the global pandemic, they have in some instances been used to undermine scientific evidence and national vaccination campaigns, with a negative impact on public health. They are all too easily harnessed as tools to intentionally sow mistrust and spread hate. Sexist hate speech and online harassment affect women in particular, as a means of questioning their legitimacy and their right to take part in the democratic process.

Polarization and populism are not new concepts, but the current context provides the conditions for them to flourish. The level of polarization has reached new heights. Partisan competition is normal and healthy, but intense polarization carries significant risks. It penetrates society as a whole, affecting everyday interactions. It has the potential to damage the culture of tolerance, increase conflict and widen distrust. It can also severely undermine the effectiveness of our democratic institutions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further aggravated existing challenges, affecting democratic processes, leading to questioning of evidence-based decision-making, and ultimately challenging the ability of the democratic model to cope with and recover from emergencies.

Towards new approaches to politics

Politics that is founded on confrontation and division undermines the legitimacy of the system as a whole. We are concerned that increased polarization reduces the opportunities to build broad coalitions in society and implement bold public policies to address urgent issues such as climate change.

Addressing the contemporary challenges to democracy requires a concerted effort by us all. Political leadership and solidarity are vital as we seek new approaches to politics. Our response must be based on a renewed commitment to our core democratic values, inclusiveness and problem-solving through dialogue and an evidence-based approach.

Countering disinformation and hate speech

Legislative and policy measures are needed in order to strengthen democratic resilience and create a vibrant information ecosystem, which contributes to democracy, the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights. In our parliaments, we must be vigilant to threats to civic space and resolute in our defence of freedom of expression and the diversity of views, while at the same time countering disinformation and combatting online harm.

Democracies need informed citizens with a solid understanding of how democracy works and the skills to participate in it. Just as we vaccinate our citizens against the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to build immunity against disinformation and attempts to manipulate public opinion. We need to invest in media literacy and civic education at all ages and for all sectors of society, in order to ensure that our populations are well-informed and equipped with critical thinking skills.

We recognize the important role of the media and journalists as sources of information and an essential part of free and open societies. Underlying economic shifts threaten the sustainability of independent journalism at local and national levels. We must explore new models that protect the diversity of views and critical perspectives in the media.

Both traditional media and social media outlets bear responsibility for ensuring differing views can be expressed without fear of reprisals or harassment. Respect for diversity must be fostered by those who inform and facilitate public debate. As parliamentarians, we must create the conditions for free speech while protecting those who take part in public debate from any form of violence, sexism and harassment, including online.

We are cognizant of the key role of the private sector in driving innovation and technological change. At the same time, we cannot stand by while power accumulates in the hands of a small number of online platforms. We must engage in a constructive multi-stakeholder dialogue and find appropriate regulatory responses. The underlying business model of social media platforms is based on engagement and popularity, and tends to reward polemic and emotion. An open and inclusive dialogue could accelerate the reassessment of the current approach in favour of a more human-centred model, which furthermore would protect private data.

Reducing polarization

The underlying factors of polarization, such as growing economic gaps and inequalities, the exclusion of some societal groups from political discourse and the disruption of the media industry through technological advancement, can only be overcome if there is a strong political will.

A core function of the parliamentary ecosystem is to promote trust in democracy and reinforce the relevance of representative institutions. Effective political systems and parliamentarians promote a culture of cooperation and dialogue to surmount divisions, build inclusive societies and promote trust.

Political leaders and elected officials bear responsibility for demonstrating respect for democratic values in their words and actions. Wider societal coherence can be built by avoiding poisonous rhetoric, demonstrating a willingness to cooperate across party lines and promoting evidence-based decision-making. Parliamentarians, both men and women, must play their part in countering polarization by creating spaces in parliament for cross-party dialogue. Women's caucuses often set a positive example of how party divides can be bridged and how legislative work can be less hostile and more evidence-based. There is a need for similar approaches throughout parliaments.

Political parties must also play their part in winning back public trust in democratic systems and building strong institutions, by being more socially representative and responsive, and delivering on their electoral promises.

We reaffirm that political compromise is a core of the democratic process and believe that the ability to reach agreements, cooperate across political divides and prioritize public interests over party politics contributes to de-polarization and sustainable social peace.

Parliaments must create the conditions for all voices to be heard within the institution, including all political views, whether majority or opposition. Internal policies must ensure balanced participation, bearing in mind diversity – whether based on political affiliation, gender, age or otherwise – as well as zero tolerance towards disrespectful, discriminatory and sexist speech or behaviour within parliament.

Parliaments must support or lead efforts to promote the use of evidence in policy making, for example by reinforcing national statistical capacities, encouraging independent sources of research and analysis, and developing methodologies for public consultation so that the views of the people most directly concerned by legislation and policy can be taken into account. In their own work, parliaments must develop close links with academic institutions in order to improve access to the best available scientific information, for example on climate change. Parliaments must also invest in the capacity of their own parliamentary research services to provide non-partisan research and support to all parliamentarians.

Connecting people with their democratic institutions

For democratic systems to work, people must have the opportunities and the will to participate in them. Maintaining trust in parliamentary democracy requires regular interaction between governing bodies and the public. We must foster meaningful public engagement in the work of parliament that builds confidence and helps people see their interests reflected in policy. We are convinced of the need to embed a culture of engagement across our parliaments for a united and concerted effort towards broader and deeper public participation.

Public engagement also contributes to inclusive decision-making. We must work towards a more inclusive form of politics, making strong connections between parliaments and a diverse range of communities, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized populations. Parliaments have a responsibility to be more representative, including of women, youth, indigenous peoples, minorities and other underrepresented groups in society. Greater intergenerational collaboration not only builds solidarity among political actors of all ages, but also encourages the inclusion of youth perspectives in policy solutions.

Leading in times of crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic is a vivid reminder that crises often arise when least expected. The pandemic has challenged our governance systems and our ability to handle emergencies. We need to learn from that experience and be better prepared for the next crisis.

Parliaments have a critical role to play in enhancing the quality of emergency preparedness and their own ability to manage crises whenever they occur. Parliaments must also ensure that democratic processes are not undermined in such situations.

Crisis management plans must be an integral part of our governance system. Rules and procedures and the roles and responsibilities of political actors need to be clearly set out in legal frameworks or policies. The balance of power must be preserved even during times of crisis. Parliaments need to be able to continue to fulfil their oversight mandate and supervise the actions of the executive at all times.

Above all, responsiveness and inclusiveness must be an integral part of every crisis management strategy. Parliaments need to communicate with people to demonstrate that they are listening to what people have to say and are addressing issues of public concern.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many parliaments managed to adjust to the new realities and use innovative approaches in their operations. Still, we need to prepare ourselves even more thoroughly. We must further embed the use of digital technologies in parliamentary operations to ensure continuity of work in times of emergency and explore new mechanisms of public participation and ways to connect society and the authorities.

We recognize that the contemporary challenges to democracy have deep roots. We nevertheless accept our role and responsibility as actors in addressing these challenges, conscious of the need to protect democracy for the common good. We acknowledge the need to show effective leadership, to pursue bold and innovative initiatives, and to learn from each other's successes and failures.

As such, we pledge to do our utmost, individually and collectively, to overcome these challenges, build community, and protect and promote our democratic values and institutions.

Legislation worldwide to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse

*Resolution adopted unanimously by the 143rd IPU Assembly
(Madrid, 30 November 2021)*

The 143rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Condemning all forms of online child sexual exploitation and abuse,

Recalling the universally accepted UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as well as the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's Guidelines regarding the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography,

Also recalling the Council of Europe's widely recognized Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (the "Lanzarote Convention"),

Further recalling in particular Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the protection of children from all forms of violence, injury, neglect, exploitation and abuse, including sexual abuse,

Reaffirming that the general principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the best interests of the child, non-discrimination, participation, survival and development, provide the framework for all actions concerning children,

Noting that the sale, trafficking and online child sexual exploitation and abuse is a growing and international concern that needs cross-border collaboration and coordination, and acknowledging that the fight against it has to be a high-priority global initiative,

Acknowledging the necessity of a multifaceted approach to effectively prevent and combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse on all levels in order to protect children from such exploitation in the first place,

Bearing in mind the lack of a sufficient legal framework, specifically legal provisions criminalizing all forms of online child sexual exploitation and abuse, budget, technical expertise and workforce in many States to effectively combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse,

Recognizing the importance of creating awareness about the preventive measures and harmful effects of online child sexual exploitation and abuse in the eyes of the public, particularly parents, teachers, children and community leaders, legislatures, law enforcement agencies and all other relevant policymakers,

Considering that children's voices are in general little or badly considered, and that law enforcement agents and judges are still poorly or not at all informed about cases of online sexual exploitation and abuse children can be victims of,

Acknowledging the importance of relevant (sexual) education programmes, communication campaigns and media literacy as a basis for prevention in any cultural milieu, as well as education on the role that increased digital capabilities play in increasing the vulnerability of victims and facilitating perpetrators of online child sexual exploitation and abuse,

Recognizing the importance of information and communications technologies in children's lives as a new tool for learning, socialization, expression, inclusion and fulfilment of the rights of the child and fundamental freedoms, such as the right to education and the right to freedom of expression,

Deeply concerned by risks of new and evolving forms of violence against children, child sexual abuse and exploitation, which are related to the use of information and communications technologies, and by cyber-bullying,

Noting the precarious situation of the child in cases of online child sexual exploitation and abuse and the importance of a victim-centred approach when combatting online child sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as child-centred rehabilitation processes,

Considering that it often takes minors who are victims of sexual abuse, either by direct or online exploitation, many years before they talk, if at all, about what they had gone through, and even longer before taking any legal steps,

Mindful that, although girls seem to be the main victims of online child sexual exploitation and abuse, many boys are affected as well, and both must be approached differently in terms of prevention programmes and financing,

Conscious that child exploitation is also a commercial act and may thus be driven by economic motivations,

Noting that the fight against online child sexual exploitation and abuse is complicated by the increased access to the internet, fast-moving new technologies such as cryptocurrencies and Blockchain, with their untraceable nature in the commercial sale of child exploitation materials, the number of online platforms and apps, as well as anonymous features of platforms, which have made it harder to target perpetrators,

Stressing the importance of cross-sector, multi-disciplinary and international collaboration in the strategy to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse, and recognizing the existing work of organizations such as INTERPOL and the International Telecommunication Union,

Underlining the corporate social responsibility that private sector information and communications technology companies must take for combatting, preventing and monitoring online child sexual exploitation and abuse,

1. *Urges* those parliaments that have not yet done so to consider ratifying the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children;
2. *Urges* parliaments to adopt specific, comprehensive and harmonized legal frameworks to introduce national online child sexual exploitation and abuse laws, considering the WeProtect Global Alliance's Model National Response as the guiding model for legislation while maintaining protection of freedom of expression, to increase resources allocated to this work and to exchange among themselves good practices in this regard;
3. *Underlines* that such a legal framework should protect all children under the age of 18 regardless of a lower age of consent for sexual activity, and stipulate that a child cannot be considered as able to consent to engage in online child sexual exploitation and abuse, and should include provisions to avoid re-traumatization and re-victimization of victims throughout the investigative and judicial proceedings;
4. *Urges* parliaments to ensure that the national legal framework includes complete definitions and criminalization of all forms of online sexual exploitation and abuse of children for financial gain, and of the production, possession, and distribution of child sexual abuse materials along with repeated access to websites containing such images; also, legislation must consider online sexual offences against children as an extraditable offence and must establish a legal basis for mutual legal assistance between States in respect of the investigation of online offences;
5. *Also urges* parliaments to ensure that cross-border cooperation and coordination between law enforcement authorities is established to prevent known perpetrators from committing abuse in other countries, taking into account existing efforts involving INTERPOL, the International Telecommunication Union and other international organizations;

6. *Calls upon* members of parliament to emphasize the need for rapid and effective international cooperation and law enforcement responses, such as removing hurdles preventing law enforcement agencies from sharing vital information, and to address the growing illegal usage of cryptocurrencies to trade in child sexual exploitation material;
7. *Emphasizes* the importance of a strategic private sector commitment to cooperation with law enforcement agencies including in the reporting, prevention, detection, investigation, and prosecution of online child sexual exploitation and abuse offenders, and of strengthening and equipping law enforcement agencies and the justice system to ensure a child-friendly system, including specialized training in the detection and investigation of crimes against children, as well as specialized treatment, care and interview of child victims;
8. *Urges* parliaments to ensure that technology companies commit to increase the transparency and accountability measures in the prevention, moderation, reporting and removal of online child sexual exploitation and abuse, including a safety by design approach;
9. *Also urges* parliaments to develop thorough infrastructure, including trained medical professionals, to support victims of online child sexual exploitation, abuse and blackmail in their physical and psychological recovery and social integration, whilst ensuring a healthy and supportive reporting environment in their State, avoiding the re-victimization of girls, boys and adolescents who have been victims of online sexual exploitation and abuse, and ensuring sufficient financial and human resources for, inter alia, educational programmes that are also accessible to children with disabilities, hotlines for low-threshold reporting of suspected child sexual abuse material and victim helplines;
10. *Further urges* parliaments to promote media literacy for children, parents and guardians to build knowledge and skills in using media and thus provide protection to children and young people;
11. *Urges* parliaments to ensure that measures to prevent and combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse take into account the differentiated needs and experiences of children according to their age and sex, including by ensuring their participation in the development of such measures;
12. *Calls on* the IPU to draft a model law for States and formalize, in the best interests of the child, clear legislation on combatting online child sexual exploitation and abuse, where children's rights, education, voices, needs and security should take centre stage in any proceedings that affect their wellbeing;
13. *Also calls on* the IPU to prepare a parliamentary guide that sets out clear working mechanisms for parliaments and to discuss legislation on combatting online exploitation and sexual abuse of children; moreover, the guide shall include oversight tools to monitor public policies on the protection of children and include specific mechanisms of action that are compatible with parliaments in different regions of the world;
14. *Recognizes* the active role of men and boys as strategic partners and allies in changing norms and practices that motivate all forms of gender-based violence, including online child sexual exploitation and abuse;
15. *Requests* parliaments to undertake to promote, by all means necessary, the need for professionals surrounding children to identify the violence committed against them, and to mobilize these professionals to this effect, namely by providing training to detect such violence and by making available resources for and advice on the transmission and reporting of such alarming information;

