



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

148th IPU Assembly and related meetings

Geneva, Switzerland
23-27 March 2024

Results of the proceedings



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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148th Assembly

1. Opening of the Assembly

The IPU Anthem was played at the start of the Assembly.

Dr. T. Ackson, IPU President, opened the Assembly on 24 March 2024 and invited delegates to observe a moment of reflection to honour colleagues who had passed away since the last Assembly, notably Mr. H.G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, and the thousands of people around the world who had died as a result of war, humanitarian catastrophe, terrorist attacks, violence and illness. She noted that the 148th Assembly, her first as IPU President, was the first time that an Assembly was being held in Geneva in almost six years and thanked those Member Parliaments who had hosted highly successful Assemblies in the interim.

The choice of parliamentary diplomacy as the theme for the Assembly and of peace and security as the IPU's policy focus for 2024 were timely given the proliferation of conflict around the world, and brought the IPU back to its founding principles as the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue. She cited numerous conflict situations where the IPU was working constantly to bring together parliamentarians – the Middle East, Ukraine and the Russian Federation, and the Sahel, to name just a few – and expressed her hope that, during her mandate, the IPU would expand its promotion of parliamentary dialogue to the many other situations where it was sorely needed.

Mr. M. Chungong, IPU Secretary General, congratulated the President on her first Assembly and welcomed delegates back to Geneva after an almost six-year absence. The holding of an Assembly in the city of multilateralism and peace would send a strong signal to the world on the IPU's staunch commitment to peace and security. In their deliberations, he was sure that delegates would want to live up to the IPU's motto – "For democracy. For everyone." – and the expectations of their 46,000 colleagues around the world and the people they served. Parliamentarians had great potential to be key stakeholders in peace processes and to bring the voices of the people to the negotiating table.

He hoped that parliamentarians would take the opportunity through the many activities planned at the current Assembly to emphasize the importance of reconciliation, of dialogue across political, religious and ideological divides, and of peaceful coexistence. Over 135 years ago, the founders of the IPU, Cremer and Passy, had recognized the importance of dialogue as a means of resolving disputes and misunderstandings, and parliamentarians around the world should continue to recognize and realize those founding values as their common agenda.

Mr. D. Garden (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, said that he had been born in 1986, a time when the world had had legitimate fears of the consequences of a catastrophic nuclear attack, but that in the following years, the global consensus had coalesced around a liberal democratic model greatly improving the prospects for peace. In recent years, however, the world appeared to have sunk back into levels of instability not seen since the end of the Cold War. Young people bore the heaviest burden of war, with thousands of young victims in every one of the major conflicts currently raging around the world.

As outlined in United Nations Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), it was vital for young people to participate in decision-making, but particularly in peace processes, as conduits for the voices of youth. War should not be considered an inescapable feature of the human condition, and peace should not be considered unattainable, but rather the only battle worth fighting.

In a keynote video message, **Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians**, expressed her conviction that parliamentarians believed in the potential of parliamentary diplomacy and encouraged them to extend that belief to the huge potential of women to contribute to and lead processes that led to peace and security. Next year would mark the 25th anniversary of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, but many countries were still failing to place women at the heart of conflict prevention and resolution.

The women, peace and security agenda was the tool the world needed to build bridges to sustainable peace, and to progress from exclusion to democratic decision-making and from gender inequality to gender justice. To that end, parliamentarians needed to work towards gender parity in decision-making, the participation and leadership of women in peace processes, and the elimination of violence against women. She encouraged parliamentarians to pledge their support and allocate appropriate budgets to women's organizations, notably those helping the survivors of sexual violence in conflict.

In a video message, **Ms. M. Robinson, Chair of The Elders, former President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**, said that parliaments played an indispensable role in building bridges for peace and understanding, and in finding a consensus on how to tackle shared challenges; a role that was particularly valuable in the current era of increasing social polarization and geopolitical tensions. As a former parliamentarian and participant in IPU events, she had been heartened to hear that, in addition to parliamentary diplomacy, the Assembly would also focus on the revitalization of multilateralism, in a year in which the United Nations Summit of the Future would aim to chart a new way forward for international cooperation.

The world was facing several existential threats – the climate and nature emergency, pandemics, nuclear weapons, and the risk of unregulated artificial intelligence – but too much decision-making was governed by short-term and self-interested calculations. Faced with the global proliferation of conflicts, the multilateral international peace and security architecture appeared completely ill-equipped to cope. This was why The Elders, an organization founded by the late Nelson Mandela and of which she was currently Chair, was advocating for long-view leadership, to tackle these threats and build a more resilient and equal society. Such an approach would rely on a determination to resolve seemingly intractable problems, the wisdom to make decisions based on scientific evidence and reason, and the humility to listen to all those affected. In a year in which 40% of the world's population would have the chance to vote in consequential elections, she hoped that parliamentarians would heed her call to adopt a more long-term view.

2. Participation

Delegations from 144 Member Parliaments took part in the work of the Assembly*:

Afghanistan**, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia (The), Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar**, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Parliament of Jamaica also attended the 148th Assembly in an observer capacity, with a view to future affiliation.

The following seven Associate Members also took part in the Assembly: the Arab Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS), the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO), the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie (APF).

Observers included representatives of:

(i) the United Nations and related organizations: United Nations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), Joint United Nations

* For the complete list of IPU Members, see [page 36](#).

** As per the decision of the Governing Council in Madrid in November 2021, the IPU continues to engage with the former, democratically elected parliamentarians from Afghanistan and with the Committee to Represent Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) for Myanmar. The corresponding delegations attend Assemblies in a non-voting observer capacity.

Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW);

(ii) parliamentary assemblies and associations: African Parliamentary Union (APU), Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), Baltic Assembly, Collective Security Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly (CSTOPA), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR), Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC), International Parliamentary Network for Education (IPNEd), Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (IAO), Maghreb Consultative Council (MCC), Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), Parliamentary Assembly of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (AP-CPLP), Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States (TURKPA), Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States (PUIC), Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF), and UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health;

(iii) Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI);

(iv) International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Development Law Organization (IDLO), International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), Organization of American States, and Sovereign Order of Malta.

Several special guests also attended the Assembly and gave addresses at high-level segments.

Of the 1,479 delegates who attended the Assembly, 716 were members of parliament (703 from Member Parliaments and 13 from Associate Member delegations), including 51 Presiding Officers, and 48 Deputy Presiding Officers. Member Parliaments' delegations included 252 women MPs (35.85%) and 194 young MPs (27.60%).

In continuation of practices established at recent Assemblies, the 148th Assembly was an in-person event with adaptations for hybrid participation. Nearly all the session rooms were equipped for external engagement and remote interpretation and these technical capacities were well used throughout the Assembly. All official side events, as well as the Executive Committee and the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (CHRP), allowed remote participation, with 84 users participating actively online in these sessions.

The proceedings of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, Assembly General Debate and all sittings of the Governing Council were live streamed in English and the original language, with a total of 14,805 views. See the [Media and Communications](#) section for more details.

3. Choice of an emergency item

On 24 March 2024, the President informed the Assembly that the following six requests for the inclusion of an emergency item had been proposed:

- *Raising awareness of the International Court of Justice provisional measures for Israel in relation to Palestinians in Gaza, and of the need for urgent action on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza* (South Africa with the support of the African Group and the Arab Group)
- *The immediate release of the hostages in Gaza* (Israel)
- *Parliamentary diplomacy for peace in Palestine* (Indonesia and Malaysia)
- *Call for urgent action regarding the conflict in the Middle East* (Denmark, France, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal, Sweden and United Kingdom)¹
- *Free, fair and transparent elections without prohibitions: Towards an orderly and peaceful democratic transition in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela* (Argentina, on behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Guyana, Peru and Uruguay)
- *Call for urgent action to end the aggression and massive violations of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

¹ Iceland informed the IPU of its intention to support Denmark's proposal after the list of proposals (A/148/2-Inf.1-rev.5) had already been distributed in the room.

The President also announced that negotiations were under way for a joint proposal by South Africa (with support of the African Group and the Arab Group), and Denmark (and six other countries in the Twelve Plus Group). Ultimately this joint proposal did not materialize.

Jordan spoke in favour of South Africa's proposal and Canada spoke against.

Ireland spoke against the proposal of Israel. Israel ultimately withdrew its proposal.

Indonesia and Malaysia withdrew their proposal in support of South Africa's proposal.

Canada spoke in favour of Denmark's proposal and Jordan spoke against.

The proposal of Argentina was jointly presented by Argentina and Guyana. Cuba spoke against the proposal.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo withdrew its proposal in support of South Africa's proposal.

The Assembly then proceeded with a roll-call vote on the three remaining proposals (see pages [53-55](#)).

The President announced that none of the three proposals still on the table had obtained the requisite two-thirds majority. The President informed the Assembly that such an outcome meant that none of them could be included on the agenda of the 148th Assembly in accordance with the Rules of the Assembly (Rule 11.2(a)).

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

(a) General Debate: *Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding* (Item 3)

During the three days of deliberations, some 184 legislators from 129 Member Parliaments, including 48 Presiding Officers and 19 young parliamentarians, as well as representatives of 5 Associate Members and 14 permanent observers, contributed to the General Debate. The proceedings of the Debate were webcast, and many of the good practices and recommendations that emerged were reflected in the outcome document.

High-level segment – *Mitigating the humanitarian consequences of war: The role of parliaments*

The General Debate included a high-level segment on 25 March 2024 on the theme *Mitigating the humanitarian consequences of war: The role of parliaments*. The debate was organized within the framework of the 75th anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. The segment featured high-level representatives from leading agencies working on humanitarian issues: Ms. M. Spoljaric Egger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Ms. P. Patten, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Ms. E. Tan, Director of the UNHCR Division of International Protection.

The debate focused on the humanitarian impacts of war, in particular with regard to displaced populations and sexual violence in conflicts. While Ms. Tan addressed the issue of displacement, especially of refugees, as a consequence of armed conflicts, Ms. Patten highlighted the impact caused by conflict-related sexual violence and the need both to strengthen accountability mechanisms to prosecute this crime and to address its root causes. Ms. Spoljaric Egger stressed the importance of upholding international humanitarian law (IHL) norms to mitigate the humanitarian impacts of war, and how this legal framework remains relevant and necessary in tackling the challenges brought about by today's armed conflicts. She also pointed out the importance of ensuring implementation of IHL norms at the domestic level and the crucial role played by parliaments in achieving this goal.

Delegates from IPU Member Parliaments discussed the need for the international community to avoid double standards when it comes to ensuring respect for IHL obligations and how addressing the root causes of violations of these norms could be a way to contribute to conflict prevention. Delegates also discussed the current lack of support provided to humanitarian assistance efforts in crisis situations and the importance of scaling up funding to humanitarian organizations working in these contexts. Delegates acknowledged that IHL still played a major role in tackling the humanitarian impacts of war, but also highlighted the need to advance the law to address the reality of today's armed conflicts, such as in the areas of new technologies and environmental protection. Ms. Spoljaric Egger underlined in her final remarks that the lack of respect for IHL did not challenge its legitimacy.