16. *Emphasizes* that children should never be blamed for abuse and that victim blaming should be prevented by all possible means;
17. *Underlines* the importance of the role of poverty, inequitable socio-economic structures, lack of education, gender discrimination, harmful traditional practices in online child sexual exploitation and abuse, and emphasizes the importance of the economic empowerment of women, and therefore calls for intensifying the international community's efforts to combat poverty as an important entry point to combatting such crimes;
18. *Calls on* parliaments to legislate that companies in the digital industry develop programmes and mechanisms to automatically identify and report any harmful content related to online child sexual exploitation and abuse and are obliged to detect and delete this content immediately;
19. *Also calls on* parliaments to facilitate automated detection methods while ensuring respect for personal integrity, bearing in mind Article 16 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the right to privacy, and also Article 17 of the International Covenant on the Civil and Political Rights, which provides for the right to privacy and family;
20. *Calls on* parliaments, law enforcement agencies, internet service providers and internet infrastructure officials, including the Internet Governance Forum, to unite and work together to establish a specific and effective mechanism that combats all malicious activities online;
21. *Emphasizes* the need for sustained education focusing on digital culture change amongst youth for relevant policy makers, law enforcement agencies, education sector and staff working with children and youth, and the public, including both children and their parents;
22. *Invites* the IPU to schedule periodic meetings and workshops with the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children and with other stakeholders and global activists in the fight against this phenomenon, emphasizing global initiatives for preventing and tackling the problem; and also invites parliaments to exchange, through IPU activities, information regarding good practices and successful experiences in combatting online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

Harnessing global parliamentary support for vaccine equity in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic

*Resolution adopted unanimously by the 143rd IPU Assembly
(Madrid, 29 November 2021)*

The 143rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Welcoming the UN Security Council Resolution 2565 (2021) adopted on 26 February 2021,

Recalling that the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical, mental and social health and well-being is a fundamental human right enshrined in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Sustainable Development Goal 3, the Constitution of the World Health Organization, the majority of national constitutions and other international treaties and agreements to which the IPU Members are signatories,

Also recalling that this right is accorded to all human beings regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status,

Cognizant that, on 23 September 2019, world leaders endorsed a comprehensive political declaration on health at the UN High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage under the theme *Universal Health Coverage: Moving Together to Build a Healthier World* in which they undertook to co-operate in strengthening health systems to ensure that they are equitable, resilient and capable of meeting everyone's needs as an essential priority for international development,

Mindful that, at the 141st IPU Assembly held in Belgrade, Serbia in October 2019, the IPU adopted a landmark resolution entitled *Achieving Universal Health Coverage by 2030: The role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health* calling for parliaments to take all legal and policy measures to achieve Universal Health Coverage and address barriers to access to health for all,

Noting that the COVID-19 pandemic has been an ongoing moment of reckoning for health systems and health security around the world, as well as to our commitment in both word and deed to achieving Universal Health Coverage and addressing barriers to access to health for all in such times of crisis,

Recognizing that vaccination is part of a comprehensive strategy to reduce transmission and save lives and is among the most important tools in the fight against the pandemic, and reaffirming that extensive COVID-19 immunization is a global public good,

Welcoming the fact that the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) initiative has already delivered more than 550 million vaccine doses to low and lower-middle income countries, including substantial amounts of vaccine donations from high income countries, and has secured enough vaccines to cover 43 per cent of the populations concerned,

Concerned that prolonged delays in the recognition and registration of vaccines complicate the health and developmental crisis, economic downturn and suffering occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa and other regions among those most affected, and that vaccine inequality translates into social and economic inequality resulting in more fatalities and increased poverty,

Therefore the 143rd Assembly:

1. *Calls upon* the international community and the WHO to further advance joint efforts to ensure timely, equitable and universal access to safe, affordable, quality and effective vaccines, with particular regard to the needs of low and middle income countries and the most affected regions;

2. *Calls upon* countries to recognize the importance of the principle of equity, meaning that each person must be vaccinated in accordance with their level of risk and needs, and to ensure that that principle be reflected at the national and global levels with respect to access to essential vaccines;
3. *Encourages* vaccine manufacturers to provide regular, clear supply forecasts as to how they will fulfil and prioritize their contracts with COVAX and other relevant regional initiatives;
4. *Also encourages* vaccine manufacturers to enhance the production of vaccines by using flexible cooperation models such as building up fill and finish production capacities, technology partnerships and licensing activities;
5. *Calls upon* governments to harmonize all regulatory requirements to accelerate the supply of vaccines, and provide the logistics and training for implementing large-scale vaccination programmes;
6. *Implores* parliamentarians to work with their national governments to exert a global and collective influence on the WTO to eliminate all export restrictions and any other trade barriers on COVID-19 vaccines and the inputs involved in their production;
7. *Insists* on the fact that both national and international efforts to raise awareness regarding the effectiveness of vaccines, to engage communities and to reduce vaccine hesitancy are indispensable to attain a sufficient degree of immunization around the world and that considerably more efforts in this field are required.

Report of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

*Noted by the 143rd IPU Assembly
(Madrid, 30 November 2021)*

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security held two sittings on 28 and 29 November 2021 with its President (ad interim), Mr. J.I. Echániz (Spain), in the Chair.

On 28 November, after going through procedural items and official communications, the Committee held an expert hearing on the theme *Rethinking and reframing the approach to peace processes with a view to fostering lasting peace*. The Committee had chosen this theme for its resolution to be negotiated at the 144th IPU Assembly.

The Committee members were shown a video which outlined the preliminary findings of a team of four students from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) of Geneva who had been carrying out research with the IPU since March 2021 on the human security approach to foreign policy. The video introduced "human security" as a comprehensive, context-specific, prevention-oriented, multi-sectoral, and people-centred approach.

The advantages of such an approach in the everyday work of parliaments were highlighted, specifically regarding the potential for greater participation of the public in decision-making processes, because it is the recipients of these policies that are best suited to identify priorities.

The President recalled that the objectives of the expert hearing were: (1) to raise the IPU Members' awareness of the topic at stake, and (2) to provide insights and inputs for the draft resolution to the co-Rapporteurs Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden) [joining remotely] and Mr. A. Bagbin (Ghana), who was represented at the 143rd Assembly by Ms. D. Gomashie (Ghana).

The President introduced the moderator of the experts round table segment, Ms. H. Qasas, Head of the Secretariat of the Principles for Peace Initiative. Ms. Qasas recalled that there were currently 56 active conflicts around the world, a record since the Second World War. Most of those conflicts had gone through a failed peace process. The human consequences, such as mass displacement or polarization, were disastrous and amplified by the effect of climate change. It was in this context, that Ms. Qasas reiterated that the topic of reframing of peace processes was most relevant. She then introduced the panellists:

- Mr. B. Koenders, Former Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands, [joining remotely]
- Ms. N. Bagayoko, Chair of the African Security Sector Network
- Ms. J. Lilja, Director of Studies, Peace and Development of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) [joining remotely]
- Ms. B. Nepram, Co-founder of the Control Arms Foundation of India and of the Manipur Women Gun Survivor Network.

In their introductory presentations the panellists exposed the unsustainable aspects of the contemporary peace processes. They addressed the gaps in peacebuilding that had to be bridged to ensure long lasting peace for the people. The importance of dialogue was highlighted, in particular the duty of parliamentarians to involve women and youth and to go beyond inclusion by having those people who were implicated themselves contribute to shaping the solutions to the problems affecting their reality. Rather than top-down imposed solutions, drawn academically by external actors, it was the role of parliamentarians to engage with the local populations and communities and to ensure that local experts, who understood the complexity of the situation, the language, the culture, were involved in peace processes.

Mr. Koenders insisted on the need for and relevance of parliamentarians in peace processes. As a former parliamentarian himself, he argued that not only did parliamentarians represent the people but they also must act as guarantors of peace. Tools such as mediation were important as was the need to ensure the inclusion of non-armed groups, civil society, women and youth at the negotiation table. He stressed the value of large processes such as consultations, expert committees, and work with tribal and religious leaders. To make peace more sustainable the international community must consider a charter or covenant that would define the role of international and national players.

Ms. Bagayoko insisted on the inappropriateness of “one size fits all” solutions and echoed the need for deeper inclusion of local contexts – including local history and languages – in peacekeeping processes. The local failures of contemporary peacekeeping rippled into neighbouring nations and destabilized the region. Such disastrous consequences showed how crucial the success of peace processes was at an international level.

Ms. Lilja called for a broader notion of peace processes and warned that no society was protected against conflict. People turned to violence when discontent within society was continuously disregarded. The risk of conflict was also exacerbated by climate change – which meant that every single country was at risk of conflict. She concluded by stating that parliament was the institution that fostered dialogue and, as such, could de-escalate conflict. Engagement with opposition and marginalized groups in society was key to promoting peace.

Ms. Nepram’s intervention was a heartily felt reminder of the harsh reality of conflict zones. She recalled that there were 378 forgotten conflicts in the world, many of them on indigenous territories and outlined the tragedy that befell people indiscriminately regardless of whether international news covered these conflicts. In conclusion, she underlined that women were strong constituents for peace which was why the agenda must be broadened to include them and indigenous communities in peace processes.

The next segment featured the two co-Rapporteurs, Ms. D. Gomashie (Ghana) and Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden), who presented their initial ideas with regard to the draft resolution. They recalled the crucial role that parliament could play when it came to contributing to peace processes. Parliaments and parliamentarians had a mandate to create conditions for dialogue and had the capacity to listen to all ideas, even those they were not in favour of. Inclusiveness was in parliament’s DNA and resorting to representative institutions as major stakeholders could only increase the sustainability of peace building efforts. To back peace processes, parliaments could also pass laws on empowerment, education, and other social measures with a view to reduce tensions. The co-Rapporteurs explained that they would be working on a very concrete resolution that could take the form of a set of guidelines accessible to and usable by all members of parliament who were dealing with matters of international peace and security.

In the ensuing discussion the participants voiced their general agreement that peace processes must be reframed and their understanding that the failure of contemporary peace efforts had left too many people behind. Participants recalled the disastrous consequences of the rise of terrorism and the significant challenges it posed to the whole of humanity. Emphasizing their experience of the different conflicts that impacted their respective regions, the parliamentarians all welcomed the efforts of the co-Rapporteurs to draft the resolution as a parliamentary set of guidelines to assist parliaments in securing and sustaining peace for their constituents. Participants were of the view that while peace, in addition to stabilization, was a prerequisite for development, parliaments must also address the long-term economic and social causes of conflict. The issue of decreasing military spending was also addressed as those funds could be diverted to peace and sustainable development-related expenditures.

Participants agreed that political mediation was a valuable tool for parliaments to be used at the local, national, regional and even international level. They also strongly reinforced the importance of public engagement especially with local stakeholders who, with their knowledge of the history, language, impact of climate change in a given area, could help contextualize peace actions. Echoing the experts, participants also recognized that young people and women were among the main players in resolving conflicts and building peace and should therefore be included in peace negotiations. Participants stated that in terms of peacebuilding parliaments must both look back to resolve longstanding conflicts and look ahead to anticipate and prevent tensions that would inevitably arise from climate change, in cyberspace, and from the weakening of international institutions and democratic processes. In so doing, they must cooperate and share practices in order for these new challenges to be tackled by all.

On 29 November the Committee examined its second substantial item in a panel discussion on the theme *Parliament’s role in addressing the risks of diversion in arms transfers*.

The Committee members were shown a video message from Mr. L. Gberie, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations Office at Geneva and President of the Seventh Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). In his presentation, Mr. Gberie stressed the importance of parliamentary action to curb the flows of diverted weapons. The Diversion International Exchange Forum (DIEF) was a useful tool for addressing diversion. He highlighted and welcomed the work of the IPU on involving parliaments in the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty.

The President introduced the moderator for the panel of experts, Mr. A. Ware, Global Coordinator with Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND). Mr. Ware presented the publication *Assuring our common future: A guide to parliamentary action in support of disarmament for security and sustainable development* which was prepared jointly by the GCSP, IPU, PGA, PNND, PFSALW, WFC, and was supported by UNODA. Mr. Ware, then introduced the panellists:

- Ms. B. Nepram, Co-founder of the Control Arms Foundation of India and of the Manipur Women Gun Survivor Network
- Ms. K. Olofsson, Secretary-General of the Parliamentary Forum for Small Arms and Light Weapons
- Mr. R. del Picchia, former French Senator and former Member of the IPU Executive Committee.

In their introductory presentations the panellists highlighted the long-lasting impacts that the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) had on societies, a phenomenon deepened by the diversion of weapons.

Mr. del Picchia focussed on the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, supplemental to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the only legally binding agreement against the circulation of SALW. France had ratified the agreement in 2019 thus being the first of the world's most significant producers of weapons to do so. Mr. del Picchia called for the universalization of the ATT as a way to deepen the fight against SALW trafficking and to make the world a better place for civilian populations. Ms. Olofsson recalled that diversion was a key international security concern and that illicit proliferation of SALW constituted a serious violation of human rights and international law. While there were international agreements and agendas on the issue, there was no universal acknowledged definition of "diversion". She highlighted the key role of parliaments in addressing that issue through their various constitutional mandates and encouraged the sharing of experience and good practices. Ms. Nepram referred to the role of parliamentarians in ensuring that taxpayers' money was well spent for safety and security. Global disarmament should also be rethought and tackled on the ground. She gave the example of local women's movements that focussed on arms control to ensure peaceful communities where children could go to school and people could build their lives.

In the discussion that followed, parliamentarians welcomed the recommendations, parliamentary tools, and anecdotes brought forth by the panellists, especially regarding the need for higher traceability which many argued to be the most appropriate way to address the threat illicit flows of weapons pose to national security.

They agreed that SALW proliferation was a major component of instability and insecurity in developing countries. The relation between the diversion of weapons and terrorism were stressed by multiple parliamentarians, heightening the need to eradicate illicit flows of weapons that killed massively. Participants agreed on the need for enhanced transparency from governments but also from weapons manufacturers who had the means to help enforce trackability of the weapons they produced. Also addressed was the issue of international agreements and the need to bring in parliament from the very beginning of negotiations. If signing was a governmental matter, ratification could only be done with the support of parliament and, most importantly, implementation occurred locally and must be legislatively framed accordingly. The key role women had with regard to disarmament on the ground was highlighted and insisted upon. Finally, discussions touched upon the amount of resources allocated to militarization, armament and overall military spending in contrast to the dire need for further investments in health, education, and sustainable development efforts.

The report on the work of the Committee was presented to the Assembly at its last sitting on 30 November by the acting President of the Standing Committee, Mr. Echániz (Spain).

The Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security met on 28 November 2021. Nine out of 18 members and the representative of the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians were present.

During the meeting, the Bureau discussed its workplan. It was decided to devote all the time allocated for the 144th Assembly to negotiating the next resolution. The proposals were subsequently approved by the Standing Committee at the end of its last plenary sitting on 29 November.

Report of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

*Noted by the 143rd IPU Assembly
(Madrid, 30 November 2021)*

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development held its sittings on 27 and 29 November. Both sittings were chaired by Mr. W. William (Seychelles). Ms. H. Järvinen (Finland) and Mr. S. Patra (India) served as co-Rapporteurs of the resolution.

Debate on the theme *Leveraging Information and Communication Technology as an enabler for the education sector, including in times of pandemic.*

The debate was organized around the theme of the Committee's resolution that will be tabled at the 144th Assembly in spring 2022. The debate provided the co-Rapporteurs with initial information about how the IPU Member Parliaments approached this issue. The theme and key issues for consideration and discussion were introduced by Ms. I. Kharkova, Associate Project Officer at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), expert on the nexus between education and digitalization.

Education is the backbone of human development. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can foster inclusive and quality teaching and learning. Digital technological innovation has reshaped the way we learn; however, technology is not neutral, and teaching and learning should not be driven by technology, but rather keep a human-centered approach. ICT in education serves a twofold function, as a provision medium and pedagogical tool. ICT has the potential to expand access to education and strengthen it; enhance the quality of learning; and provide lifelong learning pathways through formal and informal methods.

While there are several international instruments that aim to ensure education is inclusive, equitable and ethical, and that outline the potential of ICT, digital inequalities in education persist and the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed how significant the digital divide within and among countries is. To enhance ICT for education, coherent funding and enabling policies are needed. Technological innovations should promote digital inclusion in education; address the digital divide and gender inequalities; prioritize the most marginalized; foster a humanistic approach; address the needs of teachers and learners, including the protection of their privacy; and create ecosystems where technology, digital content and skills are integrated to build resilient educational systems.

The co-Rapporteurs also gave their view on the topic, noting that even before the pandemic the educational gap across the globe was already very wide, and that leveraging and enabling were the main areas to focus on to bridge that divide. Furthermore, digital learning needed teachers trained for the task.

A total of 30 delegates from (in order of appearance) Slovenia; the United Arab Emirates; India; Romania; Kuwait; the United Kingdom; North Macedonia; Egypt; the Islamic Republic of Iran; the Syrian Arab Republic; the Netherlands; South Africa; Saudi Arabia; Indonesia; Burundi; Pakistan; Mexico; Portugal; the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Algeria; Bahrain; Cameroon; Palestine; Lebanon; San Marino; South Sudan; Zimbabwe; Zambia; Ukraine; South Africa, took the floor to give their comments and share their views and the good practices their countries had put in place to promote ICT as an enabler of education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ICT can indeed build resilience in the schooling and education system. A common point in the interventions was that access and availability of devices and connectivity, were equally important as effective teacher training. Provision of remote learning does not automatically ensure take-up and better evidence generation. The effectiveness of remote learning is critical. Content must be adapted to the new modalities of teaching and learning. One other prominent theme was the need to harness the potential of multi-stakeholder partnerships, as well as of the wide range of learning delivery systems, such as television, radio, and social media.

To conclude the debate, the co-Rapporteur Ms. Järvinen recalled the importance of economic support for enhancing ICT systems for educational purposes, as well as the necessity to recognize that digitalization could deepen social and economic inequalities, unless it was accessible to all. The co-Rapporteurs would work on a draft resolution incorporating the inputs provided during the debate.

Panel discussion on the theme *Impact of climate change on natural resources: How can parliaments ensure inclusive water access and availability?*

The conservation of natural resources should help meet the world's growing needs. Global demand for food and water is expected to double in the next 30 years. Climate change has both direct and indirect effects on agricultural productivity including changing rainfall patterns, drought, floods and the geographical redistribution of pests and diseases. The panel aimed to identify key actions that parliaments could take to respond to those trends.

The following experts contributed to the panel discussion: Mr. D. Muruven, Global Policy Lead for Freshwater, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and Mr. Lifeng Li, Director, Land and Water Division, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Mr. Muruven elaborated on the nexus between water and climate change and the detrimental effects climate change had on water availability. Water systems were facing numerous constraints which needed to be looked at holistically, meaning that the management of natural resources and the infrastructure to access them must be given equal consideration. Climate resilience was not a given. Social innovation could offer a novel and integrated approach to build resilient societies and address societal, economic and water-related challenges by combining the technological and non-technological dimensions of innovation. Multiple actors were needed to leverage innovation. The government and the public sector had a strong history of innovation, but their efforts needed to embrace indigenous and local knowledge.

Mr. Lifeng Li reinforced the message that climate change was expected to increase the complexity of land and water systems which threatened food security. Agricultural productivity was affected directly and indirectly by climate change. Water scarcity was a global threat and water stress was on the rise. To increase resilience and enhance climate adaptation, including through agriculture, an integrated approach was needed to specific land and water policy instruments and inclusive resources management decision-making. Coordinated and coherent policy arrangements across all sectors and investment in innovation and climate-smart technologies were necessary to provide long term sustainability.

In the ensuing debate, 25 delegates from (in order of appearance) Saudi Arabia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, the Syrian Arab Republic, Egypt, Viet Nam, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Romania, Kuwait, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the United Kingdom, the Arab Parliament, the United Arab Emirates, Madagascar, Mexico, Palestine, France, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Finland, Gabon, Niger, Portugal, Israel, took the floor to explain the challenges and priorities in the management of natural resources in their national contexts. Water is essential to all aspects of life and it plays a key role in human security. Access to clean water is a human right. Interventions revealed the importance of transboundary cooperation in the management of natural resources and the need to work collectively to ensure that financing for development reaches the people.

Elections to the Bureau, work plan for the 144th IPU Assembly, and any other business

The Committee elected the President and Vice-President of the Committee and filled the remaining vacancies on the Bureau.

The Bureau met on 28 November. Members from India, Monaco, the Netherlands, and Pakistan provided an update on national activities that had been carried out since the last meeting. The IPU Strategy for the next five years was presented. The initial idea of adopting an internal climate change policy for the Organization and its Members was welcomed by the Bureau. The starting point would be to understand the carbon footprint of internal activities and of leveraging technology to reduce emissions. To this end, remote participation to IPU meetings could be enhanced and encouraged. It was also proposed that the Bureau focus each year on a specific Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) by mapping what national parliaments were doing towards their implementation and by sharing their best practices. This knowledge could be shared in online meetings.

During the first sitting of the Committee, Ms. K. Jabre, IPU Director of the Division of Programmes, presented and launched a new IPU publication entitled *Guidelines for parliamentarians on budgeting for the SDGs: Making the most of public resources*. The publication provides information on key elements of budgeting for the SDGs and identifies concrete actions parliamentarians can take to advance efforts to achieve them. Mr. C. Chauvel, Global Lead, Inclusive Processes and Institutions, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), intervened remotely stressing the importance to find new sources of investment and new financing tools. Parliaments also needed to leverage on partnerships with different stakeholders (such as the academia, civil society, supreme audit institutions) to strengthen their scrutiny capacities and oversight role.

Report of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

*Noted by the 143rd IPU Assembly
(Madrid, 30 November 2021)*

Mr. P. Katjavivi (Namibia) opened the session informing that he was acting as Committee Chair and that a formal election for the positions of president and vice-president would be held at the end of the session.

After the adoption of the agenda and of the summary records of the April 2021 Committee session, the Chair introduced the two panel discussions for the session. Thirty-four parliamentary delegations comprising some 80 parliamentarians were present.

Panel discussion 1: The global vaccination campaign to end the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons from the WHO and WTO

This panel featured representatives from the WHO and UNAIDS instead of an WTO expert as none were available. Dr. S. Swaminathan, Chief Scientist, and Dr. K. O'Brien, Director of the Department of Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals spoke for the WHO; Mr. E. Gomez, Chief of Staff, represented UNAIDS. Their interventions focused on questions of vaccine equity and accessibility, as well as on the general pandemic response of their respective agencies.

The global goal of immunizing 70 per cent of the population by June 2022 was off track because of limited manufacturing capacity of the vaccine as well as, to a lesser extent, to vaccine hesitancy by large segments of the population. Manufacturing capacity was constrained by the inherent difficulty in expanding production of a highly sophisticated medical product and in transferring technical knowhow, but also by constraints linked to intellectual property rights under the TRIPS agreement.

The WHO's ACT Accelerator and COVAX facility were created to make the vaccine widely available to developing countries who lacked the financial resources or the productive capacities to make their own vaccine doses. While these facilities were very helpful, they were not operating at capacity. Africa was the continent with the lowest number of people vaccinated. Only one per cent of vaccine production was in Africa. The WHO vaccine approval process did not favour any particular vaccine producer or country. Currently, eight vaccines out of seventeen had been authorized by the WHO. Any country wanting to seek WHO authorization can do so by submitting the required paperwork and allowing WHO inspection of the production facilities.

For UNAIDS, the COVID-19 pandemic response needed to consider lessons learned from the HIV pandemic such as the need for stronger public health systems to provide a whole range of medical services and not just vaccines or drugs. UNAIDS was a leading founder of the People's Vaccine Alliance to end vaccine apartheid. Key demands of the Alliance included a waiver of vaccine patents under the TRIPS agreement, and direct government investments to scale up vaccine production. The WHO and UNAIDS were unanimous in encouraging governments to make greater use of TRIPS flexibilities and in calling for more transparency in governments' purchasing contracts of vaccine doses from private producers.

The following fourteen delegations spoke from the floor in response to the panel presentations: Bahrain, Belgium, Egypt, India, Namibia, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. These interventions and exchanges with panellists emphasized the need for greater global solidarity and for a much stronger pandemic response. As more than one speaker noted, "no one is safe until all are safe" and the recent emergence of the potentially more aggressive Omicron variant of the coronavirus was a stark reminder of the need to scale up the global response to the pandemic. With only one exception, speakers supported a patent waiver under the TRIPS agreement. The use of social media to spread vaccine misinformation needs to be countered with a facts-based public information campaign that respects people's right to free speech. Some speakers highlighted their own countries' example of global solidarity through donations of vaccine doses to COVAX or directly to countries in need.

Panel discussion 2: The UN Secretary-General's Report on Our Common Agenda

This panel consisted of a sole presenter in the person of Ms. M. Griffin, Policy Advisor, Office of the UN Secretary-General. Ms. Griffin discussed the main highlights of the September 2021 report of the Secretary-General (SG) whose title refers to the Common Agenda adopted at the conclusion of the High-Level Meeting to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations (UN75 Summit). The Common Agenda contained 12 commitments to address growing threats to the sustainability of the world, from climate change to future pandemics, as well as to peace and security. It reaffirmed countries' political commitment toward the lagging Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The underlying theme of the Common Agenda was the need to strengthen multilateralism as the only option to addressing those threats effectively, as best illustrated more recently by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The SG's report provides some 90 recommendations on how the UN, countries and all partners, including parliaments, can work together to break the pattern of "business as usual" and embark on a new course that provides real answers to the people and restores their faith in government and in the international community. The SG's recommendations were drawn from various rounds of consultations with parliamentarians, civil society, youth and other groups. A key message of the report is that solidarity among nations is not merely an expression of charity but a matter of self-interest: when nations go it alone, they actually end up losing more than when they work with the international community.

Although the SG's report calls for greater parliamentary input in UN decision-making processes, members of parliament should look at the report as a whole and take action of their own to help bring its various recommendations to fruition. While a great number of recommendations can be carried out by the UNSG directly within his own authority, others, such as the proposal to hold a Summit of the Future in 2023, will need member States' endorsement. Ms. Griffin noted that while multilateral institutions needed fixing, overall they had managed in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic in ways that would have been unimaginable only ten years ago.

The following ten delegations spoke from the floor in response to Ms. Griffin's presentation: Algeria, Cyprus, India, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Mexico, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and Zimbabwe. The various interventions and responses emphasized the representative, oversight and legislative role of parliaments as key to the implementation of international agreements such as the Common Agenda as well as to the ratification of international treaties. Speakers generally recognized the importance of multilateral solutions in an increasingly interdependent world. Parliaments can contribute to UN processes and multilateralism in many ways including by creating their own all-party parliamentary groups on UN affairs.

Besides their institutional role, members of parliament need to help support a climate of international solidarity that avoids fearmongering and knee-jerk reactions against other countries. Several interventions applauded the SG report for its focus on youth and on the future, and also urged the SG to pay closer attention to the issues of migration, terrorism, and digital currencies, as well as to the need for key principles of international law, such as national sovereignty and non-interference, to be consistently applied and respected.

Following the two substantive discussions, the Chair informed the Committee of the nominations received from the geopolitical groups to fill existing vacancies on the Bureau: Ms. H. Tigranyan (Armenia), Ms. E. Qatrawi (Moldova), Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), Ms. E. Lindh (Sweden). With no objection to the nominations, the Chair invited the Committee to elect the President and the Vice-President of the Bureau as proposed by the geopolitical groups, namely, Ms. S. Noor of Kenya for President, and Mr. L. Wehrli of Switzerland as Vice President. These two members were elected by acclamation. In addition, Mr. A. Almutairi of Kuwait was announced as a replacement to Mr. Al-Hamad until the end of the term.

The Chair announced that a new IPU Observer Office to the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV) was opened during the year. Ms. B. Brenner, Ambassador, representative of the IPU to UNOV, was invited to introduce herself as the IPU Observer responsible for relations with the UN community in that city. Ms. Brenner explained her role and the issues she would be working on, such as corruption, disarmament, and nuclear energy.

Having exhausted all items on the agenda, the Chair brought the session to a close.

IPU Strategy for 2022-2026

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 208th session
(Madrid, 30 November 2021)*

This document is the result of an inclusive consultative process with the IPU's Members and stakeholders based on an impact assessment of the 2017-2021 strategic period. Led by the IPU Executive Committee, 902 individuals in 107 countries participated, including parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, institutional donors, partners, as well as the IPU political leadership (past and current Presidents, members of the Executive Committee), the IPU Secretary General and staff, through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. This Strategy is also informed by the deliberations of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament.

The IPU 2022-2026 Strategy will be implemented through annual operational work plans and budgeting including monitoring and evaluation matrices to measure success.

A synopsis of key consultation findings is included at the end of this document.