The IPU President and Secretary General reiterated the Organization's commitment to pursue the mobilization of parliaments to ensure respect of IHL and other legal frameworks of relevance with regard to conflicts and their impacts. They also reaffirmed the IPU's commitment to its existing partnerships with the ICRC, UNHCR and other UN bodies working in this area.

Special segment featuring the Director-General of the World Health Organization

Dr. T.A. Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), addressed the Assembly in a special segment on 25 March 2024. He emphasized the importance of signing a global Pandemic Accord and invited parliamentarians to counter the misinformation and disinformation that surrounded current negotiations. During a subsequent question and answer session, parliamentarians expressed particular interest in the Pandemic Accord, as well as in women's health, harmful practices, and the linkages between health and climate change. A new memorandum of understanding between the IPU and WHO was signed on this occasion, charting the course of their cooperation for the next five years.

Address by the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs

On 26 March 2024, Dr. F. Paullier, the first United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, addressed the Assembly on the topic of the General Debate. He emphasized the role of youth as a beacon of hope for peace and described the United Nations Security Council resolution 2250 as a groundbreaking achievement in recognizing the positive role that young people play in fostering peace and preventing violence. However, much more work was needed to ensure the implementation of the agenda set out by the resolution. Young people, and especially young women, continued to face heavy obstacles to participating in politics and were underrepresented. He called on parliamentarians to: support the youth, peace and security agenda by holding governments to account for its implementation, including through parliamentary commissions; create youth bodies in parliament to better channel the voices of young people; advocate for national plans and roadmaps for peace; and support the IPU's *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign.

Address by the Chief of Staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

On 26 March 2024, the IPU President and Secretary General welcomed Mr. B. Majekodunmi, Chief of Staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to the plenary. Mr. Majekodunmi noted that, for many years, the IPU had had a strong partnership with UNRWA and, given the current situation in the Middle East, it was important for parliamentarians to hear first-hand about the realities on the ground. He vividly described the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza, marked by widespread death and destruction, impending famine and the looming collapse of health care services. Women and children were dying of starvation and disease, and urgent action was needed both in terms of a ceasefire and steps to ensure access for humanitarian aid. He also issued a strong call for parliaments to ensure adequate and continued funding for UNRWA. The IPU President expressed the Organization's strong support for UNRWA's mission to provide relief and essential services – including education, health care and emergency assistance – to millions of Palestinian civilians. All parliaments were called upon to support these efforts, which went well beyond politics and should be rooted in a shared belief in every individual's intrinsic human rights, dignity and worth.

(b) Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security held three sittings from 24 to 26 March 2024, with its President, Ms. A. Kuspan (Kazakhstan), in the chair. The Committee was entrusted with the task of debating the draft resolution *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*. The draft resolution and an accompanying explanatory memorandum had been prepared by the two co-Rapporteurs, Ms. M. Stolbizer (Argentina) and Mr. C. Lacroix (Belgium).

Following the presentation of the draft resolution by one of the two co-Rapporteurs, 34 speakers took the floor to express their thoughts on the matter. During the drafting process, the Committee considered 200 amendments tabled by 22 Member Parliaments and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. Around one-third of the proposed amendments and sub-amendments were taken on board.

The Bureau of the Committee gathered on the morning of 26 March 2024. Its main decision was to put forward a subject item stemming from the discussions during the meeting. The Bureau also agreed to continue consultations to establish a full programme of work for the 149th Assembly.

At the Committee's last sitting on the afternoon of 26 March 2024, the consolidated draft resolution was adopted by a vote and the subject item proposed by the Bureau was accepted.

On 27 March 2024, the President of the Committee presented the draft resolution at the plenary sitting of the Assembly, and it was adopted by consensus. The delegations of India, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and the Russian Federation expressed their opposition to the entire text of the resolution. The delegations of China and Lithuania expressed a reservation on the entire text of the resolution. The delegations of

Australia, Canada, Cuba, France, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Türkiye and the United Kingdom expressed reservations on several paragraphs and, in some cases, on the use of the term “autonomous weapon systems” without mentioning the characteristic of lethality.

The Assembly approved the subject item presented by the Bureau entitled *The role of parliaments in advancing a two-State solution in Palestine* and approved the nomination of Mr. M.A. Bouchouit (Algeria) and Mr. J. Buttimer (Ireland) as the co-Rapporteurs for the next resolution. When putting forward the subject item, the Bureau indicated that for reasons of inclusiveness due to the sensitivity of the subject, it should have the possibility to establish a team comprising a co-Rapporteur from each geopolitical group. The President of the IPU will therefore be entrusted with pursuing consultations with a view to appointing these rapporteurs at the earliest possible opportunity pursuant to Rule 13.4 of the Rules of the Standing Committees.

(c) Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development held its sittings on 24, 25 and 26 March 2024 with its President, Mr. W. William (Seychelles), in the chair. The Committee was entrusted with the task of drafting the resolution on *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*. The draft resolution and an accompanying explanatory memorandum had been prepared by the co-Rapporteurs, Ms. M.S. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates), Mr. S. Patra (India) and Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine).

Drafting of the resolution was conducted in plenary. The Committee had received 293 amendments submitted by 27 Member Parliaments. The consolidated draft resolution was adopted by consensus. India and Iran (Islamic Republic of) expressed their opposition to the entire text. China expressed reservations on preambular paragraphs 7 and 8, and operative paragraphs 7, 8 and 25. Türkiye expressed reservations on operative paragraphs 24, 25 and 26.

At its final sitting and at the proposal of its Bureau, the Committee adopted its next subject item entitled *Parliamentary strategies to mitigate the long-lasting impact of conflicts, including armed conflicts, on sustainable development*. The Committee approved the nomination of Ms. H. Ramzy Fayez (Bahrain), Ms. E.T. Muteka (Namibia) and Mr. R. Fogiel (Poland) as co-Rapporteurs.

The Committee also approved a work plan for the next Assembly. It includes a debate on the topic of the next resolution, a panel debate entitled *The role of parliaments in preventing corporate tax avoidance and achieving sustainable development*, as well as a segment to prepare for the Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Azerbaijan (COP29).

No candidature was received for the Bureau’s vacant post.

(d) Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

The Committee held two sittings.

At its first sitting, held on 25 March 2024 with Vice-President Mr. A. Torosyan (Armenia) in the chair, the Committee held a debate on its next resolution, *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*. The debate explored the potential benefits of artificial intelligence while also drawing attention to the multiple risks associated with this emerging technology, with contributions from experts, the rapporteurs (Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada) and Ms. N. Lugangira (United Republic of Tanzania)) and more than 30 delegates.

At its second sitting, held on 26 March 2024 with Mr. Torosyan again in the chair, the Committee held a debate on *Sustainable actions to improve the life conditions of people with disabilities, including their chances for education and work opportunities*. The debate highlighted the important role parliaments can play to advance implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, by ensuring that laws, policies and budgets advance the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community and remove all forms of discrimination and stigma based on disability.

In application of Rule 10.2 of the Rules of the Standing Committees, the Committee declared the position on the Bureau held by Mr. E. Uwizeyimana (Rwanda) to be vacant. An election to fill this vacant position will take place at the next Assembly.

For further information about the two debates, see [page 56](#).

(e) Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

The Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs held two sessions. The first session featured the new UN Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, Dr. F. Paullier, who introduced the new Youth Office and its mandate to facilitate youth access to debates and processes across the UN system. Some 48 delegations were present for the vigorous discussion and over 18 interventions were made.

The second session focused on the sustainability of the UN's humanitarian work. The committee was briefed by high-level officials from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). These officials shared important information regarding humanitarian crises around the world. Over 34 delegations were present and 16 made interventions.

The Committee adopted a motion to encourage parliamentarians to engage domestically on Security Council reform, foster a debate in their parliaments, discuss the issue with their permanent representative to the UN and be ready to ratify any agreed changes to the Security Council.

On 25 March 2024, the Committee convened a special high-level meeting for Speakers and Deputy Speakers on the crisis of multilateralism. The discussion featured Ms. T. Valovaya, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, and Ms. R. Grynspan, Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

5. Special accountability segment

For the fifth consecutive Assembly, the General Debate included a special accountability segment. During this segment, delegations were invited to contribute with interventions on their actions to advance parliamentary solidarity to defend the human rights of parliamentarians, parliamentary engagement for the promotion of inclusive societies and parliamentary action to tackle climate change.

In this context, the IPU President emphasized the IPU's nature as a Member-driven Organization, in which decisions and outcomes needed to be translated into national realities for the well-being of the people. As per the IPU Statutes, Member Parliaments are required to share details with the Organization of results accomplished in follow-up to IPU decisions.

To facilitate this process, each year, a number of parliaments from each geopolitical group are designated to report and answer a survey prepared by the IPU Secretariat. The rate of respondents reached a high of 71% in 2023. In 2024, 38 countries across all six geopolitical groups are scheduled to report.

A total of 18 delegations, including the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) and the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (IAO), both IPU observers, took the floor to share their good practices in following up on relevant declarations adopted by the IPU in recent years. Four delegations shared multimedia content that was screened during the segment.

Concrete examples of parliamentary action included:

- Australia: Australia had collaborated with its Pacific Island neighbours to strengthen climate resilience. Last year, Australia and Tuvalu signed the first-ever bilateral agreement on climate mobility. Special visa arrangements had been implemented for Tuvaluans threatened by climate change so they could live, work and study in Australia. Australia had also allocated funds to the Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project to enhance the islands' climate resistance.
- Azerbaijan: Azerbaijan would be hosting COP29 in November 2024 and had been going through a responsible transition from fossil fuels to alternative clean energy sources. The country was involved in various projects that aimed at promoting renewable energy, such as joining the Global Methane Pledge initiative and participating in the European Union's Green Corridor project.
- China: China had been the global leader in renewable energy investment for seven consecutive years and had dominated the output and sales of new energy vehicles (NEVs), with half of the world's NEVs operating on Chinese roads. To follow up on IPU resolutions and other international agreements, the National People's Congress had enacted and implemented several laws to support renewable energy and clean transportation, which included the Energy Conservation Law, the Promotion of Clean Energy Law and the Circular Economy Promotion Law.

- Cabo Verde: The Parliament had prioritized the transition to zero carbon emissions and focused on green and circular economies through digitalization efforts. Cabo Verde had established safe havens to preserve marine biodiversity and pioneered plastic waste reduction initiatives.
- Chile: The Parliament was setting an example of inclusivity by employing individuals with Down syndrome in the Chamber of Deputies. The Chilean delegation encouraged the IPU to address the subject of persons with disabilities in its meetings further.
- Denmark: The Parliament had decided to actively follow up on cases of violation of the human rights of MPs examined by the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, in Europe. This included sending delegations to court hearings, sending letters to detained MPs, and discussing the cases with representatives of the countries in question.
- Indonesia: The Indonesian House of Representatives had been actively promoting a green economy transition, giving priority to finalizing a new Renewable Energy Bill. Indonesia was also committed to fostering an inclusive and peaceful society by ensuring equal respect for all religions, including the passing of a bill that ensured equal treatment of all religions in the country.
- Latvia: The Parliament was currently enhancing responses to hate speech by collaborating closely with multiple stakeholders, including NGOs and law enforcement bodies. While hate speech was criminalized in Latvia, the Parliament was also exploring more nuanced measures to promote inclusive societies and facilitate societal cohesion through dialogue.
- Thailand: The Parliament was working to strengthen inclusivity in Thai society by focusing on marriage equality, indigenous people's rights and labour protection. The lower house was on the brink of passing legislation on marriage equality and become the first country in the ASEAN to do so.

Other delegations that took the floor during this segment were Canada, Germany, India, Malawi, Mexico and Tunisia.

6. Concluding sitting of the Assembly

At the concluding sitting on 27 March 2024, the IPU President introduced the Geneva Declaration on *Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding* (see [page 38](#)) and invited the youngest male and one of the youngest female MPs in attendance at the Assembly, Mr. A. Tongjaisod (Thailand) and Ms. E.T. Muteka (Namibia), to present the Declaration. The Assembly unanimously endorsed the Geneva Declaration.

Recalling that it had not been possible to reach a consensus on the choice of an emergency item earlier in the week, the IPU President reported that she and the Secretary General would imminently be issuing a leadership statement on behalf of the global parliamentary community, on urgent action to address the situation in Gaza (see [page 41](#)).

Ms. A. Kuspan (Kazakhstan), President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, presented the resolution *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence* (see [page 42](#)). The Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus, with opposition to the resolution expressed by India, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and the Russian Federation, and reservations expressed by Australia, Canada, China, Cuba, France, Lithuania, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Türkiye and the United Kingdom.

Mr. W. William (Seychelles), President of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, presented the resolution *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity* (see [page 47](#)). The Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus, with opposition to the resolution expressed by India and Iran (Islamic Republic of), and reservations expressed by China and Türkiye.

The Assembly took note of the Reports of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, presented by its Vice-President, Mr. A. Torosyan (Armenia), and of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, presented by its President, Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada) (see [page 56](#)).

The Assembly approved the subject items for the resolutions to be drafted by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development for adoption at the 150th IPU Assembly, together with the rapporteurs that would be working on the draft resolutions (see [page 34](#)).

At the conclusion of the Assembly, the representatives of the geopolitical groups took the floor: Ms. S.S. Chaudhury (Bangladesh) on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, Mr. B. Boughali (Algeria) on behalf of the Arab Group, Mr. M. Bouden (Algeria) on behalf of the African Group, Ms. S. Carvajal Isunza (Mexico) on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, Ms. V. Riotton (France) on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group and Mr. T. Vardanyan (Armenia) on behalf of the Eurasia Group. They thanked the President, Secretary General, the staff of the Secretariat, and the Swiss hosts for their tireless work in ensuring another hugely successful Assembly, and echoed the Secretary General's gratitude and congratulations, expressed at the Governing Council earlier in the day, to Ms. S.-A. Sader, Conference Services Officer, who would be retiring in the coming months. They deplored the failure of the membership to find a consensus on an emergency item for the second Assembly in a row but thanked the President and Secretary General for their initiative to release a leadership statement on the situation in Gaza. Even without an emergency item on the subject, the situation in Gaza had been brought to the fore in many discussions during the Assembly, and they expressed the hope that the revision of the IPU Statutes and Rules currently in progress would give rise to improved processes to allow the IPU membership to convey its position on such important issues.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. M. Chungong, IPU Secretary General, congratulated the President on her efficiency in presiding over her first Assembly. Noting that 2024 would mark the 135th anniversary of the IPU, he said that the Organization's founding fathers, Cremer and Passy, would have been extremely gratified to see over 700 MPs participating in the present Assembly and the high quality of the debates and outcomes. He hoped that Member Parliaments would use the opportunity of the 135th anniversary to rededicate their efforts to find peace around the world. He further highlighted the ongoing digital transformation of the IPU, which was in evidence at the Assembly through the increasing acceptance of a paperless approach, with many delegates now consulting the documents of the Assembly on their own digital devices. He looked forward to welcoming delegates back to Geneva for the 149th Assembly in October 2024.

In her concluding remarks, Dr. T. Ackson, IPU President and President of the 148th Assembly, expressed her gratitude to all those who had played a pivotal role in the organization of the Assembly, and in particular to the Swiss authorities for their warm welcome to Geneva. The robust level of participation at the Assembly and its strong focus on parliamentary diplomacy would send a signal to the international community that parliamentarians would support and contribute to efforts to reinvigorate multilateralism with a strong parliamentary dimension and a focus on inclusive dialogue as the only way to achieve long-lasting peace. She thanked delegates for their active participation, insightful contributions and unwavering commitment to the IPU, which had provided a strong foundation for the Assembly's numerous successful outcomes. She invited those present to take the Geneva Declaration back to their parliaments and consider organizing a special event on parliamentary diplomacy to mark the IPU's 135th anniversary on 30 June 2024, the International Day of Parliamentarism.

Dr. T. Ackson declared the 148th IPU Assembly closed and the IPU anthem was played.

213th session of the Governing Council

1. Report of the IPU President

The Governing Council took note of the report of the IPU President on her first five months in office and expressed its appreciation for her achievements in this short time. It also concurred with the Executive Committee that it was the collective responsibility of the global parliamentary community to create a platform for dialogue between the Parliaments of Israel and Palestine with a view to finding solutions to the ongoing crisis.

2. Report of the Secretary General

The Secretary General presented the [Impact Report 2023](#) covering the IPU's activities in the second year of implementation of its 2022-2026 Strategy. He highlighted numerous areas of impact across the Organization's five strategic objectives and the 2023 priority theme of climate change.

3. Financial results for 2023

The Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for 2023 were introduced by Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance. He reported that the 2023 accounts showed a healthy financial situation with an operating surplus of CHF 157,000 at year end. The surplus

had been added to the IPU Working Capital Fund, which was now at 91% of its target level. Expenditures were within budget for each of the Strategic Objectives and the income from the IPU's investments had improved thanks to the favourable market conditions in 2023.

Mr. Al Nuaimi welcomed the strong results yielded by the Secretary General's efforts to mobilize voluntary funds. This demonstrated that the IPU was recognized by donors as a reliable partner. He also noted that the amount of arrears in Member Parliament contributions had been increasing steadily in recent years. One main reason for this was the situation of the Parliament of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, whose arrears rose every year and now stood at CHF 662,000. He encouraged the governing bodies to decide how to address this exceptional situation. He also encouraged all Member Parliaments to work with their geopolitical groups to try to reduce the list of other Member Parliaments in arrears.

The Internal Auditor, Mr. H. Carneiro (Portugal), presented his report. He conveyed his opinion that the financial statements presented by the IPU accurately reflected its financial position as of 31 December 2023 and its financial performance throughout the year 2023, and complied fully with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). The new External Auditor, the Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia, had expressed a positive opinion on the Financial Statements with no reservations, confirming that all previous audit recommendations had now been implemented. Three new recommendations had been made relating to the IPU Pension Fund assets, the categorization of certain travel costs and the collection of arrears in Member Parliament contributions, all of which the IPU Secretariat had accepted and was in the process of implementing. Mr. Carneiro highlighted that the Governing Council should consider applying all the mechanisms at its disposal to address the build-up of arrears, including suspending the rights of those Member Parliaments who failed to meet their obligations, and detailing the reasons for its decisions taken on each Member Parliament in arrears. He also advised the IPU to make provisions over the coming years to compensate for the Pension Fund's reduction in assets, using the IPU's accumulated reserves.

Mr. Carneiro concluded that the financial management of the IPU had a strong foundation based on internal controls and its financial position was healthy. He recommended that the Governing Council approve the Secretary General's financial administration of the IPU and the financial results for 2023.

There were interventions from the floor congratulating the Sub-Committee on Finance and the Secretariat team for their work, seeking information on staffing and thanking the Indonesian Audit Board for the excellent audit report prepared under its new mandate.

The Governing Council approved the Secretary General's financial administration of the IPU and the financial results for 2023.

4. Financial situation of the IPU

The Governing Council received a report on the financial situation of the IPU as at 31 January 2024 and an updated list of unpaid assessed contributions. Reporting on behalf of the Executive Committee, Mr. Al Nuaimi noted that, as it was still early in the year, the situation was similar to the end of 2023. The Organization's budget performance was on track for the year so far. Investment markets had continued to perform well at the beginning of the year and the IPU's finances remained healthy and stable. The list of Members in arrears had reduced slightly but was still in need of close attention in 2024.

The Secretary General updated the Governing Council on the mobilization of voluntary funding. The IPU's work continued to be supported by grants from a range of parliaments, governments, agencies and foundations across Bangladesh, Benin, Canada, China, Ireland, Micronesia (Federated States of), Qatar, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, the European Union and the United Nations family.

5. Questions relating to membership and observer status

The Governing Council took note of ongoing efforts by the Secretariat and existing Member Parliaments to reach universal membership.

The Governing Council took note of the participation in the Assembly of a high-level delegation from Jamaica and expressed its hope that this Parliament would once again become a Member of the IPU in the near future.

The Governing Council also took note of ongoing discussions on the potential admission of Belize to the IPU in the not too distant future, and wished those involved every success in further expanding the IPU membership.

The Governing Council approved the recommendation of the Executive Committee to admit the Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPPPAL) and the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) as permanent observers to the IPU and wished these organizations every success in their cooperation with the IPU.

The Governing Council was apprised of the situation of certain parliaments, organized into four categories, and adopted a series of recommendations from the Executive Committee.

(a) Parliaments that are not functioning

The Parliament of **Afghanistan** had been dissolved by the Taliban, resulting in most former parliamentarians now being in exile in Canada, Türkiye and various European countries. The IPU governing bodies had taken a political decision not to recognize the Taliban regime. Instead, it had decided to allow the dissolved parliament to continue to participate in the work of the IPU in a non-voting observer capacity. Since then, the Parliament had regularly been represented at IPU Assemblies. Several IPU bodies, notably the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law and the Executive Committee, had been closely following the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. The Governing Council decided to maintain its decision to allow Afghanistan to participate in IPU meetings in a non-voting and non-elective capacity.

The Parliament of **Guinea-Bissau** had been dissolved by the President in violation of the constitutional provisions that forbade dissolution of the Parliament within 12 months of an election. Parliamentarians had been banned from accessing parliamentary property or resources and the Speaker had written to the IPU President to seek assistance. As a gesture of solidarity, the Secretary General had invited the Speaker of the dissolved Parliament to Geneva to explore how the IPU could offer its support. The Governing Council decided to continue to show solidarity with the Parliament of Guinea-Bissau, recommended continued engagement with its Speaker and asked to be kept informed of the outcome of those discussions.

In **Haiti**, no parliament was functioning, and the country was effectively in the hands of gangs, with no prospects of elections being organized in the near future. The Prime Minister had left the country and had no plans to return due to threats to his life from the warlords and gangs in charge. The Governing Council recommended that the IPU continue to monitor the situation and support every effort towards a return to constitutional order.

The situation in **Myanmar** was similar to Afghanistan. The military had taken power and did not recognize the results of the democratic elections held in 2020. In its previous decision on this case, the Governing Council had decided to recognize the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, which is a legislative body made up of parliamentarians, many of them now living abroad, and invite it to attend the IPU's meetings to represent Myanmar in a non-voting observer capacity. The Governing Council decided to maintain that decision.