Introduction

The IPU has served as the hub of worldwide parliamentary dialogue since 1889, working for “peace and cooperation among peoples and the solid establishment of representative institutions,” in accordance with Article 1.2 of its Statutes.¹ Over 130 years later, the IPU continues to be driven to improve the lives and ensure the human rights of all people. Its vision is a world where parliaments and parliamentarians work “for democracy, for everyone” in a manner that is inclusive, collective, forward-looking, resilient, and responsive to the ever-evolving set of actors and dynamics that contribute to parliamentary ecosystems.²

In all of its work, the IPU seeks to strengthen national parliaments' capacity to carry out their many important roles – from serving and representing diverse constituents, to acting to hold their governments accountable at home and abroad, to creating and resourcing legislation on a wide array of issues to ensure the well-being of their people now and in the future. The IPU's work is predicated on the idea that strong and effective parliaments can safeguard fundamental human rights, ensure sustainable development that leaves no one behind, achieve gender equality, empower youth, create pathways for peace and security, and protect the planet. The IPU recognizes that parliaments are called upon to constantly evolve to better serve their constituents. They therefore need to be equipped with the best insights, ways of working, and resources that allow them to anticipate and solve problems and make decisions for the long-term interests of all their people.

Yet, as much as individually strong parliaments are instrumental to progress, they are not enough. The IPU is unique in bringing together 179 of the world's parliaments to work jointly on an equal footing. This global position allows it to: 1) accelerate progress, by connecting parliaments to each other for peer learning with mutual respect and support; 2) complement parliaments' experience with data and research; and 3) catalyse joint political action on critical global issues that affect the lives of all people everywhere.

Values

The IPU accompanies parliaments, in a facilitating manner, in their own development, as referenced in the *Common Principles for Support to Parliaments*, encouraging them to use the collective intelligence of its membership. It is guided in its work by five core values:

Equality: Ensuring individuals and groups of individuals are treated fairly, in the same way and no less favourably than others irrespective of race, gender, disability, religion, belief, wealth, political persuasion, sexual orientation or age with the ultimate aim of eliminating discrimination and injustice.

¹ [IPU Statutes and Rules](#).

² “Parliamentary ecosystems” refers to the broader set of actors and dynamics that influence parliaments. Parliaments do not exist in isolation but in a complex system in constant interaction with other institutions of government, beginning with the executive, as well as political parties, civil society organizations, constituents, the media, academia, and others.

Inclusiveness: Harnessing the full spectrum of views, needs and concerns within society in order to foster a sense of belonging and represent the interests of all sectors of society.

Respect: Recognizing, showing regard for and valuing cultural, religious, ethnic, political, linguistic and other differences as a prerequisite for constructive dialogue and resolving disputes.

Integrity: Acting with transparency, fairness, probity, and as an impartial broker in conflict or post-conflict situations.

Solidarity: Fostering a sense of community, togetherness and unity of interests for the world parliamentary community by supporting each other and working collectively.

Current context

The IPU's Strategy for 2022-2026 coincides with five significant trends that will continue to shape the global agenda over the coming five years:

- (1) The need for immediate action on the global existential threat of climate change.
- (2) Growing social and economic inequalities including an increasing digital divide, further exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- (3) Weakening public trust in national and global institutions of governance and increasing threats to parliaments and their ability to serve their constituents effectively.
- (4) Regression on key democratic, human rights and development achievements.
- (5) Growing threats to peace and security and peoples' yearning for a more peaceful and secure world.

In setting the agenda for the next strategic period, IPU Members have recommended more focus on the areas of IPU's greatest impact and where parliamentary action is indispensable. They have also recommended working in a more integrated way to leverage the interconnectedness of key issues and "build forward better". This means focusing on fewer, cross-cutting objectives in order to help prepare Member Parliaments for an uncertain future. In addition, Member Parliaments have stressed the need for the Strategy to be flexible and responsive to a rapidly evolving context.

This echoes the lessons learned by parliaments in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic – the need to better understand and engage a wider variety of stakeholders and develop a clearer understanding of the broader (and rapidly changing) operating environments in which they find themselves, as well as the need to recognize, manage and take advantage of the accelerated digital transformation brought about by the pandemic. Many parliaments were confronted with the way that the pandemic upended traditional parliamentary ecosystems – changing the composition of stakeholders and partners with whom they engage, the actors and elements that contribute to their continued functioning, and the way interactions take place.

In response, the 2022-2026 Strategy builds on parliaments' COVID-19 experience and sets as the ultimate objective the development of parliamentary ecosystems for democracy, for everyone. The guiding logic is that by strengthening parliaments, helping to ensure their resilience over time so they can better respond to crises, and expanding the focus from parliaments in isolation to a wider, ecosystems view, the IPU and its Member Parliaments can better deliver on the Organization's vision.

Response and strategic orientation

The IPU's five new interconnected strategic objectives are designed to consolidate the IPU's action and deepen its impact in two ways. First, the IPU will concentrate its efforts on the areas where the Organization has achieved the best results to date. Second, it will adapt to changing circumstances with a new focus on Member Parliaments' resilience, a greater emphasis on the broader inclusion of marginalized groups and strengthened accountability for both Member Parliaments and the Secretariat.

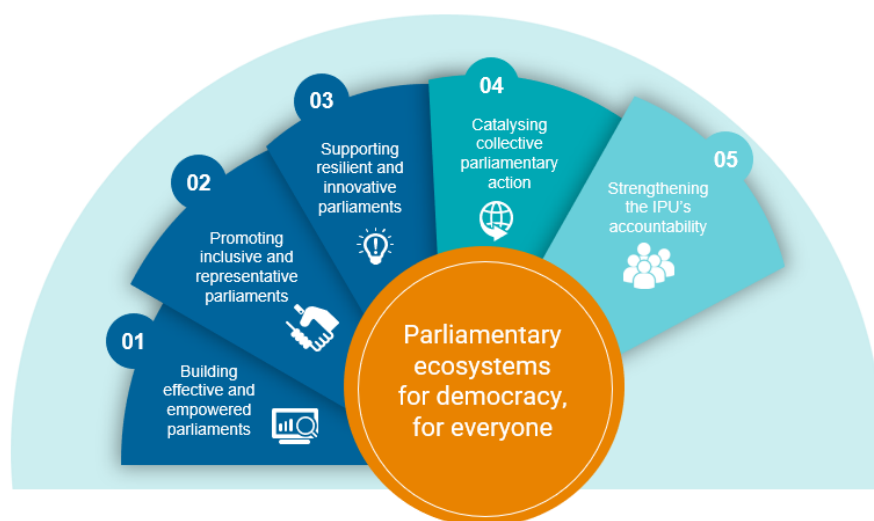
The ultimate goal of the new strategic objectives is to **develop parliamentary ecosystems for democracy, for everyone** as underscored in the IPU's emblem.

The parliamentary ecosystem approach involves a shift from looking at parliaments in isolation to incorporating a wider, evolving, systems-based view of the actors, interactions and dynamics that influence parliaments and parliamentarians, including the executive, political parties, constituents, civil society, experts, United Nations and other partners, and the media.

These five strategic objectives represent the pathways through which the IPU will reach that ultimate goal:

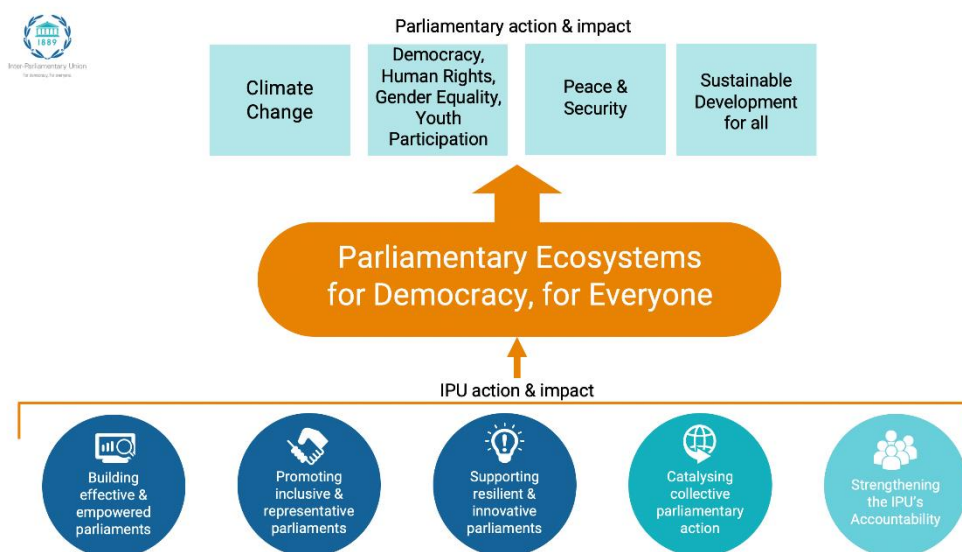
1. Building effective and empowered parliaments
2. Promoting inclusive and representative parliaments
3. Supporting resilient and innovative parliaments
4. Catalysing collective parliamentary action
5. Strengthening the IPU's accountability

Strategic Objectives 1-3 emphasize strong democratic parliamentary institutions; Strategic Objective 4 focuses on political mobilization and global and regional interaction; and Strategic Objective 5 strengthens the IPU as a whole for greater Member and organizational accountability across all strategic objectives.



Policy focus

Together, these objectives will be leveraged to make an impact in the policy areas that Members have indicated require prioritization and urgent action over the next five years. The aim is to ensure that parliaments' actions are consistent with people's expectations today. These four policy areas are of equal importance: climate change; democracy, human rights, gender equality and youth participation; peace and security; and sustainable development for all.



Climate change

Climate change represents a global existential threat. Given the urgency, Members have stressed the need for the IPU to take urgent action to contribute to global efforts to restore the planet's ecological health. To uphold the multilateral consensus and accelerate the green transition globally, the IPU will help parliaments make progress on and increase accountability for the Paris Agreement and advance other climate-relevant treaties, accelerate decarbonization and reduce the carbon footprint within parliaments themselves.

The IPU will also endeavour to reduce its own carbon footprint in its annual activities as an organization, including its Assemblies. The ultimate goal of the IPU's action on climate change during the strategic period is to allow all people to live on a healthier planet with warming limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Democracy, human rights, gender equality and youth participation

The IPU will work toward ensuring all people have a voice in how they are governed and can enjoy all human rights without distinction of any kind such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, wealth, political beliefs, or any other status. It will work to strengthen parliament's role in addressing contemporary challenges to democracy. Specifically, the IPU will support access to and representation of under-represented groups in parliament, and enhance outreach, engagement with, and accountability to all members of society with a particular focus on women, youth and the most marginalized populations. It will furthermore support parliamentary action that ensures respect for human rights and addresses discrimination. Particular attention will be given to work to preserve freedom of expression while addressing the nefarious uses of social media (for example, misinformation, hate speech, harassment of elected representatives), which constitute a critical challenge to democracy. Finally, the IPU stands by its commitment to actively defend the human rights of parliamentarians.

Peace and security

To work toward ensuring that all people live in peace, free from violence and conflict, the IPU will work multilaterally, and prioritize helping parliaments take action on: upholding the UN Charter, the implementation of UN instruments related to disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation, humanitarian and refugee law; passing laws and implementing measures to prevent violent extremism and to counter terrorism; and engaging in multilateral dialogue around peaceful coexistence and building and sustaining peace. It will also take a forward-looking stance to anticipate and mitigate foreseeable impacts that global challenges like climate change have on peace and security. It will accord particular attention to the role of women and youth as key players in conflict resolution, peace-building and prevention of violence.

Sustainable development for all

To help ensure that all people benefit from sustainable development and that it is equitable, effective, and inclusive, with no one left behind, the IPU will prioritize action towards the overall achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, with a particular focus on the socio-economic factors contributing to marginalization and vulnerability. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, it will also work to help parliaments ensure that government recovery packages are greener and benefit the most marginalized. Finally, it will work toward ensuring all segments of society have access to basic services, on an equal footing, prioritizing access to health for all.

As a cross-cutting driver of change, together with gender equality, youth participation will be mainstreamed across all four policy areas as a core element in achieving progress. While focusing on the four policy areas, the IPU will continue to contribute to other key issues of importance to Member Parliaments over the strategic period.

Communications is another key driver of change. A refreshed Communications Strategy will be put in place during 2022 following an assessment of the previous strategy. The refreshed strategy will consolidate and build on the work started in the 2019-2021 Communications Strategy, in which the IPU began its digital transformation and raised its visibility significantly in both traditional and social media.

IPU Communications will scale up its investments in digital platforms and reach, supporting the development of new online platforms, and improving the IPU websites and databases. These tools will help improve more targeted engagement with Member Parliaments, facilitate communication between the world's 46,000 parliamentarians, and help reduce the IPU's carbon footprint.

Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective 1: Building effective and empowered parliaments

Rationale: Parliaments and parliamentarians that are able to effectively exercise their mandates, represent and defend the rights and interests of the people, make decisions based on independent, evidence-informed and credible information, and exercise oversight of their governments are essential to democracy.

Aim: The IPU will expand its work to ensure that MPs are able to exercise their mandates freely and safely in response to the growing threats and challenges that many MPs are facing. It will also respond to the current challenges facing representative democracy by pursuing its efforts towards growing parliamentary effectiveness, representation, transparency, accountability and accessibility – all elements of democratic parliaments. It will do so through institutional and individual capacity building, technical support and research, as well as by supporting national parliaments to deliver on key national priorities (human rights, development, etc.).

In response to the need to focus efforts where action is most urgent, while remaining accessible to all, priority will be placed on parliaments in countries emerging from conflict or in transitional situations, which require reinforced support. In addition, IPU research and data will leverage its rich history in standard setting on democratic parliaments and the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments to work towards defining the elements and actors that sustain an effective parliamentary ecosystem over time.

Strategic Objective 2: Promoting inclusive and representative parliaments

Rationale: A key success factor for parliaments is the degree to which their members represent and articulate the concerns of society at large and the extent to which inclusive parliamentary practices enable the institution to create access and influence pathways for all members of the community.

Aim: The IPU will enhance its longstanding work on increasing the participation of women and youth in parliament. It will build on that strong track record to expand its focus to include the participation of marginalized and vulnerable populations. Working with Member Parliaments, the IPU will use research, data and tools to define and measure the participation of underrepresented groups of society in parliament, understand the challenges faced in participation, and identify structures and ways of working that result in better inclusion and better influence for these populations.

In addition to their composition, the way parliaments function and are organized will also be a focus of action, leveraging the IPU's existing work on gender-sensitive parliaments and the findings of the Global Parliamentary Report on public engagement.

In response to growing social and economic inequalities and historically uneven access, the long-term aim of the work over the strategic period is to determine which elements in the larger ecosystem best support and sustain access to parliaments for the community.

Strategic Objective 3: Supporting resilient and innovative parliaments

Rationale: The COVID-19 pandemic is one of a number of recent events that have highlighted the need for parliaments and parliamentarians to be forward-looking, resilient, and able to evolve, adapt and manage risk as circumstances change. It has also brought to the fore the importance for parliaments to innovate, harness the potential of technological and scientific innovation, and transform parliamentary strategy and business processes.