In **Niger**, there had been no functioning parliament since the dissolution of the democratically elected legislature by the military. During the 147th IPU Assembly in Luanda, the Prime Minister of Niger informed the Secretary General that the transitional authorities were working on the establishment of a Consultative Council of the Transition, which would serve as the legislative branch during the transition. The Prime Minister had said that he would update the Secretary General as soon as possible on the arrangements related to that planned body. Upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the Governing Council decided to invite the IPU to continue monitoring the situation in Niger and provide assistance with a view to a return to constitutional order.

In **Sudan**, there had been no functioning parliament since the military coup in 2019. Several plans had been made for the organization of elections, but none had been followed through. In 2021, the IPU had decided to suspend the affiliation Sudan. A civil war had broken out in the country in 2023 and was still raging. In light of this, there were no prospects for elections in the near future and the Governing Council therefore decided to maintain the decision it had taken in 2021.

(b) Transitional parliaments

This category comprised **Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Guinea, Libya, Mali** and **South Sudan**.

The IPU had been engaging with the Transitional Legislative Assembly of **Burkina Faso**. The Secretary General had visited Burkina Faso in May 2023, to collect first-hand information and consult with the authorities on how the IPU could support a rapid return to normality. The organization of elections to end the transition was on hold as terrorists were currently occupying more than 40% of the territory of the country.

Mali was experiencing similar security issues and the military had taken power with a view to addressing the situation. A national transition process was ongoing and a transitional parliament was in place. In light of this, the IPU governing bodies had decided to retain the membership of Mali and recommended that the IPU Secretary General support efforts towards a return to constitutional order. Pursuant to that mandate, the Secretary General had visited the country in May 2023, and had met the various stakeholders involved in the transition. The authorities maintained that elections would still be held in 2024.

Like Burkina Faso and Mali, a transition period was ongoing in **Guinea**, with a Transitional National Council in place. The IPU governing bodies had decided to retain the membership of Guinea, and had mandated the Secretary General to engage and consult with the transitional authorities on how the IPU could successfully support the ongoing process to a rapid return of constitutional order. The Secretary General had visited Guinea during his West African tour in May 2023, when he had attended the launch of the constitutional policy debate intended to gather the views of the population on the draft constitution. A referendum on this draft was planned to take place no later than December 2024.

In **Chad**, a Transitional National Council was in place following the undemocratic change of the head of State, now the son of the late President Idriss Déby. The IPU was providing assistance to the transitional body pursuant to the decision of the governing bodies to retain the membership of Chad. A presidential election is due to take place in May 2024, followed by legislative elections.

In **Gabon**, in August 2023, the military had overthrown the supposed winner of the presidential election, Mr. Ali Bongo. The military authorities had begun a transitional process, implementing the related mechanisms including a transitional parliament. In light of this, the IPU governing bodies had decided to retain the membership of Gabon and recommended engagement with the transitional parliament to provide support. The Secretary General had visited Gabon in early 2024 where he had met with all the transitional authorities, including the Head of State, Mr. Oligui Nguema. In an inclusive approach, he had also paid a visit to former President Ali Bongo. The transitional process was proceeding well and a national dialogue on the next steps would take place from 2 to 30 April 2024.

In the case of **Libya**, the IPU had recognized the Parliament elected in 2014, based at the time in Tobruk and now located in Benghazi. One of the core missions of that Parliament had been to pave the way for elections, which had not yet taken place because of disagreements among the different actors involved. However, according to a recent update, an agreement had been reached between that Parliament and the executive authority based in Tripoli to organize elections in the near future when certain conditions had been met.

South Sudan was also engaged in a transitional process with a transitional parliament sworn in in 2021. However, the process had been extended to February 2025, affecting the organization of the election due to take place in December 2024.

For the seven transitional parliaments listed above, the Governing Council recommended that the IPU keep monitoring the situation, provide assistance where required with the drafting of new constitutions and legislative frameworks in those countries, and keep the governing bodies informed of progress.

Following up on this recommendation, during the Assembly, the Secretary General held a meeting with the heads of the delegations of Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Guinea and Mali, as well as Guinea-Bissau, to discuss the way forward in terms of IPU support to their respective transitional processes. The heads of delegations reiterated their gratitude to the IPU, which was among the rare organizations that not only understood their situation but had also suggested well-designed support for their return to normality. As a follow-up to this meeting, a regional workshop will be organized in Geneva to harmonize IPU support for those countries and to pool and share experience. The Geneva workshop will be followed by national follow-up activities during which specific issues will be addressed.

(c) Countries where the political situation is impacting the functioning of parliament

The Governing Council received an update on the case of the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**. While the IPU did not recognize either the parliament elected in 2015 or the one elected in 2020, the governing bodies had agreed to welcome a delegation from Venezuela to the IPU's statutory Assemblies provided that it was composed of representatives of these two parliaments. As per the mandate given to him by the governing bodies to help normalize the situation of Venezuela, the Secretary General had invited representatives of the 2020 parliament to Geneva for a consultation in January 2024, as the 2015 parliament had effectively ceased to exist. The representatives had also

participated in a hearing with the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians on the case of the Venezuelan parliamentarians before that Committee. Though there were signs of normalization of relations between President Maduro's regime and the opposition – in light of the agreement reached in Barbados – recent developments indicated that a number of challenges remained to be addressed such as the request from the regime for the closure of the OHCHR office in Caracas, and the banning of a senior political opposition leader from running in the presidential election in July 2024. Noting that the situation in Venezuela remained challenging, the Governing Council supported the recommendation of the Executive Committee to defer any decision on Venezuela to its next session, when it would receive an update on the outcome of the July 2024 presidential elections.

In **Palestine**, the elections foreseen since 2010 had still not taken place and the current situation in the region did not offer better prospects. The Governing Council approved the recommendation of the Executive Committee to take note of the lack of progress and express the hope that the long-delayed elections would take place in the very near future.

Yemen remained a fully fledged Member Parliament that participated regularly in IPU activities. An agreement was in place to support the Secretariat of the Parliament, but it had not yet been implemented due to the ongoing war in the country. The Governing Council approved the recommendation of the Executive Committee to take note of that situation.

(d) Countries where the political situation constitutes a potential threat to parliament's capacity to function

This category comprised **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Eswatini, Peru** and the **Syrian Arab Republic**. The Governing Council approved the recommendation of the Executive Committee to invite the Secretariat to continue to monitor those situations and provide regular updates.

The Governing Council took note of the Executive Committee's proposal that **Eswatini** and **Peru** be removed from the list if the recent developments in the countries continued on a positive track.

6. IPU priority theme for 2024

The Secretary General introduced the priority theme for 2024, peace and security, and the numerous initiatives and activities under way and planned on this theme throughout the year.

The Secretary General said that the annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations in New York in February 2024 had focused on the role of parliaments in ending conflicts and promoting a more human-centred approach to peacebuilding. The theme of the 148th IPU Assembly was also directly linked to the priority theme, with parliamentary diplomacy taking centre stage, as well as the negotiation of the resolution on *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*. At a more programmatic level, the IPU was stepping up its efforts to support transitional parliaments in countries emerging from political instability as well as initiatives to promote peaceful coexistence through interfaith dialogue and parliamentary action to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

On 30 June 2024 – the IPU's 135th anniversary and International Day of Parliamentarism – the IPU would be encouraging Member Parliaments to celebrate the milestone with a particular focus on peace and security.

Finally, the Cremer-Passy Prize for 2024 would be awarded to a parliamentarian or group of parliamentarians with an exceptional record on peace and security, in line with the umbrella theme of the year.

7. Regional offices of the IPU

The Governing Council was briefed on the progress made with the establishment of IPU regional offices in Uruguay and Egypt.

In Uruguay, the Host Agreement between the IPU Secretariat and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been officially ratified by law on 25 November 2023. Collaborative efforts between the Secretariat and the Parliament of Uruguay were ongoing to conclude an operational agreement, which would outline the operational and budgetary aspects of the Regional Office.

Regarding the establishment of the Regional Office in Egypt, discussions had taken place on the Host Agreement and financial arrangements. The IPU Secretariat had received amendments and feedback on the proposed template, signalling progress in negotiations.

8. Future inter-parliamentary meetings

The Governing Council approved the list of future inter-parliamentary meetings as recommended by the Executive Committee.

In addition, the Governing Council approved two recommendations of the Executive Committee on this subject:

- that a global meeting for women parliamentarians be held on an annual basis with the first such meeting taking place in Mexico in February 2025, subject to the identification of funding;
- to continue the practice of holding a meeting of the Executive Committee between the two Assemblies each year, to be hosted by the parliament of one of the members of the Executive Committee, upon their invitation.

9. Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

The Governing Council endorsed the composition of the Preparatory Committee for the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (see [page 62](#)), comprising 16 Speakers of Parliament from across the six geopolitical groups; two members of the Executive Committee; the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, the President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and the President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, all serving in an ex officio capacity; the President of the National Council of Switzerland, as the Host Parliament; and the Chef de Cabinet of the United Nations Secretary-General, serving as the latter's representative. The Preparatory Committee will hold its first meeting on 16 and 17 May 2024 in Geneva. The Conference itself is tentatively scheduled for late July or early August 2025.

10. 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](#), the [Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians \(CHRP\)](#), the [Committee on Middle East Questions](#), the [Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law](#), the [Group of Facilitators for Cyprus](#), the [Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine](#), the [High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism \(HLAG\)](#), the [Working Group on Science and Technology](#), the [Gender Partnership Group](#) and the [Advisory Group on Health](#). The Council endorsed the new appointments to those bodies (see [page 33](#)).

The Governing Council adopted decisions concerning 268 parliamentarians in 14 countries submitted by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

11. Election of IPU Vice-Presidents

The Governing Council endorsed the election of the following members of the Executive Committee as IPU Vice-Presidents: Mr. A. Kharchi for the African Group, Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi for the Arab Group, Ms. A. Sarangi for the Asia-Pacific Group, Ms. S. Mikayilova for the Eurasia Group, Ms. B. Argimón for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, and Ms. D. Avgerinopoulou for the Twelve Plus Group.

12. Cremer-Passy Prize 2024

The Cremer-Passy Prize, named after the IPU's founders, William Randall Cremer and Frédéric Passy, will be awarded for the third time in 2024.

The Prize is open to sitting parliamentarians who make an outstanding contribution to the defence and promotion of the IPU's objectives, as well as those "who contribute to a more united, peaceful, sustainable and equitable world".

Nominations for the 2024 edition should be submitted through the IPU's six geopolitical groups, each of which will select one candidate from their region with a second nomination as an alternate.

In 2024, in line with the overall theme of the year, the winning parliamentarian or group of parliamentarians should have an exceptional record when it comes to peace and security.

The Prize will be awarded, upon the decision of the Prize Selection Board, at the second IPU Assembly of the year in October 2024.

292nd session of the Executive Committee

1. Report of the IPU President

The Executive Committee heard the report of the IPU President on her activities since her election at the 147th IPU Assembly in Luanda. All of those activities had revolved around the following three key objectives: reinforcing peace and security, reinforcing the IPU's visibility and supporting the implementation of the IPU Strategy.

On peace and security, inspired by her mission to the Middle East at the start of her mandate, she highlighted the need for greater efforts to bring back peace in the region. While commending the Committee on Middle East Questions on its overall efforts, the Executive Committee encouraged it to continue its work on the issue and pursue concrete actions, including a field visit that would allow the collection of first-hand information.

The President had used the opportunity of her participation in various meetings to promote the IPU's visibility. Regarding the implementation of the IPU's Strategy, the President stressed the need to redouble efforts in favour of further inclusion of women in the decision-making process as progress made on that front had been slow.

2. Report of the Secretary General

The Secretary General presented the [Impact Report 2023](#) covering the IPU's activities in the second year of implementation of its 2022-2026 Strategy. He highlighted numerous areas of impact across the Organization's five strategic objectives and the 2023 priority theme of climate change.

3. Sub-Committee on Finance

The Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates) informed the Executive Committee of the work of the Sub-Committee on Finance, which had met to discuss the financial questions ahead of this session of the Executive Committee.

The Sub-Committee had examined the financial statements for 2023 and the External Auditor's report. The External Auditor had issued a positive audit opinion and confirmed the accuracy of the financial statements. The IPU's Internal Auditor for 2023 (Mr. H. Carneiro, Portugal) had held a meeting with the new External Auditor, the Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia, to formally discuss the report. Three new audit recommendations had been issued and all previous recommendations had been implemented in full.

The Sub-Committee had taken note of certain aspects of the 2023 accounts that were also highlighted to the Executive Committee. Investment performance had recovered during 2023 and yielded a positive return. The situation of arrears in Member Parliament contributions had however been increasing steadily over recent years despite regular follow-up efforts by the Secretariat. The Sub-Committee on Finance encouraged the governing bodies to decide how to address this exceptional situation. The Chair of the Sub-Committee also took note of the situation of the IPU's closed Pension Fund whose assets were diminishing and would need to be replenished by 2026, should the pension liability not reduce at a similar rate. In this event, the IPU held sufficient reserves to cover the pension liability.

The Sub-Committee had also reviewed the financial situation of the IPU at 31 January 2024. The Organization's budget performance was on track for the year so far and the IPU's finances were healthy and stable.

The Executive Committee received and reviewed the Secretary General's usual update on the mobilization of voluntary funding. The Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates had been the latest to announce a donation, of US\$ 1 million, to the IPU. The situation of voluntary funding was promising thanks to successful fundraising efforts by the Secretary General and his team.

The Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance thanked the IPU Secretariat team for its excellent work.

4. Questions relating to membership and observer status

The Executive Committee was informed that no official requests had been received for affiliation or re-affiliation. It also received an update on ongoing efforts to achieve universal membership, for which the Chair of GRULAC and the Speaker of the National Assembly of Guyana were providing particularly strong support in encouraging Caribbean non-Members to join the IPU. In this regard, and as a result of this support, the Executive Committee was informed of the participation in the Assembly of a high-level

delegation from Jamaica which was exploring the possibility of rejoining the IPU. The Executive Committee took note of that encouraging news and expressed its support to the Secretary General for the discussions he would have with the Jamaican delegation.

By the same token, the Executive Committee took note of the update on discussions with the Parliament of Belize about possible admission as an IPU Member. Concurring with the Secretary General, the Executive Committee expressed the hope that Belize would join the IPU in the near future.

Still in the spirit of universality, the Executive Committee decided to discuss further at a later date the question of how to deal with Member Parliaments from small developing countries facing financial difficulties that may not be in a position to pay their contribution to the IPU, and hence were likely to be sanctioned for non-payment.

The Executive Committee received an update on the ongoing discussions with the International Parliamentarians Congress (IPC) about establishing a memorandum of understanding with the IPU to start working on common areas of interest as per the recommendation made during the Committee's 291st session. The Secretaries General of the IPU and of the IPC would meet to discuss the matter during the Assembly.

Following up on the request, first tabled at the Committee's session in Luanda in October 2023, for observer status from the Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPPPAL), which had now provided additional information on the global scale of its activities, the Executive Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the admission of COPPPAL as an observer.

In the same vein, the Executive Committee agreed to recommend to the Governing Council that the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) also be admitted as an observer.

5. Working Group on amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules

The Working Group on amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules held its first meeting on 26 March 2024, with six of the eight members in attendance. The members elected Ms. N.B.K. Mutti (Zambia) as Chair. Following introductory remarks from the IPU President, the Working Group began its consideration of the proposed amendments submitted by the geopolitical groups and individual Member Parliaments before the deadline of 30 November 2023. The Working Group will continue to meet regularly online in the weeks after the Assembly to determine an agreed package of amendments to submit to the Executive Committee at its session in June 2024. If approved, this package will be submitted to the full membership by the statutory deadline of three months before the Assembly for potential adoption at the 149th Assembly in October 2024.

6. IPU Communications Strategy

As the 2022-2026 Communications Strategy was reaching its halfway point, the Director of Communications gave a brief progress update to the Executive Committee on what was working well and what needed more discussion.

The Communications Strategy was adopted in 2022 to drive and support the overall IPU Strategy over its five-year period, and was primarily targeted at the 46,000 MPs in the world.

The Strategy's main objective remained to position the IPU as the global resource for, about and between parliaments. The Strategy had been designed to be an overall framework with built-in flexibility allowing for course corrections and agile responses to new opportunities.

Overall, most indicators were on track, showing increasing visibility, engagement with MPs and growth on most IPU channels.

This was particularly true in terms of video content – for example the video testimonials for the IPU's climate campaign [Parliaments for the Planet](#) had reached over 150,000 views. Subscriptions to the IPU newsletter were up 51%, the MP database had reached 25,000 names, media coverage was up 10% on last year and social media channels were seeing big growth in followers and engagement.

Areas that needed discussion included institutional communications.

Against a backdrop of escalating geopolitical tensions, with the Ukraine war entering its third year and a catastrophic humanitarian situation unfolding in Gaza, the IPU's institutional communications needed to navigate an increasingly polarized world with many differences in opinion.

To be credible and represent its membership of 180 parliaments, the institution needed to speak with a unified voice, especially with regard to official statements.

The Director also illustrated the agility of the Strategy in terms of content. In 2022, there was little talk of artificial intelligence, whereas it was now a hot topic. As such, the IPU communications team had recently produced interviews and articles on the impact of artificial intelligence on parliaments and parliamentarians, as well as providing support for webinars on the subject, with a view to joining the global conversation and remaining relevant.

In conclusion, the IPU Communications Strategy was generally succeeding but continued to depend on the support of IPU Members to amplify and ensure the IPU's voice was heard more clearly, both at the national level and globally.

7. Questions relating to the IPU Secretariat

The Executive Committee was briefed on staff movements in the IPU Secretariat.

8. Election of IPU Vice-Presidents

The Executive Committee elected from among its members the following as the Vice-Presidents of the IPU: Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi for the Arab Group, Mr. A. Kharchi for the African Group, Ms. A. Sarangi for the Asia-Pacific Group, Ms. S. Mikayilova for the Eurasia Group, Ms. B. Argimon for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, and Ms. D. Avgerinopoulou for the Twelve Plus Group. It recommended to submit these elections to the Governing Council for its approval.

Subsidiary bodies of the Governing Council

1. Forum and Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

The 37th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians was held on 23 March 2024. It brought together 262 participants, including 141 parliamentarians (129 women and 12 men) from 91 countries.

The First Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria), chaired the session in the absence of the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico).

In order to contribute to the work of the Assembly, the participants examined, from a gender perspective, the draft resolution of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security on *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*. The Forum then proposed to the Standing Committee two amendments to the draft resolution which were included in the resolution.

The Forum also organized a panel discussion on *Women peacebuilders advancing sustainable peace*, during which participants highlighted that to achieve sustainable peace, women must participate on an equal footing in peace processes, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and security efforts. Without the inclusion of women in post-conflict reconstruction processes, there will also be no justice or full reparations. Participants called for women peacebuilders to be present at the negotiating table and participate in decision-making processes on peace and security. By working with parliamentarians, women peacebuilders can also more effectively inform and influence better policies to implement the women, peace and security agenda.

The Bureau of Women Parliamentarians held meetings on 23 and 27 March 2024. The meeting of 23 March was dedicated to the preparation of the 37th session of the Forum, and the meeting of 27 March took stock of the expected results of the 148th Assembly from a gender perspective and planned the Forum's future work. See full report on [page 64](#).

2. Forum and Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians

The Forum of Young Parliamentarians was held on 24 March 2024 and brought together 70 young MPs, 41% of whom were women. The meeting was presided over by Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom), the President of the Board of the Forum.

In their opening remarks, the IPU President and Secretary General reaffirmed the IPU's commitment to elevate youth voices and continue to aim higher in increasing the participation of young MPs at the IPU. The UN Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, Dr. F. Paullier was also warmly welcomed and participated throughout the meeting.

The Forum's young MPs provided updates on recent developments in their countries. They also contributed youth perspectives to the topics before the current IPU Assembly and held a Q&A session on pledge 2 of the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign, on aligning the age of eligibility for office with the voting age.

The Forum appointed a member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, Mr. F. Fakafanua, Speaker of the Parliament of Tonga, to prepare a youth overview report on the proposed resolution *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*, which will be examined at the 149th IPU Assembly in October 2024.

At its meeting earlier that day, the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians took stock of their achievements in the first year of their mandate. Looking ahead to their second year, they agreed to redouble efforts to have younger MPs at IPU Assemblies, including through a proposed amendment to the IPU Rules and Statutes to lower the age below which MPs are classified as "young" from 45 to 40. See full report on [page 65](#).

3. Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

The Committee held its 174th session from 22 to 26 March 2024. Ms. M.G. Odhiambo (Kenya), President, Ms. L. Quartapelle (Italy), Ms. A. Reynoso (Mexico), Ms. L. Fehlmann Rielle (Switzerland), Ms. C. Asiaín Pereira (Uruguay) and Mr. H. Kamboni (Zambia) participated in the session. Mr. B. Mbuku Laka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) also participated in the session remotely. Mr. S. Cogolati (Belgium), and Mr. E. Blanc (France) were unable to take part in the session.

During the session, the Committee examined the situation of 350 parliamentarians (34% of whom are women) in 19 countries. New cases concerning 26 parliamentarians were declared admissible in Guinea-Bissau (4 MPs), India (1 MP), Madagascar (1 MP), Somalia (1 MP), Türkiye (1 MP) and Zimbabwe (18 MPs). One case, concerning a parliamentarian from Israel was declared inadmissible and one case concerning a parliamentarian from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was closed. The Committee also held eight hearings (one of which took place online) with national delegations and complainants.

The Committee submitted decisions to the Governing Council for adoption on the situation of 268 parliamentarians in the following countries: Bangladesh, Egypt, Eswatini, Guinea-Bissau, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Somalia, Türkiye, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Zimbabwe. See the document detailing the [decisions adopted](#).

4. Committee on Middle East Questions

Since the 147th IPU Assembly in Luanda in October 2023, the Committee on Middle East Questions has convened three times, on 5 February, 24 March and 26 March 2024, with consistent attendance. Serving as a unique global forum with representatives from Israel and Palestine, the Committee plays a prominent role in encouraging dialogue, underscoring its significance in the current crisis and the pursuit of peace.