Aim: The IPU will develop a new area of work and way of engaging with its Members to increase the resilience of parliaments and respond to the increasingly multifaceted challenges they face by connecting them with a larger number of actors who influence the environment in which parliaments operate.

Leveraging research, data, discussion and sharing of good practice, the work will strengthen parliaments' ability to absorb, adapt and transform in the face of external shocks, and help them manage emerging risks within the framework of a multi-stakeholder community of practice.

To do so, the IPU will pursue and expand its work on innovation in parliament, and support parliaments in building capacity to better anticipate the future, including on cutting edge issues such as the acceleration of scientific and technological innovation and its attendant ethical challenges. The IPU will

also facilitate online learning exchanges with parliamentarians and parliamentary staff and create opportunities for them to connect and exchange with experts, media and civil society to build their institutions' capacity for greater resilience over time, and jointly identify and respond to challenges as they emerge. Overall, building bridges between policy and science contributes to foster good governance and trust, as scientific values of rationality and transparency serve as a common language in support of parliamentary diplomacy.

This work implies new ways of communicating with its Members through enhanced digital platforms, strengthening the IPU's current relationships with non-parliamentary actors, and facilitating communication between these actors.

While resilience will be the initial aim of the learning community, it will be expanded during the strategic period to ensure that the IPU and Member Parliaments remain future-focused.

Strategic Objective 4: Catalysing collective parliamentary action

Rationale: Since its inception, a key strength of the IPU has been its ability to connect Member Parliaments to each other, create a safe space for diverse, sometimes opposing, views, serve as the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue, exchange, solidarity and diplomacy, and leverage the collective political strength of its Members at the global level and with regard to the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. Furthermore, the global convening power of the IPU is unique. The potential to harness this collective influence and transform it into greater political action is particularly critical now.

Aim: The IPU will accelerate national, regional and multilateral policy solutions to key global issues by catalysing inter-parliamentary cooperation and action through regional and global events, including its flagship Assemblies. It will also work to further strengthen the parliamentary dimension of multilateralism and global governance including the voice of parliaments at the United Nations and other multilateral organizations; undertake collective advocacy at the global level, including for enhancing governance; and support national parliaments in contributing to the formulation and implementation of global commitments at the national level. It will continue to pursue its long-term goal of universal membership.

In response to the need to focus on issues of greatest urgency, the IPU will prioritize collective parliamentary action on: combatting climate change, promoting the democratic, human rights and gender equality agendas, strengthening peace and security, and working toward sustainable development for all.

Strategic Objective 5: Strengthening the IPU's accountability

Rationale: Reinforcing and sustaining a culture of trust and mutual accountability on all levels – for and between Member Parliaments, between Member Parliaments and the IPU Secretariat, and within the Secretariat – is both a key organizational value and a critical factor in ensuring that progress towards all strategic objectives is sustained and occurs in a transparent and democratic manner.

Aim: The IPU will enhance existing accountability efforts both at the level of Member Parliaments and within the Secretariat itself. It will: clarify, standardize and strengthen processes that require follow-up action by Member Parliaments on key issues; expand Member engagement (in particular between events); streamline and enhance parliamentary tracking and reporting mechanisms by Members; and more consistently track, consider and apply Member feedback.

Within the Secretariat, the IPU will aim to expand existing efforts towards its digital transformation, achieve a "green IPU" (i.e. carbon neutrality) during the strategic period, continue work towards a "gender transformative" IPU, and develop and apply an organization-wide monitoring, evaluation and learning system which will allow tracking and reporting of progress on the strategic objectives to Member Parliaments, staff and the public on an annual basis.

Synopsis of consultation findings



Key Impact Areas

Strengthening parliaments	Defending the human rights of parliamentarians	Data on women's participation	Dialogue	Strength of bilateral relationships between MPs	Learning about/exposure to global content

Unique Value Add

Combined convening and programmatic delivery power	Global reach	History of experience	Knowledge about data and access to parliaments	Capacity to connect parliamentarians to each other

Future strategic priorities

Interdependent and cross-cutting	Robust measurement and accountability	Delivered through hybrid in-person/online approach	Evidence-based with clear and communicated decision-making
		Expand parliaments' and parliamentarians' knowledge and technical capacities	

Stop Doing

Trying to be relevant on all issues	Partnerships not tied to strategic objectives	'Least common denominator' resolutions	Insufficient follow-up to knowledge products and activities

IPU budget for 2022

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 208th session
(Madrid, 30 November 2021)*

	2022 Budget		
	Regular Budget	Other Sources	All Funds
Assessed contributions	10,920,800		10,920,800
Working Capital Fund (IPSAS)	230,000		230,000
Working Capital Fund (liquid)	392,000		392,000
Staff assessment	1,089,400		1,089,400
Interest	100,000		100,000
Programme support costs	389,500	(389,500)	0
Other revenue	16,000		16,000
Voluntary contributions		5,257,700	5,257,700
TOTAL REVENUES	13,137,700	4,868,200	18,005,900
1. Building effective and empowered parliaments	1,964,200	2,925,600	4,889,800
2. Promoting inclusive and representative parliaments	578,900	414,200	993,100
3. Supporting resilient and innovative parliaments	306,700	580,000	886,700
4. Catalysing collective parliamentary action	6,565,100	1,159,700	7,724,800
5. Strengthening the IPU's accountability	3,615,200	178,200	3,793,400
Other charges	107,600		107,600
Eliminations		(389,500)	(389,500)
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	13,137,700	4,868,200	18,005,900

Approved 2022 capital budget

Item	2021
1. Replacement of computers and servers	35,000
2. Furniture	15,000
3. Website development	100,000
Total capital expenditures	150,000

Approved programme and budget for 2022

Scale of contributions for 2022 based on the UN scale of assessment

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 208th session
(Madrid, 30 November 2021)*

Country Name	UN 2019–2021	Approved 2022 scale	
	Per cent	Per cent	CHF
Afghanistan	0.007%	0.110%	12,100
Albania	0.008%	0.110%	12,100
Algeria	0.138%	0.270%	29,600
Andorra	0.005%	0.110%	12,100
Angola	0.010%	0.110%	12,100
Argentina	0.915%	1.110%	121,600
Armenia	0.007%	0.110%	12,100
Australia	2.210%	2.440%	267,400
Austria	0.677%	0.860%	94,200
Azerbaijan	0.049%	0.160%	17,500
Bahrain	0.050%	0.160%	17,500
Bangladesh	0.010%	0.110%	12,100
Belarus	0.049%	0.160%	17,500
Belgium	0.821%	1.010%	110,700
Benin	0.003%	0.100%	11,000
Bhutan	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	0.016%	0.120%	13,100
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.012%	0.120%	13,100
Botswana	0.014%	0.120%	13,100
Brazil	2.948%	3.170%	347,400
Bulgaria	0.046%	0.160%	17,500
Burkina Faso	0.003%	0.100%	11,000
Burundi	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Cabo Verde	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Cambodia	0.006%	0.110%	12,100
Cameroon	0.013%	0.120%	13,100
Canada	2.734%	2.960%	324,300
Central African Republic	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Chad	0.004%	0.100%	11,000
Chile	0.407%	0.570%	62,500
China	12.005%	11.750%	1,280,200
Colombia	0.288%	0.440%	48,200
Comoros	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Congo	0.006%	0.110%	12,100
Costa Rica	0.062%	0.180%	19,700
Côte d'Ivoire	0.013%	0.120%	13,100
Croatia	0.077%	0.200%	21,900
Cuba	0.080%	0.200%	21,900
Cyprus	0.036%	0.150%	16,400
Czech Republic	0.311%	0.460%	50,400
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	0.006%	0.110%	12,100
Democratic Republic of the Congo	0.010%	0.110%	12,100
Denmark	0.554%	0.730%	80,000
Djibouti	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Dominican Republic	0.053%	0.170%	18,600
Ecuador	0.080%	0.200%	21,900
Egypt	0.186%	0.320%	35,100

Country Name	UN 2019– 2021	Approved 2022 scale	
	Per cent	Per cent	CHF
El Salvador	0.012%	0.120%	13,100
Equatorial Guinea	0.016%	0.120%	13,100
Estonia	0.039%	0.150%	16,400
Eswatini	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Ethiopia	0.010%	0.110%	12,100
Fiji	0.003%	0.100%	11,000
Finland	0.421%	0.580%	63,600
France	4.427%	4.620%	506,200
Gabon	0.015%	0.120%	13,100
Gambia (the)	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Georgia	0.008%	0.110%	12,100
Germany	6.090%	6.220%	681,600
Ghana	0.015%	0.120%	13,100
Greece	0.366%	0.520%	57,000
Guatemala	0.036%	0.150%	16,400
Guinea	0.003%	0.100%	11,000
Guinea-Bissau	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Guyana	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Haiti	0.003%	0.100%	11,000
Hungary	0.206%	0.350%	38,400
Iceland	0.028%	0.140%	15,300
India	0.834%	1.030%	112,900
Indonesia	0.543%	0.720%	78,900
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	0.398%	0.560%	61,400
Iraq	0.129%	0.260%	28,500
Ireland	0.371%	0.530%	58,100
Israel	0.490%	0.660%	72,300
Italy	3.307%	3.530%	386,800
Japan	8.564%	8.560%	938,000
Jordan	0.021%	0.130%	14,200
Kazakhstan	0.178%	0.310%	34,000
Kenya	0.024%	0.130%	14,200
Kuwait	0.252%	0.400%	43,800
Kyrgyzstan	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Lao People's Democratic Republic	0.005%	0.110%	12,100
Latvia	0.047%	0.160%	17,500
Lebanon	0.047%	0.160%	17,500
Lesotho	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Libya	0.030%	0.140%	15,300
Liechtenstein	0.009%	0.110%	12,100
Lithuania	0.071%	0.190%	20,800
Luxembourg	0.067%	0.180%	19,700
Madagascar	0.004%	0.100%	11,000
Malawi	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Malaysia	0.341%	0.500%	54,800
Maldives	0.004%	0.100%	11,000
Mali	0.004%	0.100%	11,000
Malta	0.017%	0.120%	13,100
Marshall Islands	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Mauritius	0.011%	0.110%	12,100
Mexico	1.292%	1.500%	164,400
Micronesia (Federated States of)	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Monaco	0.011%	0.110%	12,100
Mongolia	0.005%	0.110%	12,100
Montenegro	0.004%	0.100%	11,000
Morocco	0.055%	0.170%	18,600

Country Name	UN 2019– 2021	Approved 2022 scale	
	Per cent	Per cent	CHF
Mozambique	0.004%	0.100%	11,000
Myanmar	0.010%	0.110%	12,100
Namibia	0.009%	0.110%	12,100
Nepal	0.007%	0.110%	12,100
Netherlands	1.356%	1.570%	172,000
New Zealand	0.291%	0.440%	48,200
Nicaragua	0.005%	0.110%	12,100
Niger	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Nigeria	0.250%	0.390%	42,700
North Macedonia	0.007%	0.110%	12,100
Norway	0.754%	0.940%	103,000
Oman	0.115%	0.240%	26,300
Pakistan	0.115%	0.240%	26,300
Palau	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Palestine		0.100%	11,000
Panama	0.045%	0.160%	17,500
Paraguay	0.016%	0.120%	13,100
Peru	0.152%	0.280%	30,700
Philippines	0.205%	0.340%	37,300
Poland	0.802%	0.990%	108,500
Portugal	0.350%	0.510%	55,900
Qatar	0.282%	0.430%	47,100
Republic of Korea	2.267%	2.500%	273,900
Republic of Moldova	0.003%	0.100%	11,000
Romania	0.198%	0.340%	37,300
Russian Federation	2.405%	2.630%	288,200
Rwanda	0.003%	0.100%	11,000
Saint Lucia	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Samoa	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
San Marino	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Sao Tome and Principe	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Saudi Arabia	1.172%	1.380%	151,200
Senegal	0.007%	0.110%	12,100
Serbia	0.028%	0.140%	15,300
Seychelles	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Sierra Leone	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Singapore	0.485%	0.650%	71,200
Slovakia	0.153%	0.280%	30,700
Slovenia	0.076%	0.190%	20,800
Somalia	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
South Africa	0.272%	0.420%	46,000
South Sudan	0.006%	0.110%	12,100
Spain	2.146%	2.370%	259,700
Sri Lanka	0.044%	0.160%	17,500
Sudan	0.010%	0.110%	12,100
Suriname	0.005%	0.110%	12,100
Sweden	0.906%	1.100%	120,500
Switzerland	1.151%	1.360%	149,000
Syrian Arab Republic	0.011%	0.110%	12,100
Tajikistan	0.004%	0.100%	11,000
Thailand	0.307%	0.460%	50,400
Timor-Leste	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Togo	0.002%	0.100%	11,000
Tonga	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Trinidad and Tobago	0.040%	0.150%	16,400
Tunisia	0.025%	0.130%	14,200

Country Name	UN 2019–2021	Approved 2022 scale	
	Per cent	Per cent	CHF
Turkey	1.371%	1.590%	174,200
Turkmenistan	0.033%	0.140%	15,300
Tuvalu	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Uganda	0.008%	0.110%	12,100
Ukraine	0.057%	0.170%	18,600
United Arab Emirates	0.616%	0.800%	87,700
United Kingdom	4.567%	4.760%	521,600
United Republic of Tanzania	0.010%	0.110%	12,100
Uruguay	0.087%	0.210%	23,000
Uzbekistan	0.032%	0.140%	15,300
Vanuatu	0.001%	0.100%	11,000
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	0.728%	0.910%	99,700
Viet Nam	0.077%	0.200%	21,900
Yemen	0.010%	0.110%	12,100
Zambia	0.009%	0.110%	12,100
Zimbabwe	0.005%	0.110%	12,100

Member or associate member	UN 2019–2021	Approved 2022 scale	
	Per cent	Per cent	CHF
Andean Parliament		0.020%	2,200
Arab Parliament		0.010%	1,100
Central American Parliament		0.010%	1,100
East African Legislative Assembly		0.010%	1,100
European Parliament		0.060%	6,600
Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States		0.020%	2,200
Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union		0.010%	1,100
Latin American and Caribbean Parliament		0.030%	3,300
Parliament of the CEMAC		0.010%	1,100
Parliament of the ECOWAS		0.010%	1,100
Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation		0.030%	3,300
Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie		0.020%	2,200
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe		0.040%	4,400
Total		100%	10,920,800

Parliamentary Message to the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5)

*Endorsed by the IPU Governing Council at its 208th session
(Madrid, 30 November 2021)*

We, the parliamentarians participating in the 143rd IPU Assembly, welcome the convening of the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Doha, Qatar, on 23-27 January 2022. We regard this high-level gathering as an opportunity to highlight the special situation of the LDCs and their population of over 900 million people.