During the 5 February 2024 meeting, the IPU President commended members for their attention to Middle East issues, stressing the need for consensus within the Committee and the IPU towards the shared objective of Middle East peace. Discussions highlighted the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, including widespread destruction, impending famine and limited healthcare services. Committee members emphasized the urgency of inclusive negotiations to address these challenges.

Committee members expressed a strong desire to visit the region to assess the situation first-hand, engage with relevant stakeholders and contribute to tangible peacebuilding efforts. Both Israeli and Palestinian representatives welcomed the prospect of such a mission.

During its sessions on 5 February and 26 March 2024, the Committee heard from a representative of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) on recent developments in Gaza and the West Bank, including allegations against UNRWA staff. UNRWA assured full cooperation with investigations but expressed concern over funding suspensions, which jeopardized aid delivery to millions in Gaza and neighbouring regions. Committee members urged countries to reconsider funding decisions, emphasizing UNRWA's critical role in providing stability and humanitarian aid.

The Committee discussed the inability of IPU Member Parliaments to adopt an emergency item resolution on Gaza for the second time. It was emphasized that the resolution proposed by Denmark and the resolution proposed by South Africa shared the key principles of an immediate ceasefire,

hostage release, humanitarian access, and adherence to international law. Differences persisted regarding the treatment of Palestinian detainees, reflecting broader challenges in achieving consensus within the global parliamentary community. See full report on [page 67](#).

5. Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

The Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) met on 26 March 2024.

The Committee heard an update on recent developments with regard to specific areas of humanitarian concern. It paid particular attention to three situations: Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sudan.

The Committee called on IPU Members to promote efforts towards the resettlement of Afghan parliamentarians and parliamentary staff currently at risk – an example of parliamentary solidarity in action. It also agreed to continue shedding light on the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons, especially in the DRC, and called on all IPU members to draw attention to these situations in their parliaments and consider providing support to humanitarian organizations working in crisis situations, such as in Sudan. It also decided to include the situation of the Al-Hawl refugee camp in the Syrian Arab Republic on the agenda of the Committee's next session in October 2024.

The Committee also turned its attention to several key IHL, human rights and other international legal frameworks which need to be universalized and more strongly implemented. These are the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons. It called on IPU Member Parliaments to look at their country's ratification status with regard to these instruments, and open discussions in their parliaments, explore the reasons why they are not yet parties, and consider accession. It also invited IPU Members to review their national legal frameworks in place and assess whether these frameworks need to be revised or strengthened for enhanced implementation. The Committee invited all IPU Members to speak out against anti-personnel mines, statelessness and non-respect for IHL.

The Committee also agreed to hold its open session at the next IPU Assembly in October 2024 on the topic of disability and armed conflict, to mark the 25th anniversary of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. See full report on [page 68](#).

6. Group of Facilitators for Cyprus

The Group of Facilitators for Cyprus met on 23 March 2024. The meeting was attended by one Facilitator, Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland), three members of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus and three representatives of the Turkish-Cypriot political parties.

The parties reaffirmed their commitment to reach a solution to the Cyprus problem, on the basis of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, according to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the European Union values and principles.

The parties expressed the hope that the recently appointed Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Cyprus will contribute towards breaking the present stalemate and the resumption of negotiations with a view to reaching a sustainable solution as soon as possible, to the benefit of present and future generations. They underscored the need for confidence-building measures, as well as the importance of including women in peacebuilding talks.

The parties also exchanged views on ways to better promote joint endeavours in addressing climate-related issues and in managing emergency situations. In turn, the IPU reiterated its willingness to provide further assistance related to the much-needed confidence-building measures.

7. Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine

On 25 March 2024, the Task Force met for the twelfth time. The Task Force reiterated its commitment to pursuing parliamentary diplomacy and focusing on small steps that could eventually lead to dialogue and better understanding between the parties, as well as possible humanitarian outcomes beneficial to their civilian populations.

Five topics had been selected for discussion in previous meetings: nuclear safety, food security, access to and exchange of prisoners of war, protection of environmentally vulnerable sites, and the situation of conflict-affected children. The Task Force proposed to focus on engagement with the Ukrainian and Russian delegations on the last of these. More specifically, the Task Force sought to explore ways to

promote family reunification for displaced children who found themselves stranded across the Russian-Ukrainian border or along the lines of military control in the conflict zone without their parents or legal guardians.

Attending the meeting in separate hearings, the delegations from both Ukraine and the Russian Federation welcomed the work of the Task Force and agreed to deepen cooperation with the IPU on the issue of conflict-displaced children, share further information as requested, and work to develop more concrete and structured procedures to support family reunifications. Two years after its first field visit to Ukraine and the Russian Federation, the Task Force also discussed the possibility of conducting a second mission to Kyiv and Moscow, a proposal which was welcomed by both parties. See full report on [page 63](#).

8. High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

On 23 March 2024, the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG) held its sixteenth meeting. The IPU Secretary General emphasized the HLAG's crucial role in addressing terrorism, particularly in the Sahel region. The Group elected Mr. M. Karlsson from Sweden as Chairperson and Ms. M. Guerra Castillo from Mexico as Vice-Chairperson. The discussions mainly focused on the implementation of the outcomes from the Second Global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, particularly the creation of an ad-hoc mechanism within the HLAG. This ad-hoc group will consist of five members of the HLAG as facilitators, and will be responsible for working on the five priority areas of communities, security, environment, development and education, and for overseeing initiatives in the region.

The Group also highlighted other outcomes of the Summit, including the need to focus on fostering development and economic growth to create opportunities for youth employment in the Sahel. Noting the abundant natural resources in these countries, they agreed to promote investment to support development efforts in the Sahel. The Group was provided with updates from several countries concerning the funding of the IPU programme on counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism (CTPVE); some countries will renew cooperation agreements with the IPU, and others will be new Programme funders. Members were also urged to collaborate with the IPU Secretariat to seek funds for the CTPVE programme.

The members raised objections to a proposal from the Qatari-UNOCT parliamentary group (the Programme Office on Parliamentary Engagement in Preventing and Countering Terrorism) to host a conference in Mexico City with the Forum of Women Parliamentarians on the role of women in counter-terrorism. The objections were based on a lack of consultation with the HLAG and the interference of the Qatari-UNOCT parliamentary group in the work that the IPU carries out as the global organization of national parliaments, to which the regional parliamentary organizations are also closely associated. See full report on [page 71](#).

9. Working Group on Science and Technology

Two sittings of the Working Group were held, online on 22 January 2024 and in Geneva on 25 March 2024. At least ten members attended each of these meetings in person or virtually.

The Working Group members discussed the progress made with their initiative to produce an IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology. The first draft of the Charter was circulated to the IPU membership during the Assembly with a view to gathering feedback and input.

The Working Group discussed its ongoing projects, including the Science for Peace Schools, the parliamentary toolkit on the engagement of the scientific community with parliaments, and the survey on understanding parliamentarians' use of scientific research, which was launched during the Assembly.

The Working Group asserted its role as a repository of expertise for the IPU to inform its various bodies and processes on enhancing evidence-based decision making, and expressed its hope to engage more with the other IPU bodies.

A field visit by the Working Group members to CERN had been scheduled to take place on 26 March 2024. However, due to the decision made by the CERN Council to suspend its cooperation agreement with the Russian Federation, the CERN team were unable to welcome the Russian member of the Working Group. The Working Group members therefore collectively agreed to not participate in the CERN visit, as long as one of their members was excluded.

The members further asserted the view that CERN's decision in that regard was not aligned with the IPU's values and principles of inclusivity, fostering dialogue and cooperation among parliamentarians from different countries and political backgrounds. See full report on [page 72](#).

10. Gender Partnership Group

The Gender Partnership Group held its 49th session on 26 March 2024. In attendance were the Chair, Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), Ms. N.B.K. Mutti (Zambia), Ms. S. Mikayilova (Azerbaijan) and Mr. A. Almodóbar (Spain).

As per its mandate, the Group reviewed the state of women's participation in national parliaments, as well as in IPU bodies and Assemblies. It examined the composition of delegations at the 148th Assembly. As of 27 March 2024, 35.8% of the delegates at the Assembly were women ([see page 73](#)), slightly less than the total at the last Assembly in Luanda (October 2023) and lower than in Madrid (November 2021) and Nusa Dua (March 2022). In Geneva, 43 delegations out of 142 (30.3%) were gender-balanced, a slightly lower percentage than at the last Assembly in Luanda. The 43 gender-balanced delegations attending the 148th Assembly are listed in the report on [page 74](#).

In terms of participation by region, the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean is the regional group with the highest proportion of women delegates (45% women) followed by the Twelve Plus Group (42%), the Eurasia Group (38%), the Arab Group (33%), the Asia-Pacific Group (31%) and the African Group (30%).

Of the 142 delegations present, 132 were composed of at least two delegates, of which only 15 were all-male (11.4%). In addition, two delegations of two or more delegates were composed entirely of women. All in all, eight delegations were subject to sanctions at this Assembly. (See report on [page 73](#).)

The Group was briefed on the first set of measures taken to implement the IPU anti-harassment policy at IPU Assemblies and other events. Structures and processes had been put in place: IPU focal points were assigned for the Assembly, an anti-harassment core group had been set up within the Secretariat, and the email address speakout@ipu.org was now operational to receive complaints.

The Group held a dialogue session with a delegation from Sri Lanka to discuss how to improve women's participation ahead of the country's 2026 parliamentary elections. Sri Lanka ranks 176th in the IPU's global ranking of women in national parliaments with only 5.3% of seats held by women. After an exchange on strategies and challenges, the delegation indicated that capacity building to empower women at the local and national levels would be very useful, as well as the provision of resources for campaigning and outreach. The IPU's support in these endeavors would be of great value.

The IPU and its Gender Partnership Group reiterated their support to the Sri Lankan Parliament in its efforts to facilitate the election of more women.

11. Advisory Group on Health

The IPU Advisory Group on Health met on 23 March 2024, with five out of nine members in attendance, as well as technical partners from the World Health Organization (WHO), the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and UNAIDS. The new memorandum of understanding signed by the IPU and WHO during the Assembly and a cooperation agreement with PMNCH were presented to the Group.

The Group was briefed by the WHO on the ongoing negotiations on an international instrument on pandemic preparedness. The discussion highlighted the importance of reaching an agreement and of engaging stakeholders in the process. The Advisory Group further noted the current challenging context, with many crises affecting national health systems and limiting countries' capacities to respond to emergencies.

The Group discussed the preliminary results of a study looking at parliamentary strategies and practices to make parliaments more responsive to the health needs of women, children and adolescents. It recalled its visit to WHO on 22 March 2024 and noted the shrinking political space for addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights. The Group committed to engaging parliaments and parliamentarians during IPU Assemblies on key issues affecting gender equality and the right to health.

As the focal point for accountability for implementation of the 2019 IPU resolution on universal health coverage, the Advisory Group called on its technical partners to provide monitoring tools to better track progress and gaps in the implementation of universal health coverage at the national level.

Upcoming activities include a series of podcasts to communicate and raise awareness on the Advisory Group's priority themes. The Group agreed to work with the WHO to hold an event during the World Health Assembly in May 2024, and to hold a side event at the 149th IPU Assembly. The organization of a field visit to Cuba would be further explored. See full report on [page 70](#).

Other activities and events

1. Talks between the Speakers of Armenia and Azerbaijan at IPU headquarters

On 22 March 2024, the IPU hosted high-level delegations from the National Assemblies of Armenia and Azerbaijan, led by the Speaker of the Armenian National Assembly, Mr. A. Simonyan, and the Speaker of the Azerbaijani National Assembly, Ms. S. Gafarova. The meeting followed a mission to Armenia and Azerbaijan by the IPU Secretary General in February 2024, which had laid the groundwork for the IPU to offer its good offices to the two sides to promote dialogue and help pave the way toward normalizing relations. These discussions marked the first time the National Assemblies had officially met at their highest levels.

IPU President Dr. T. Ackson and IPU Secretary General Mr. M. Chungong welcomed the delegations to IPU headquarters and applauded both parties' willingness to employ parliamentary diplomacy to reduce tensions, build confidence, and complement governmental peace negotiations. This was followed by a private tête-à-tête meeting between the Speakers of the National Assemblies and a subsequent debrief with the IPU Secretary General, in which both sides agreed to continue their dialogue to rebuild trust and support peace efforts through parliamentary diplomacy under the neutral auspices of the IPU.

2. Joint meeting with the Chairs of the geopolitical groups and the Presidents of the Standing Committees

On 23 March 2024, the IPU President and Secretary General met with the Chairs of the geopolitical groups and the Presidents of the Standing Committees.

The IPU President gave a summary of her main projects and activities since the last Assembly, including reinforcing peace and security through dialogue and strengthening the IPU's visibility. She had conducted a visit to the Middle East (Israel and Palestine) in November 2023, participated in numerous summits, forums and seminars, and supported the implementation of the IPU Strategy through her work on the occasion of the high-level segment of COP28, the 2024 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, and the annual IPU-UN Women Parliamentary Meeting at the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

The IPU Secretary General gave an update on progress regarding the implementation of the IPU Strategy, including new IPU policies to enhance accountability at all levels. He presented an overview of the annual reporting exercise by Member Parliaments, encouraging the Chairs of the geopolitical groups to remind their Members scheduled to report in 2024 to participate in the exercise. As the IPU was marking the 10-year anniversary of its Common Principles for Support to Parliaments, the Secretary General invited the few remaining Parliaments who had not yet endorsed these principles to do so as soon as possible. The Secretary General gave a summary of the new *Code of Conduct for IPU Governance Officials* and the *IPU Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events*, and he encouraged the Chairs of the groups to raise awareness of these important policies among the broader membership.

The Chairs of the geopolitical groups provided an overview of their recent activities. Mr. A. Kharchi (Algeria), representing the African Group, reported on his meeting with the IPU Secretary General in February 2024, which addressed technical cooperation and support for African parliaments. The African Group, with support from the IPU Secretariat, had subsequently met online in March 2024 in preparation for the 148th IPU Assembly to discuss, among other things, the proposal of an emergency item. Mr. B. Boughali (Algeria), Chair of the Arab Group, stated that efforts were being made to translate all IPU documentation into Arabic and, to that end, requested that documents be sent further in advance. Ms. S. Carvajal Isunza (Mexico), Chair of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, said that she had been making efforts to bring non-Member Parliaments into the Organization, such as Belize. She highlighted that the Parliament of Mexico had recently passed a resolution to request that Spanish be adopted as an official language of the International Court of Justice and requested the IPU's support for this initiative. Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium), Chair of the Twelve Plus Group, stated that multiple meetings had been organized within the Group since the last Assembly, including a seminar in Paris on the Sustainable Development Goals. In preparation for the 148th Assembly, the Group had discussed the ongoing process of amending the IPU Statutes, the resolutions being considered by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, and the potential proposal of an emergency item.

Mr. W. William (Seychelles), President of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, highlighted that his Committee's leadership had played an important role in the Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) and was preparing for the following COP in Azerbaijan in November 2024. The Committee was expected to adopt a resolution on affordable green energy. Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, shared that the Committee had held a virtual meeting in November 2023 to discuss priorities for the Assembly. He also noted that the United Nations Summit of the Future draft outcome document did not contain any references to parliamentarism, something that had been flagged to officials from Germany and Namibia, co-facilitators of the Summit.

In the absence of the President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, Ms. L. Marzal, Secretary of the Committee, said that the Committee would devote all its time to debating and drafting a resolution on *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*, with a view to adopting it at its final session, and that 200 amendments had been received. In the absence of the President of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, Mr. A. Richardson, Secretary of the Committee, shared that the Committee would debate an upcoming resolution on *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*. At the initiative of the resolution's co-Rapporteurs, the IPU had organized three online capacity-building workshops on artificial intelligence in January, February and March 2024 to give parliamentarians an opportunity to get information from leading experts from around the world.

Lastly, the meeting attendees were invited to consider guiding questions on modalities to enhance communication and coordination within and between the geopolitical groups and the specialized IPU bodies and discuss these at their next meeting. Mr. Gryffroy underscored that the geopolitical groups were not mentioned in the IPU structure and governance organigramme, and brought attention to the Twelve Plus Group's proposal to amend the IPU Statutes so that the Chairs of the geopolitical groups are systematically invited to participate in the discussions of the Executive Committee in an advisory capacity. It was decided that this matter would be discussed in greater detail at the next joint meeting of the group Chairs and Standing Committee Presidents.

3. High-level meeting on *The crisis of multilateralism: Root causes and possible solutions*

On 25 March 2024, the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs convened a special high-level meeting on *The crisis of multilateralism: Root causes and possible solutions*. The meeting was designed to provide input to the preparatory process for the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in July-August 2025 and perspectives on the Summit of the Future with regard to the goal of reinvigorating multilateralism.

The President of the Standing Committee, Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), introduced the topic of the crisis of multilateralism, identifying the root causes, and emphasizing the role of parliaments in making the multilateral system more democratic, accountable and effective in delivering for the people. In considering solutions, he stressed the need to keep the concerns of young people in mind.

The IPU President illustrated the various manifestations of the crisis of multilateralism: the UN's record of support being obscured by political impasse, double standards in international law, and the undermined principle of *one country, one vote* within the UN. She highlighted the weakened state of democracy and people being left behind by globalization as root causes, resulting in a lack of faith in the UN's ability to solve global challenges. She expressed her hope for a multilateral system that could deliver on the promises of justice, development and peace to restore faith in multilateralism, and emphasized the role of parliaments, supported by the IPU, in making the multilateral system more effective and credible through their oversight and legislation functions. Parliaments also needed to be more representative of the people, especially the most vulnerable, women and youth, so as not to leave behind those who feel forgotten by the system.

The IPU Secretary General highlighted that, although imperfect, multilateralism cannot be done away with; instead, the tools and practices need to be tuned to the needs of the world. He recalled the foundational aspiration of the UN, rooted in the idea of *We the People*, and stressed that this is where parliaments play a crucial role. He recounted the challenges the IPU still faces in bridging the gap between the local and the global, particularly the lack of understanding as to why parliaments should be involved in UN processes. He called on the UN to connect more to the local, and for dialogues at the international level to reach institutions at the national level. Finally, he stressed the need for more

intergenerational dialogue to create a more democratic multilateral system that is inclusive of stakeholders that the UN has historically not incorporated in its decision-making, such as young people, the scientific community, and civil society organizations.

Ms. T. Valovaya (Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva) elaborated on the roots of the crisis of multilateralism, noting that the multilateral system, created in 1945 as an answer to the challenges of World War II, could not be considered fit for the modern world. Modern challenges – mistrust, growing inequalities, unprecedented geopolitical tensions, and lack of faith in the current system – require a UN 2.0, as described in the Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* report. In considering how to fine tune the system, she stressed the need for inclusive multilateralism, in which all countries have an equal voice and actors, including civil society, non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector, have a seat at the table. She stressed the IPU's crucial role in fostering more inclusivity. As the voice of the world's citizens and an institution that has seen the transformation of the multilateral system over time, the IPU can help turn the UN into an organization that is relevant and fit for the 21st century.

Ms. R. Grynspan (Secretary General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)) delivered a keynote address, in which she underscored the global system's inability to keep up with the rate of technological, geopolitical, economic and ecological changes around the world. She highlighted the triple deficit in: economic growth for small and medium countries, trust in the multilateral system, and hope, particularly among young people. She also highlighted opportunities, giving the example of how regional trade agreements and multilateral development banks can improve countries' access to the international financial system. She acknowledged that there is a risk of decentralization in global decision-making turning into a fragmentation of the multilateral system and warned against the danger of isolationism. She further reiterated the need to keep the Secretary-General's proposed reforms in his *Our Common Agenda* report central to discussions on universality and inclusion.

Ms. Grynspan warned that reforms would fail unless supported by parliaments. She identified the IPU as a vital link in the global governance chain, a bridge between the global and local, with the power to translate international commitments into actions that make a real difference in the lives of constituents. She stressed that creating a multilateral system fit for the 21st century would depend on leaders inspiring hope in societies and revitalizing the idea of a collaborative, inclusive global community working towards a shared future.

The Speakers in attendance welcomed the discussion on the crisis of multilateralism as an important and timely one. Delegates from Bahrain, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Malta, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Tonga and Zambia made remarks. Their main points are summarized as follows:

- Cooperation is lacking in the multilateral system. Speakers highlighted the need for the system to strengthen democratic principles and serve as a forum for dialogue focused on shared responsibility for the global community.
- There is a difference between talking and truly listening to each other. Speakers highlighted the need to promote women's participation at decision-making levels for more listening to occur. Speakers also stressed the role of the IPU and parliaments in promoting parliamentary diplomacy and productive dialogue.
- The system founded in 1945 created a hierarchy among Member States that is no longer applicable today. There is a need for institutional reforms focused on inclusivity and ensuring countries have an equal voice and can better participate in and benefit from the international system.
- Not all solutions to global problems can be advanced in coalitions of the willing. There was consensus that revitalizing multilateralism's universality and the consideration of multiple viewpoints is required for countries to work towards collective action.
- It is necessary to remember the crises the world's populations are facing. Speakers called for Member States to look at the local realities of individual countries to understand each other's challenges, foster a sense of international solidarity, and create a global system that is a supportive platform for all.
- Parliaments have a role in bridging the global and the local, and holding UN Member States accountable for their responsibility to make the multilateral system better. Speakers also stressed the role of parliaments in ensuring institutions are transparent, responsive and accountable, to restore trust in local and global governance systems.
- There was concern about youth disengagement from democratic processes. Speakers recognized a disconnection between past and present generations, the problem of short-term thinking, and the lack of spaces for intergenerational dialogue.

- Some said there was a need to better listen to younger generations and understand their disappointments. Others highlighted the need to restore hope by better communicating the opportunities that exist in the face of global challenges. They supported the creation of the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and the Future Generations dialogues.

Mr. McGuinty closed the meeting by emphasizing the importance of conversations that will help reshape the multilateral system into one fit for the purpose it needs to serve. He reiterated the crucial roles of the IPU and parliaments in supporting good governance, investing in people, prioritizing the rule of law, and restoring hope in societies. He concluded with the reminder that, although not everything will be solved at the Summit of the Future, it will be critical for parliaments and the UN to show movement and ambition beyond repeating what has already been agreed upon to restore faith and trust in the effectiveness of the multilateral system.