In the ten years since the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) the expectation that half of these countries would “graduate” outside the category has not been realized. Despite some progress in the group as a whole, only three countries have graduated, and four more are scheduled to graduate in the next two years. Progress has been uneven because of deep-rooted problems such as low human development, weak governance institutions, limited financial resources, unsustainable debt, limited access to technology, a large informal sector, over-reliance on the commodities sector, as well as conflict and political instability.

Today, half of all LDCs are classified as fragile and conflict-affected; and 50 per cent of the world's poorest people are located in this group. The LDCs are among the most behind in the global effort to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While there is a lot that LDCs can do on their own to move up the development ladder, they remain greatly limited by a global economic system that remains fundamentally stacked against them. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and attendant global economic crisis has led to further regression among LDCs with severe impacts on income and employment, food security, access to health, education and social safety nets. Inequitable access to vaccines worldwide is exacerbating the situation by slowing down global economic recovery, while exacting a heavy toll on health and socioeconomic development in LDCs.

Going forward, stronger coordinated action and political will are needed at both national and global levels to ensure that the LDCs regain the lost ground on their development trajectory. The LDCs need urgent support to recover from the pandemic and in the process prepare to respond effectively to future crises. The new 10-year Programme of Action that is to emerge from the Doha Conference in January 2022 must build upon the lessons learnt from the last decade to present an ambitious and coherent set of commitments to finally unlock the tremendous development potential of this group of countries and their people.

The LDCs need to become more self-sufficient and resilient to shocks. Key to this are efforts to diversify the economy so that it is no longer dependent on any one sector. To start with, this will require stronger international cooperation to provide the LDCs with enhanced policy space to put in place and implement pro-active industrial policies. Among other things, these policies should aim to nurture nascent enterprises in manufacturing, agriculture and service sectors in a variety of ways, including through more effective regulation of trade, foreign investments and capital movements. While developed countries need to lift many barriers that still reduce market access to LDCs products, the LDCs should seek to develop greater economic synergies by pursuing more trade and investment opportunities among themselves.

As aid remains a key source of development finance in most LDCs, both the quality and quantity of aid to the LDCs needs to improve dramatically in accordance with international commitments. In the long term, the LDCs need to end their over-reliance on aid by raising more of their own resources through taxation and by leveraging other forms of development finance. Unsustainable levels of debt, made worse by the current pandemic, need to be reduced through a combination of debt restructuring and debt cancellations involving both public and private creditors.

Other keyways of accelerating development in the LDCs are to improve access to digitalization and other modern technologies through technology transfers, as well as by strengthening domestic capacities for science, research and innovation. The LDCs need to invest more in their human capital by expanding access to education and health care, as well as in universal social protection programmes. The active promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, girls and youth in LDCs through greater access to decision making in all sectors will improve the quality of services, ensure equitable access and enhance the ability of these groups to contribute to social and economic development.

Climate change constitutes a major threat to the LDCs despite their minimal contribution to global emissions. Protecting the LDCs against the negative impacts of climate change will depend critically on the development and implementation of effective adaptation measures duly supported by the international community. It also requires a stronger move toward green economy practices that prioritize, among other things, renewable energy, ecosystem services, resource efficiency, the reduction of pollution and the preservation of biodiversity. All of this will require additional technical and financial assistance, as well as international support for capacity building. Developed countries' pledges to provide developing countries, including the LDCs, with adequate levels of climate finance need to be fulfilled as a matter of urgency.

In support of these efforts for sustainable development, the international community and the LDCs themselves need to strengthen the institutions of governance at all levels to ensure that they are responsive, effective, inclusive, transparent, and accountable. This will facilitate effective decision-making, resource mobilization and service delivery, as well as the implementation of more equitable policies. In the LDCs, as in most other countries, there is a need to rebuild people's trust in government as the guarantor of a social contract that works for all. This in turn will provide the conditions for greater political stability to sustain future progress. While governance is being strengthened at the national level, it also needs to be reformed at the global level by allowing greater representation and more voice for the LDCs in the international financial institutions and other relevant bodies.

Parliaments, through their representative, legislative, oversight and budgetary functions, can play a crucial role in strengthening governance all around and in improving coherence across economic, environmental and social policies. Key to making LDC parliaments more effective is the greater representation of women, who occupy only a quarter of all seats, as well as greater parliamentary engagement with civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders. Lacking sufficient capacities and political autonomy to fulfil their role, LDC parliaments need considerably more technical and financial assistance. The IPU must continue to contribute to this through the provision of institutional advice and guidance, as well as support in mobilizing resources for capacity building.

Going forward, all parliaments – in LDCs as in other countries – must play a stronger role in holding their governments accountable for the commitments they make in the emerging Doha Programme of Action. Addressing the special needs and vulnerabilities of the LDCs is not just a matter of basic justice and international solidarity; it is a necessary condition to global sustainable development and a better life for all people.

Report of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 208th session
(Madrid, 30 November 2021)*

1. The 32nd session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians was held on 26 November 2021. It brought together 197 participants, including 114 parliamentarians from 62 countries and representatives from various international organizations. There were 86 women and 28 men among the parliamentarians who attended the Forum.

Election of the President and delivery of welcome addresses

2. The President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine), opened the session and the Forum proceeded to elect Ms. M. Batet Lamaña, President of the Congress of Deputies (Spain), to the Presidency of its 32nd session. The President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. D. Pacheco, and the Prime Minister of Spain, Mr. P. Sánchez, welcomed participants to the Forum and to the 143rd IPU Assembly.

The IPU's actions aimed at promoting gender partnership

3. The IPU Vice-President and Member of the Gender Partnership Group, Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal), informed participants about the gender balance in delegations to the 143rd Assembly. Despite some improvements, parity in delegations was still not being achieved. The Gender Partnership Group would continue to pursue its work towards parity. It was also pursuing the development of a framework against sexism and sexual harassment at Assemblies and other IPU-organized meetings and would engage in consultations in that endeavour.

4. The participants were informed about the IPU's recent and future activities on gender issues. Ms. P. Maharani, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Indonesia, reported to the participants on the 13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament, held on 6 September 2021. The Secretary of the Forum, Ms. Z. Hilal, briefed participants on the new IPU-APU study on sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament in Africa.

Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

5. Ms. M. Baba Moussa Soumanou (Benin) summarized the work of the 45th session of the Bureau, which had taken place in March and May 2021 via videoconference, and the 46th session, which had been held immediately prior to the Forum meeting.

6. The Bureau met again on 30 November to take stock of the results of the 143rd Assembly from a gender perspective and to discuss the future of its work. Based on the results of the parity debate on better engaging male MPs to advance the gender equality agenda, the Bureau initiated a process to determine its work plan in this specific area.

Contributions to the work of the 143rd Assembly from a gender perspective

7. In order to contribute to the work of the Assembly, participants considered, from a gender perspective, the draft resolution before the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights entitled *Legislation worldwide to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse*. The discussion opened with a brief overview of the draft resolution by Ms. A. Gerkens (Netherlands), co-Rapporteur of the resolution. The debate was conducted in two groups. Group 1 discussed *Gender-responsive and survivor-centred legislation to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse*. Group 2 discussed *Age and gender-sensitive strategies to empower and educate children to protect themselves and report online sexual exploitation*.

8. Ms. H. Ramzy Fayez (Bahrain) and Ms. M. Baba Moussa Soumanou (Benin) were designated Chair and Rapporteur respectively of Group 1, and Ms. V. Riotton (France) and Ms. S. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates), Chair and Rapporteur respectively of Group 2.

9. Participants in Group 1 agreed that children were vulnerable targets of the growing phenomenon of online sexual exploitation and abuse, which had been further exacerbated by the isolation of children during the COVID-19 pandemic and their increased use of the internet. They emphasized the urgent need to adopt inclusive, comprehensive and gender-sensitive legislation that criminalized all forms of online child sexual exploitation and abuse. The legislation should protect the rights and safety of child survivors of violence and focus on the empowerment of survivors. Care and support centres for child survivors should be established to help them repair and rebuild psychologically and physically. Participants also recommended the prioritization of alert and reporting mechanisms, including hotlines and helplines on online platforms; the inclusion of children in the search for solutions that take into account the different needs of children according to their age and gender; and a focus on specific measures adapted to young girls.

10. Participants in Group 2 discussed the accompanying and implementing measures required to complement the legislation. They highlighted the need to raise awareness, educate and engage all those concerned by online child sexual exploitation and abuse: children, families, communities, teachers, doctors, and legal and law-enforcement professionals. All those who interacted with children must be trained to detect the signs of abuse and address them in an age- and gender-sensitive way, as well as equipped to act and ensure children can protect themselves and seek support. Participants also recommended that any strategy to prevent online child sexual exploitation and abuse must include sex education and digital literacy education.

11. The reports of the discussions conducted in the two groups resulted in one amendment to the draft resolution of the Standing Committee and several expressions of support for amendments proposed by national delegations. The proposed amendment was included in the draft resolution. Several of the amendments supported by the Forum helped enhance the draft resolution from a gender perspective.

Panel discussion on strategies for gender-responsive law making

12. The panel discussion focused on the role of parliaments in ensuring that national laws guarantee gender equality in practice, by adopting rights-affirming laws that protect and benefit all women and girls, but also analysing the differentiated impact of legislation on women and girls. Participants emphasized the building of alliances, parliamentary mechanisms and capacities for reforming legislation from a gender perspective as important strategies for gender-responsive legal reform.

13. The exchange opened with a video message from UN Women and introductory remarks by the Secretary General of the IPU and Chair of the International Gender Champions Global Board, Mr. M. Chungong, who presented the new IPU and UN Women handbook for parliamentarians on gender-responsive law making. The handbook built on contributions and best practices from MPs from around the globe.

14. The discussions were introduced by presentations from Ms. H. Faye Hala (Bahrain) on “*Gender-responsive legal reform, its benefits and related challenges*”; Ms. P. A. Komarudin (Indonesia) and Ms. E. Nyirasafari (Rwanda) on “*Partnerships needed to conduct gender-responsive legal reform*”; and Ms. C. Mix (Chile) on “*Mechanisms and capacities for action in parliament*”.

15. Participants shared experiences on the costs of discrimination and the benefits of corrective legal reforms. Discussions focused on laws and policies in the areas of family and marriage, land ownership, employment and equal pay rights, nationality and citizenship, as well as eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. Examples of improvements were highlighted in areas such as women’s economic inclusion, access to school for girls, ending online violence against women and girls, and combatting violence against women in politics. Strong cooperation between government, parliament and civil society, and engagement with women’s civil society associations as well as multi-party alliances and partnerships between men and women parliamentarians were often key to achieving such reforms. Participants stressed the effectiveness of mechanisms such as standing committees on gender equality as well as women’s parliamentary caucuses. They called specific attention to the implementation of laws, as well as budget scrutiny through a gender lens and gender-responsive budgeting.

Parity debate

16. The Forum of Women Parliamentarians organized a parity debate on *Are men and women MPs equally engaged in gender equality?* The debate focused on how men could become more effective gender equality champions. The debate brought together both men and women MPs, with four men MPs and six women MPs contributing their views and experiences.

Elections to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

17. The participants elected Ms. U. Undram (Mongolia) to fill the vacant seat for the Asia-Pacific Group. The Forum also approved the election of Ms. W.P. Andrade Muñoz (Ecuador) to the position of Second Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians.

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COMPOSITION AND OFFICERS OF THE BUREAU OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS (as at 29 November 2021)

PRESIDING OFFICERS (April 2021–2023)

President: Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine)

First Vice-President: Ms. H. Ramzy Faye (Bahrain)

Second Vice-President: Ms. W.P. Andrade Muñoz (Ecuador)

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

African Group:

Ms. O. Sanogo (Mali)

Ms. N. Bujela (Eswatini)

Ms. S. Wakarura Kihika (Kenya)

Ms. M. Baba Moussa Soumanou
(Benin)

Expiry of term

April 2023

April 2025

Arab Group:

Ms. M.S. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates)

Ms. H. Ramzy Faye (Bahrain)

Ms. M. Mohammed Saleh
(Syrian Arab Rep.)

Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah (Egypt)

April 2023

April 2025

Asia-Pacific Group:

Ms. P. Maadam (India)

Ms. P.A. Komarudin (Indonesia)

Ms. U. Chinbat (Mongolia)

Ms. E. Azad (Islamic Rep. of Iran)

April 2023

April 2025

Eurasia Group:

Ms. E. Vtorygina (Russian Federation)

Vacancy

Ms. Z. Greceanîi (Rep. of Moldova)

Ms. M. Vasilevich (Belarus)

April 2023

April 2025

Group of Latin American and the Caribbean:

Ms. C. Mix (Chile)	Ms. V. Persaud (Guyana)	April 2023
Ms. W.P. Andrade Muñoz (Ecuador)	Ms. A.F. Sagasti (Argentina)	April 2025

Twelve Plus Group:

Ms. L. Wall (New Zealand)	Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine)	April 2023
Ms. V. Riotton (France)	Ms. M. Grande (Italy)	April 2025

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE*(ex officio, for the duration of their term on the Executive Committee)***Expiry of term**

Ms. O. Kefalogianni (Greece)	November 2025
Ms. B. Argimón (Uruguay)	October 2024
Ms. E. Anyakun (Uganda)	October 2023
Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden)	October 2023
Ms. P. Krairiksh (Thailand)	October 2023
Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal)	April 2023

PRESIDENT OF THE FORUM OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS*(ex officio for two years)***Expiry of term**

Ms. M. Batet Lamaña (Spain)	November 2023
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Report of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 208th session
(Madrid, 30 November 2021)*

The Forum of Young Parliamentarians was held on 27 November 2021. It was co-presided by a woman and man member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians – Ms. O. Rudenko (Ukraine) and Mr. M.A. Rakotomalala (Madagascar), who replaced the President of the Board, Ms. S. Albazar (Egypt), and the youngest member of the Board, Ms. M. Vasilevich (Belarus), who were both absent. The meeting brought together 72 participants, including 59 parliamentarians from 45 countries. There were 26 women and 33 men among the parliamentarians who attended the Forum. The average age of the participating parliamentarians was of 38.