4. Panel discussion on *Addressing strategic and existential threats through common security and the rule of law*

The panel discussion, held on 24 March 2024, was organized in cooperation with the Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) and the World Future Council. It provided a forum for participants to receive an update on new peace and security initiatives in the lead-up to the UN Summit of the Future in September 2024, discuss potential roles for parliamentarians, and examine ways to strengthen international law, with a particular focus on international adjudication as a peaceful means of resolving disputes.

Presentations were made by Ms. A. Filip, IPU Director of the Division for Member Parliaments and External Relations; Ms. M. Kiener Nellen, former Swiss parliamentarian and Board Member of PeaceWomen Across the Globe; Mr. A. Ware, PNND Global Coordinator and co-founder of the Legal Alternatives to War campaign; Mr. N. Gunasekera, member of the World Future Council and of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms; and Ms. R. Shoot, Executive Director of Citizens for Global Solutions and Chair of the Washington Working Group for the International Criminal Court. These were followed by comments from the floor and an active Q&A session.

The participants discussed the role of parliamentarians in ensuring that international commitments are translated into national realities through concrete initiatives, budgetary allocations, and new legislation contributing to international security, all while exercising their rightful oversight function in respect of governmental actions. By using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a roadmap for the future, parliaments could use their unique position to restore international law as the bedrock of a world order based on solidarity and cooperation, where violations cannot be accepted. Parliaments should urge their governments to be bolder and identify actionable solutions, including those in the UN Pact for the Future, with a view to strengthening the rule of law and bringing about meaningful UN reform.

The participants also discussed the importance of the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court and other international tribunals as mechanisms that increasingly demonstrate their peace-promoting value for a wide range of disputes touching on subjects such as genocide, climate change, territorial boundaries and international terrorism. The participants also reinforced the urgency of removing nuclear weapons from any future framework of international security, in line with the SDGs. The support of parliaments in ensuring universalization and effective implementation of international instruments such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons or the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons should complement diplomatic initiatives aimed at reducing existing nuclear arsenals and preventing further proliferation.

5. Workshop on *Strengthening climate legislation: Practical tools for parliamentarians*

The workshop was co-organized by the IPU and the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory at Arizona State University (ASU) on 25 March 2024. It aimed to raise awareness among parliamentarians of leading climate tools that are readily available to enhance legislative efforts related to climate change. The workshop was moderated by Ms. A. Ellis (Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory, ASU).

Mr. M. Gray (Climate TRACE and Transition Zero) highlighted that greenhouse gas emissions data is often missing or outdated and this hampers efforts to effectively address climate change. He presented the Climate TRACE database which provides an up-to-date inventory of emissions from 395 million assets globally. He highlighted that Climate TRACE is useful for strengthening greenhouse gas emissions reporting under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Ms. T. Chan (Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, London School of Economics) presented, via video link, the Climate Change Laws of the World database, which contains thousands of laws and policies on climate change. She explained how this database can assist parliaments in strengthening national climate legislation by learning from other national examples.

Ms. M. Bolshakova (United Nations Environment Programme, Europe Office) presented a range of tools that can be utilized by parliaments to address climate and environmental issues, namely the Law and Environment Assistance Platform, Law and Climate Change Toolkit, and Global Climate Litigation Reports. She highlighted that such tools can help countries establish a legal framework for effective implementation of the Paris Agreement at the national level.

Mr. C. Meisner (World Bank) presented, via video link, an overview of the World Bank Group's Country Climate and Development Reports. These reports help countries prioritize the most impactful actions that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and boost adaptation and resilience, while delivering on broader development goals. He also stressed the key role of the private sector in meeting investment needs for low-emission development.

Mr. T. Crowther (ETH Zürich) gave an overview of global biodiversity challenges and underscored the critical role that biodiversity plays in mitigating climate change. He presented the Restor database that provides data on thousands of efforts to restore biodiversity from countries around the world. He also stated the importance of biodiversity in supporting food production, water security, disease prevention and economic stability.

The panellist presentations were followed by an interactive discussion with participants. Parliamentarians from Bahrain, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Saudi Arabia raised several issues, including in relation to the need to ensure that data on global databases are maintained and up-to-date, and that judges and legal professionals are trained on climate matters.

6. Panel discussion on interfaith dialogue: *Building bridges through interfaith dialogue for more peaceful and inclusive societies*

In this panel discussion, the participants discussed the achievements and ongoing challenges in parliamentary efforts to promote interfaith dialogue and protect freedom of religion or belief, particularly in light of the fundamental task of parliaments to uphold the rule of law and human rights for all, without distinction, and to build more peaceful and inclusive societies.

The discussion was opened by Mr. M. Omar, Senior Advisor to the IPU Secretary General, and was moderated by Mr. M. Wiener, Human Rights Officer at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Panelists included Ms. N. Ghanea, UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; Mr. P.F. Casini, Senator in the Italian Parliament and Honorary President of the IPU; Ms. M. Al Shammari, member of the Arab Parliament; and Ms. S. Markiewicz, IPU Advisor on Interfaith Dialogue.

The participants shared insights into the role of interfaith dialogue in promoting peace and upholding the rule of law and human rights in multi-faith societies, specifically considering the unique role of parliamentarians as representatives and legislators. Reflecting on the Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue organized by the IPU, the Parliament of Morocco and other partners in Marrakesh in 2023, and specifically its outcome document, the Marrakesh Communiqué, participants lamented the subsequent decrease in global peace and security and the upsurge in identity-based conflict and hate speech, particularly targeting (and sometimes driven by) religious or belief communities and ideologies. They highlighted the urgency for concrete action and tangible results which were grounded in human rights and the rule of law. It was not the time for dialogue which was limited to conferences and platitudes. The right to freedom of religion or belief must be upheld, especially the rights of religious and belief minorities, and it was a task for parliaments to review their legislation and, if necessary, update it. A common will to counter intolerance and hatred based on religion or belief was expressed by participants, however any measures must respect the international human rights framework, especially freedom of expression and its legitimate limitations, as stated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The six-part threshold test outlined in the Rabat Plan of Action could be a helpful tool in this regard. Artificial intelligence and the potential to create convincing deepfakes, particularly when targeting influential religious or political leaders, were flagged as risks to peace and security. Finally, parliamentarians, as representatives and public figures, were encouraged not to exploit religion or belief for political gain.

7. Workshop on Human security: Equipping parliamentarians for peacebuilding and conflict prevention

The workshop took place on 25 March 2024. It aimed to equip parliamentarians with the knowledge and tools for effective peacebuilding and conflict prevention through applying the human security approach to parliamentary decision-making. Co-organized by the IPU and the World Academy of Art and Science (WAAS), the workshop encouraged the active participation of multiple parliamentarians who shared insights on empowering citizens and fostering solutions through discussion.

The importance of parliamentary representation in delivering on the aspirations of the people was a focal point of the discussions. The event also highlighted a specially designed course for parliamentarians, aimed at enhancing their understanding of human security and testing their knowledge on the subject. This interactive platform served not only as a forum for sharing best practices and experiences, but also as a valuable learning resource for those committed to peacebuilding and conflict prevention at the parliamentary level.

Participants from 28 delegations were present and most took the floor to engage in a discussion with the experts from WAAS. Questions on the potential of human security for finding context-specific solutions were addressed, and a high level of interest in the approach was shown.

8. Workshop on artificial intelligence

On 25 March 2024, this workshop examined the practical aspects of how parliamentarians have worked on artificial intelligence (AI) in their parliaments, and what resources they need going forward. Delegates shared practical examples, including the creation of an emerging technology caucus in Canada, and engaging in regular dialogue with the scientific community in Ireland. Delegates took note of the resources available within the UNESCO and Internet Governance Forum networks that are likely to be of help to parliaments. Parliaments were encouraged to initiate dialogue with stakeholders in government, the civil sector, the private sector and academia to ensure that a wide range of perspectives are heard when considering options for regulating AI. Guidance from international and regional organizations will be important for parliaments, as well as ongoing exchange between parliamentarians from different countries.

Several substantive issues were discussed. In relation to the emergence of deepfake images, participants referred to the Content Authenticity Initiative as a potential means of countering misinformation through the establishment of a globally recognized standard of authentication for digital content.

Interesting parallels were highlighted with standard-setting exercises and regulation in the global pharmaceuticals industry, for example. Parliamentarians have a key role to play in ensuring that powerful technology companies are drawn into a similar standard-setting process in relation to AI, and not be allowed to simply have free reign in developing AI-based technologies.

A power imbalance exists between a small handful of technological corporations located in the Global North and the governments of the countries in the Global South. This unequal footing places the Global South in a potentially exploitative situation, particularly in relation to the collection, storage and use of data.

The importance of capacity building for parliamentarians was also underscored. Legislators in all parts of the globe require greater access to information, expertise and resources if they are to effectively respond to the opportunities and challenges thrown up by AI technologies.

9. Parity debate on *Eliminating discrimination, transforming economic losses into gains*

On 26 March 2024, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians organized a parity debate with 59 participants, including 37 parliamentarians (28 women and 9 men) from 29 countries. The event was an opportunity to showcase the centrality of parliaments in undertaking gender-responsive legal reforms, including repealing discrimination in laws. The aim was to provide participants with a better understanding of the need to lift legal and cultural barriers to ensure women's full economic participation and empowerment, as discrimination against women cost the world approximately US\$ 12 trillion in global gross domestic product (GDP). The objective of the parity debate was to promote dialogue between women and men MPs and encourage them to discuss issues of common interest.

Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria), First Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, presided over the session. The findings of the *Women, Business, and the Law 2024* report by the World Bank was presented by Ms. J.C. Braunmiller, Senior Private Sector Development Specialist at the World Bank. It was shared that almost all economies in the world face a substantive gender implementation gap. In addition, key resources for parliamentarians and policymakers to take action to empower women worldwide were shared. The discussion was enriched by contributions from 17 countries (17 women and 6 men).

Parliamentarians shared recent reforms and other initiatives implemented in their countries to improve gender equality in employment, entrepreneurship, marriage law and parenthood. Other reforms implemented to combat gender-based violence at work and at the national level were shared as well. Several parliamentarians mentioned their government's commitment to promote women's empowerment as ratified in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

10. Panel discussion on *Protecting minority rights: Towards comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation*

This panel discussion was held on 26 March 2024 and brought together some 30 participants, including MPs from Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, India, Malawi, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, San Marino, Thailand, Türkiye and Ukraine. The event was also attended by the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ms. N. Ghanea.

The event was introduced by the moderator, Ms. Y.A. Brändle-Amolo, a subnational MP from Switzerland, who gave the floor to the co-authors of the *Practical Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation*. They were particularly pleased with the unique opportunity to address lawmakers from all regions of the world for the first time, as the Guide is primarily meant for them.

Mr. J. Fitzgerald, CEO of Equal Rights Trust, provided insights on the aim and purpose of this guide and shared testimonies from some of the more than 40 institutions, experts and other stakeholders who contributed to it. Mr. C. Cahn