The Forum participants were welcomed by the IPU President and the IPU Secretary General who expressed their support for the cause of youth participation. The Forum members expressed their appreciation for the IPU's leadership support and looked forward to continuing working with the IPU President and the IPU Secretary General in the coming years.

The Forum members exchanged views on the main theme of the Assembly's General Debate *Contemporary challenges to democracy: Overcoming division and building community*. They agreed that for democracy to be strong it needed to be youth driven by more inclusive and more youth responsive parliaments. The IPU youth movement was contributing its share through the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign which had already galvanized the support of more than 500 political leaders from across the world. It was underlined that the role of young MPs was indispensable when it came to contributing to intergenerational entente, accord and cooperation. The importance of their influence in building more youth responsive parliaments was also emphasized. To this end, new empowerment tools to be run by the IPU in 2022, including a youth empowerment series made of online briefings and trainings, were welcomed.

In their contribution to the IPU resolution *Legislation worldwide to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse* from a youth perspective, the young MPs highlighted the need for: cooperation at international, regional and national levels; legislation that criminalized online sexual exploitation; and having children who experienced such exploitation placed at the centre of the policy response.

The Forum discussed the contribution – from a youth perspective – of young MPs to the IPU's work on the new IPU Strategy for 2022-2026. Although the young parliamentarians welcomed the inclusion of youth participation as a cross-cutting issue, they made a strong call to have youth participation included in its own right as a policy area of the Organization's new five-year Strategy.

The young parliamentarians took stock of recent developments in youth participation in their respective countries and highlighted that: in a number of parliaments the numbers of elected young MPs had increased; new good practices of reserving seats for youth in parliament had been implemented; there was stronger support by political parties to young candidates and aspirants; and an interesting trend of youth participation at local government level was unfolding. With regard to countries in conflict or under occupation, the young MPs expressed their support to oppressed youth who were unable to participate in the governance structure of their nations.

In order to learn from each other and enhance inter-parliamentary cooperation, the young MPs shared experiences and lessons learned on creating forums and networks of young MPs. The question and answer session helped link young MPs with experience in setting up forums with those that wanted to do so in their countries. As a result, cooperation opportunities among the young MPs were crystalized and would be followed up on. The young MPs recognized IPU's pioneering role when it established the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and acknowledged that the IPU had inspired many parliaments and their young members to do the same by using the IPU Forum as a model.

At the proposal of the Board of the Forum, the young parliamentarians agreed to have the IPU Global Conference of Young MPs in 2022 focus on youth for climate action.

In conclusion, in preparation for the 144th IPU Assembly to be held in March 2022, the Forum appointed Mr. M.A. Rakotomalala (Madagascar) to prepare a youth overview report as a contribution to the IPU resolution entitled *Rethinking and reframing approach to peace processes with a view to fostering lasting peace* and Mr. P. Kemper (Paraguay) to prepare a youth overview report as a contribution to the IPU resolution *Leveraging information and communication technology as an enabler for the education sector, including in times of pandemic*.

Report of the Committee on Middle East Questions

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 208th session
(Madrid, 30 November 2021)*

One sitting of the Committee was held on 29 November 2021, with seven members attending. The Committee members elected Mr. G. Migliore (Italy) as the President of the Committee. The Committee discussed the importance of respectful dialogue, putting differences aside and working together in order to achieve peace as part of their mandate.

The Committee heard from the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Yemen, Mr. M.A. Al-Shadadi, about the situation on the ground in his country. The situation was dire, with widespread hunger and suffering after seven years of war. Young people were greatly impacted, particularly in terms of disruption to their education and a lack of opportunities, which often pushed them to become radicalized. Women were impacted very negatively by the war, facing violence and rape daily, and parliamentarians were also under threat. The people of Yemen wanted food, medicine, safety, their children to go to school, and a life of dignity. Mr. Al-Shadadi appealed to the Committee and the international community for their support, asking for concrete actions, for the war to end, national dialogue and the enacting of democratic political solutions. He asked IPU Members to exert pressure on parliaments that were supporting militias and causing the crisis. The Committee was saddened by the situation and the tragedy occurring in Yemen. Members expressed their solidarity with the people of Yemen and pledged their support for efforts to prevent the continuation of this humanitarian disaster.

A presentation was also made by the Institute of Economics and Peace on the current status of peace in the Middle East. The Committee heard that, in 2020, there had been an increase in the numbers of casualties in ever more intense conflicts in the region, as well as a trend of national or local conflicts becoming globalized or regionalized, contributing to the systemic nature of conflict in the region. Yemen was the least peaceful country in the region, and since 2008, levels of peace have been decreasing. The Committee agreed on the importance of putting forward holistic approaches to address conflict in the Middle East region. Concrete proposals for the Committee's future work were essential to achieving impact.

The Committee heard a briefing by the IPU President on his visit to the Middle East in November 2021, notably to Israel and Palestine. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict was a main concern of the Committee. In Israel, the IPU President had held meetings with the Speaker of the Knesset and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In Palestine, he had held meetings with the Palestinian President, members of the Palestinian National Council, and other Palestinian officials. The IPU President had had the clear impression that both parties were committed to a two-state solution, and he had been pleased during his visit to see the commitment of both Israel and Palestine to the achievement of peace. He had emphasized the importance of both parties continuing to make efforts to meet each other in the middle. Israeli officials had expressed their concern that the Palestinian Authority did not have control in the Gaza Strip, nor over Hamas, and had denounced the lack of cooperation from the Palestinian Authority. Palestinian officials had told the IPU President that Israel could not claim it was committed to peace while continuing its settlement activities. They had also raised the issue of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and administrative detention. The Committee agreed that, allowing for the changing circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, they should undertake a visit to the region, in order for Committee members to meet people and see the situation on the ground for themselves.

Regarding the Committee's Rules on the gender balance of its membership, the Committee reviewed and adopted a proposed amendment on its composition submitted by the IPU Secretariat. The amendment would be submitted to the Governing Council in Nusa Dua, Indonesia, for approval in March 2022.

Report of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 208th session
(Madrid, 30 November 2021)*

1. The Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (the Committee) met on 27 November 2021. The meeting was chaired by the Committee's President, Ms. A. Vadai (Hungary). In addition to the Chair, participants included members from Bahrain, Belgium, India, Kenya, Mexico, and Suriname representing more than 50 per cent of sitting members. Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) attended as observers.
2. The Committee pursued the discussions held at its previous informal sitting held in early November 2021. The Committee was unable, as was its usual practice, to review developments in specific crisis situations which it monitored since it could not meet with some experts. It agreed to hold such consultations in virtual format (online) in December. The consultations would deal with the situation of refugees from Myanmar and the situation of Afghan refugees. The Committee expressed its intention to renew with the practice of following specific situations of concern and possibly carrying out on-site visits, if overall health and security conditions allowed it.
3. The Committee went on to discuss a specific workplan on actions to be taken to end statelessness by 2024. Members were reminded of the IPU *Statement to mark the 60th anniversary of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness* (142nd IPU Assembly) which calls on the IPU Members to step up action to adhere and implement the statelessness conventions. On its part, the Committee decided to focus its efforts in the coming years on the following:
 - Addressing **gender discrimination in nationality law** by engaging with parliamentarians in the 25 countries that retain gender discrimination in their nationality laws (see: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/604257d34.html>).
 - Building on **regional levels** parliamentarians' knowledge and capacity on the issues in question and fostering networking and exchange with other actors, such as relevant regional bodies seized with statelessness, NGO networks and stateless activists themselves.
 - Supporting follow up in the **32 priority countries** identified by UNHCR for the **#IBELONG** Campaign (pledges delivered at the High-Level Segment are available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5ec3e91b4.html>).

The Committee welcomed warmly the offer of its member from Kenya to host the first virtual regional gathering on this topic and looked forward to further engagement on the subject from other members.

4. The Committee was briefed on the follow-up to the Global Refugee Forum and implementation of the pledges made. It invited IPU Members to follow up on pledges made by their countries (see: <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/index.php/>). It also decided to pursue raising awareness of members of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and its implementation and invited all members to monitor implementation in their own parliaments.

5. The Committee pursued discussion on parliamentary efforts to strengthen implementation of international humanitarian law in cooperation with the ICRC. The discussion focused on universalization and implementation of the Additional Protocols (AP) to the Geneva Conventions in view of the celebration of their 45th anniversary in 2022. The Committee agreed to:

- **Organize a global virtual raising awareness event** for parliaments on the AP in 2022 – possibly on 8 June (anniversary date) – with the ICRC
- Compile **tools/factsheets** for MPs to support them in their raising awareness efforts
- Carry out sensitization efforts through **letters** addressed by the IPU to parliaments of non-signatory countries to encourage them to discuss the Additional Protocols
- **Where possible, provide a parliamentary contribution to ICRC** events marking the 45th anniversary of the AP at regional levels
- **Monitor and report regularly** to IPU Members on progress on accession to AP

6. With regard to its work on the Ottawa Convention (or the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention), the Committee hosted an open session on 29 November on the theme *Supporting a mine-free world: Universalization and implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention* which brought together members of parliament and representatives from the Implementation Support Unit of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Mines Advisory Group and the ICRC, for a very rich exchange of views. The debate concluded with the need to strengthen parliamentary engagement in the matter, with a particular focus on assistance to victims; securing budgetary allocations; and facilitating the exchange of good practices. The Committee agreed to pursue work on anti-personnel mines in the years to come.

7. Finally, in view of common areas of concern, the Committee highlighted the importance of building synergies with IPU's work in the area of peace and security and suggested organizing a joint meeting with the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security to enhance cooperation and coordination.

Report of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG)

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 208th session
(Madrid, 30 November 2021)*

The High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG) held three meetings since the last Assembly: a virtual meeting on 17 May, an in-person meeting on 9 September in Vienna, Austria, and an in-person meeting on 26 November in Madrid, Spain. The present report summarizes the discussions and decisions reached by the HLAG during those three meetings.

During the meetings, the HLAG reviewed the following areas of the IPU Secretariat's counter-terrorism work: progress with development of ICT tools, activities regarding victims of terrorism, and cooperation and projects with regional parliaments. Members also stressed the importance of addressing the situation in the Sahel region, as well as of supporting the victims of terrorism and addressing hate speech.

The Chair delivered opening remarks underlining the important work of the HLAG, given that terrorism was one of the major challenges facing the world today. Parliaments had a crucial role to play in the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism.

The Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) provided a presentation on the impact of terrorism, including the latest data from the Global Terrorism Index and an overview of the systemic interconnections with other strategic factors influencing global peace and security. These included violence and negative peace, the need for investments in better institutions, attitudes and structures aiming at creating more positive peace and the intimate connection between ecological degradation, levels of violence and societal resilience. One of the conclusions and recommendations pointed out the necessity to use an approach that analysed systemic and interconnected problems to produce systemic and all-encompassing solutions. Such research and solutions would be key to a successful Call for the Sahel initiative.

First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism

The IPU Secretary General presented a summary of the outcomes of the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism, held in Vienna in September 2021. The Summit had consisted of a High-Level session with the participation of the Speaker of the Austrian National Council, the IPU President, the Director-General of the United Nations Office in Vienna and Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), followed by three thematic interactive sessions.

In the first of the three sessions, victims of terrorism from the Sahel, Afghanistan and Kenya had provided their testimonies and perspectives, intended to guide participants in the search for real solutions. The session had focused on how the international community could work together in coordination with communities and civil society so that the difficult situation of victims of terrorism would cease to be a forgotten issue.

The second session had focused on the role of parliaments in the prevention of terrorism, radicalization and hate speech. Parliamentarians needed to step up their work with key actors in regions and communities. Women, youth, local stakeholders and civil society, including religious and community leaders, had important roles to play. In the third session, on the Sahel, participants had stressed the necessity of working together to prevent violence, strengthen resilience against radicalization and hate speech, enhance governance, and improve government institutions through more community engagement.

The Summit had been an excellent opportunity for parliaments, civil society, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to discuss all the issues related to the situation of the Sahel. At the end of the Summit, a joint declaration, the Call of the Sahel, had been agreed between the IPU, the Arab Parliament (AP), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), and the G5 Sahel Inter-Parliamentary Committee (CIP G5 Sahel), creating a parliamentary bloc with a strong commitment to the Sahel and genuine solidarity with its people. The parliamentary bloc would aim to achieve concrete results by assisting and supporting the countries of the Sahel region through holistic approaches.

Activities for the Sahel region

It was agreed by the HLAG members that one of the group's work priorities would be the Sahel region. In this regard, members emphasized the need to address the conditions conducive to terrorism, and the challenges, among others, relating to security, development and education in the region. At the same time, it was important to raise awareness of the deteriorating situation in the G5 Sahel, both nationally and internationally, in order to help the people of the region by developing a holistic plan of action.

As a follow-up to the Call of the Sahel declaration, the Group agreed that the aim would be to listen, not to duplicate actions, and to avoid holding meetings without any impact. The Call of the Sahel was expected to achieve real impact, result in concrete projects, and involve communities, religious leaders, women and youth, as well as international organizations, regional parliamentary assemblies, NGOs, and relevant institutions, using a holistic approach by assessing the real needs of the people of the Sahel. On 15 November, the IPU Secretary General had convened the first virtual coordination meeting in order to discuss the follow-up for the implementation of the Call of the Sahel, listen to the different actors in those countries, and agree on the road ahead. It was agreed that, in coordination with the AP, PAM, CIP G5 Sahel and other key partners, the IPU would develop an action plan engaging all regional stakeholders, including leaders, women and NGOs. It was agreed to hold a Summit on the Call of the Sahel in 2022, in order to present the plan of action and discuss how the Call of the Sahel would be implemented.

The IPU's work on various ICT tools

The IPU Secretariat presented an update on the three ICT tools that the IPU had developed: the Global Parliamentary Network, the Interactive Map, and the Mobile Application for parliamentarians. Members were informed that the tools were being finalized and would be launched at the 144th IPU Assembly from 20 to 24 March 2022 in Nusa Dua, Indonesia.

These tools were designed to utilize communication and technology to help parliamentarians in their efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism. The tools would allow parliamentarians to obtain first-hand information about counter-terrorism from around the globe and were unique products. They were aimed at raising awareness, increasing connectivity and unifying global efforts in counter-terrorism. The tools had been developed with funding from the National People's Congress of China.

The IPU Secretariat would develop the second phase of the tools, which would add the possibility of online conversations between parliamentarians, both individually and in groups, as well as video conferences and Arabic and Spanish versions. The second phase would be made possible thanks to the financial support of the Arab Parliament.

A presentation was given to members on the work that was being carried out by the IPU, the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on Model Legislative Provisions to support and protect the rights and needs of victims of terrorism, with a view to strengthening the capacity of national parliaments in that field. The Model Legislative Provisions would be launched at the end of 2021 and at the 144th IPU Assembly in March 2022.

During the HLAG meeting on 26 November, the following special guests were invited to share their point of view on these issues: Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi, Member of the Federal National Council of the UAE and member of the IPU Executive Committee, Mr. M. Roxane on behalf of Mr. J.M. Traoré, Executive Secretary of the G5 Sahel Inter-Parliamentary Committee, Mr. B. Gado Idi, Secretary General of the African Parliamentary Union, and Mr. M. Fouda, Programme Officer of the Terrorism Prevention Branch, UNODC. They agreed on the necessity to improve and strengthen support to the Sahel countries, as well as the necessity to act before it was too late. The responsibility lay not only with the Sahel countries, but all countries around the world, since the situation was a threat to global peace and stability. All special guests expressed their full support for the development of a holistic and inclusive action plan and for that plan to become a reality, taking into account the needs of the G5 Sahel countries and involving civil society, governments, communities, religious leaders, victims and women.

Lastly, members were informed that, due to the lack of a quorum, it would not be possible to continue with the agenda, since the other points required decisions to be taken, in particular the election of a Chair and Vice-Chair, which would thus be postponed to the next HLAG meeting on the occasion of the 144th IPU Assembly in Indonesia in March 2022. However, two candidatures had been received, from Ms. J. Oduol of Kenya, currently Vice-Chair of the group, for the post of Chair, and from Mr. J. Gandini of Uruguay for the post of the Vice-Chair.

Report of the Working Group on Science and Technology

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 208th session
(Madrid, 30 November 2021)*

Three sittings of the Working Group were held on 13 July, 18 November and 28 November 2021 and 17 members attended one or more of these sittings.

During its inaugural meeting on 13 July, the Group elected Mr. M. Larive (France) as its Chair and Ms. S. Attia (Egypt) as Vice-Chair. The Working Group then discussed its mandate: to bring policymakers and members of parliament closer to science and technology (S&T); to make sure parliaments reaped the maximum benefit from technological and scientific innovations; and to ensure S&T and their outcomes were beneficial and not used to the detriment of society. The Working Group highlighted that this mandate entailed two main goals: firstly to inform parliamentarians about S&T developments and challenges and to explore solutions to those challenges, and secondly to offer advice in the field.

The IPU Secretariat provided an overview of its work streams in S&T, including its partnerships with the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) and the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator (GESDA). The Working Group was also briefed on the existing *Science for Peace School* initiative, organized in collaboration with CERN to encourage participants from parliaments to work together and experience models of scientific cooperation, highlighting an evidence-based approach to addressing global and regional challenges. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the first in-person Schools had been postponed, but to maintain momentum a series of preliminary virtual events called Science for Peace Dialogues were planned for the first half of 2022.

The Working Group urged the inclusion of S&T in the IPU Strategy for 2022-2026, in order to achieve real change by building bridges between politics and science and adopting the values of rationalism and transparency in diplomatic exchanges.

The Working Group discussed its Work Plan, and the objectives it wished to advance. Webinars would be held twice a year on pertinent subjects, such as micro-nano technology or emerging issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. During its sitting of 28 November, the Working Group agreed upon a Work Plan for the year 2022. The key threads of the Work Plan were: Ethics; Sustainable Development: Poverty Alleviation, Gender Equality, Climate Change and the Right to Science; Science in Parliaments and Decision-Making; Peace; and finally, COVID-19: Vaccine Inequity. To facilitate and support the work of the Working Group, it was agreed to build partnerships with relevant scientific and technological organizations, and to collaborate with other IPU bodies, such as the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, the Committee on Middle East Questions and the Advisory Group on Health.

During its sittings, the Working Group began deliberating on a proposed International Charter on Technoscience Ethics, which would be an ethical framework on the application and use of science and technology that could be used as a foundation for countries wishing to establish legislation in the field. The Working Group agreed that the Charter would not impose any obligations but make suggestions each country would be able to adapt to their own culture and domestic law. The Charter would be submitted as a resolution at the 144th Assembly in Nusa Dua, Indonesia in March 2022, for validation by the IPU Governing Council, and would be officially presented during the international conference entitled *Science, Ethics, and Human Development* in Viet Nam in September 2022, organized by the *Rencontres du Vietnam* in collaboration with CERN, the Parliament of Viet Nam, and the organizers of the International Year of Basic Science for Sustainable Development 2022.

Statistics of the Gender Partnership Group

Status of participation of women delegates at the 143rd Assembly of the IPU (as at 30 November 2021)

Composition of delegations of IPU Members at the last eight IPU statutory meetings (April 2017 - present)

Meeting	Total delegates	Total/percentage of women delegates		Total delegations	Total/percentage of all-male delegations (2 or more)		Total all-female delegations (2 or more)	Total single-sex delegations (2 or more)	Total single-member delegations (male and female)
Madrid (11/21)	509	198	38.9	117	10	9.3	3	13	10
Virtual Gva (05/21)	755	287	38	133	8	6.2	2	10	4
Belgrade (10/19)	719	221	30.7	149	15	11.4	0	15	17
Doha (04/19)	721	219	30.3	147	16	11.8	0	16	12
Geneva (10/18)	751	247	32.9	149	17	12.1	4	21	9
Geneva (03/18)	745	227	30.5	148	18	12.7	3	21	6
St. Petersburg (10/17)	829	249	30.0	155	17	11.8	1	18	11
Dhaka (04/17)	612	193	31.5	126	11	9.6	1	12	12

Single-sex, multi-member delegations of IPU Members present in Madrid (as at 30 November 2021)

N°	Country	Madrid 11/21			Virtual 05/21			Belgrade 10/19			Doha 04/19			Geneva 10/18			Geneva 03/18			St. Petersburg 17			Dhaka 17		
		Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total
1	Cambodia	0	2	2	2	5	7	2	4	6	1	4	5	3	3	6	absent			1	5	6	2	3	5
2	Guinea-Bissau	2	0	2	absent			absent			1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	5	7	absent		
3	Iran	0	4	4	1	8	9	1	7	8	2	7	9	2	6	8	1	7	8	1	7	8	2	6	8
4	Kuwait	0	6	6	0	4	4	1	7	8	1	7	8	1	7	8	1	6	7	1	7	8	0	7	7
5	Latvia	0	3	3	2	2	4	0	2	2	1	3	4	1	1	2	1	2	3	2	3	5	1	1	2
6	Madagascar	0	4	4	3	6	9	2	3	5	absent			absent			3	5	8	1	5	6	0	1	1
7	Malta	0	3	3	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	3	3	1	1	2	0	2	2	0	3	3	0	1	1
8	Mexico	3	0	3	5	5	10	5	2	7	6	4	10	6	2	8	5	5	10	4	6	10	6	4	10
9	Mongolia	0	4	4	2	7	9	2	3	5	3	3	6	1	2	3	1	3	4	1	4	5	1	7	8
10	Panama	2	0	2	2	1	3	1	0	1	1	2	3	absent			0	2	2	1	5	6	1	1	2
11	Paraguay	0	2	2	1	2	3	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	absent		
12	Tunisia	0	4	4	2	6	8	0	1	1	0	4	4	2	2	4	2	1	3	1	1	2	absent		
13	Yemen	0	5	5	0	8	8	0	8	8	absent			0	5	5	0	7	7	absent			absent		

Single-member delegations of IPU Members present in Madrid (as at 30 November 2021)

N°	Country	Madrid 11/21			Virtual May 21			Belgrade 10/19			Doha 04/19			Geneva 10/18			Geneva 03/18			St. Petersburg 17			Dhaka 17		
		Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total
1	Belarus	1	0	1	2	2	4	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	5	6	0	1	1
2	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	1	1	absent			0	2	2	absent			absent			0	4	4	0	2	2	absent		
3	Eswatini	1	0	1	absent			1	2	3	0	4	4	absent			absent			0	2	2	1	4	5
4	Iceland	0	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	0	1	3	0	3
5	Kazakhstan	1	0	1	5	4	9	2	7	9	1	8	9	1	3	4	1	3	4	2	6	8	absent		
6	Lebanon	0	1	1	1	2	3	absent			1	4	5	1	4	5	0	2	2	1	2	3	0	2	2
7	Luxembourg	1	0	1	0	1	1	absent			0	2	2	absent			absent			0	3	3	0	1	1
8	Philippines	1	0	1	5	5	10	3	8	11	0	1	1	2	7	9	2	3	5	3	5	8	0	2	2
9	Seychelles	0	1	1	1	3	4	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	1	2	1	3	4	2	2	4
10	Slovenia	0	1	1	2	0	2	1	3	4	2	1	3	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	3	absent		

44th session of the Gender Partnership Group**Delegations with 40 to 60 per cent of women parliamentarians**

Are considered as gender-balanced those delegations that have at least 40 per cent women or men as delegates. The countries are ordered according to the percentage of women parliamentarians in their delegations at the 143rd IPU Assembly. There were a total of 44 gender-balanced delegations out of 117 delegations (37.6 per cent) of IPU Members present at the 143rd IPU Assembly (as at 30 November 2021).

Delegations with 40 to 49.9 per cent women parliamentarians (11)

Azerbaijan (40%)
Belgium (40%)
Denmark (40%)
Ghana (40%)
Italy (40%)
Nepal (40%)
Senegal (40%)
South Sudan (40%)
Viet Nam (40%)
Bahrain (43%)
Russian Federation (44%)

Delegations with 50 per cent women parliamentarians (23)

Benin
Central African Republic
Croatia
Czech Republic
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Equatorial Guinea
Estonia
Finland
Israel
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Monaco
North Macedonia
Peru
Poland
Serbia
Sweden
Uganda
Ukraine
United Arab Emirates
Uruguay
Zimbabwe

Delegations with 50.1 to 60 per cent women parliamentarians (10)

Cameroon (57%)
Andorra (60%)
Bolivia (Plurinational State of) (60%)
Egypt (60%)
Hungary (60%)
Kenya (60%)
Netherlands (60%)
Portugal (60%)
Romania (60%)
Uzbekistan (60%)

Calendar of future meetings and other activities

*Approved by the Governing Council at its 208th session
(Madrid, 30 November 2021)*

Parliamentary event at the 16th Internet Governance Forum	KATOWICE (Poland) 7 – 8 December 2021
Arab regional parliamentary forum on the 2030 Agenda organized in cooperation with UN ESCWA and the Islamic Development Bank	Virtual 13 – 14 December 2021
Joint IPU and UNICEF event on child rights for the Europe and Central Asia Region	Virtual 14 December 2021
Series of virtual webinars on nuclear disarmament organized with PNND	Virtual December 2021 – December 2022
Parliamentary Forum on the occasion of the 5th UN Conference on the LDCs	DOHA (Qatar) 22 January 2022
Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the UN	NEW YORK (USA) 17 – 18 February 2022
Regional seminar on achieving the SDGs for Asia Pacific Parliaments	ISLAMABAD (Pakistan) 22 – 24 February 2022
Side event at the 5th Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2)	NAIROBI (Kenya) 28 February – 2 March 2022 (virtual)
Annual parliamentary meeting at the Commission on the Status of Women	NEW YORK (USA) Week of 14 March 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
144th Assembly and related meetings	NUSA DUA (Indonesia) 20 – 24 March 2022
Call of the Sahel Conference	First quarter of 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
Information seminar on the structure and functioning of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for French-speaking participants	GENEVA (IPU Headquarters) May/June 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
Global Conference on the Elimination of Violence against Women	KIEV (Ukraine) May/June 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
International or regional workshop for members of Parliamentary Human Rights Committees	GENEVA (Switzerland) May/June 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
Meeting of the IPU Executive Committee	MONTEVIDEO (Uruguay) June 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
15th Workshop of Parliamentary Scholars and Parliamentarians, co-sponsored by the IPU and the Centre for Legislative Studies, University of Hull, United Kingdom	WROXTON (United Kingdom) 30 – 31 July 2022
Parliamentary Forum at the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development	NEW YORK (USA) July 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
Parliamentary meeting in the context of the WTO Public Forum	GENEVA (Switzerland) September – October 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)

Workshop for members of Parliamentary Human Rights Committees from French-speaking countries that have recently or will soon be reviewed by the Human Rights Council	GENEVA (Switzerland) September 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
145th Assembly and related meetings	KIGALI (Rwanda) 19 – 23 October 2022
Speakers' Summit (P20) on the occasion of the G20	Indonesia November 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
Annual Parliamentary Conference on the WTO	GENEVA (Switzerland) November – December 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
14th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament	Uzbekistan September 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
Capacity-building regional workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the G5 Sahel	NIAMEY (Niger) 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
Parliamentary conference on migration in the Mediterranean	Turkey 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
Interregional seminar on the SDGs	BEIJING (China) 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
Second regional seminar for African parliaments on achieving the SDGs	DJIBOUTI (Djibouti) 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
Third regional seminar for the parliaments of Latin America and the Caribbean on achieving the SDGs	PANAMA CITY (Panama) 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
Third regional seminar for the Twelve Plus Group on achieving the SDGs	PARIS (France) 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
World Conference on Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue: <i>Working together for peace and humanity</i>	ST. PETERSBURG (Russian Federation) 2022 (Dates to be confirmed)
48th Session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO	2022 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Capacity-building regional workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the Eurasia group	2022 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Capacity-building regional workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC)	2022 Venue and dates to be confirmed
8th Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians	2022 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Capacity-building regional workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the African Group	2022 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Regional seminar on Children's Rights	2022 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Regional workshop on promoting the rights of the child for the parliaments of the East and South Asia region	2022 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Fifth South Asia Speakers' Summit on achieving the SDGs	2022 Venue and dates to be confirmed

Workshop on comprehensive disarmament	2022 Venue, format and dates to be confirmed
The global empowerment series: Briefings and trainings for young parliamentarians	2022 Virtual meeting (Every other month)
Series of Regional and Global Virtual Workshops on gender equality and women's empowerment	2022 Virtual meeting (Dates to be confirmed)
Global Workshop to follow up on the IPU resolution on universal health coverage	2022 Virtual meeting (Dates to be confirmed)

Agenda of the 144th Assembly

(Nusa Dua, Indonesia, 20–24 March 2022)

1. Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 144th Assembly
2. Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
3. General Debate
4. *Rethinking and reframing the approach to peace processes with a view to fostering lasting peace*
(Standing Committee on Peace and International Security)
5. *Leveraging Information and Communication Technology as an enabler for the education sector, including in times of pandemic*
(Standing Committee on Sustainable Development)
6. Reports of the Standing Committees
7. Approval of the subject items for the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and for the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development for the 146th Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs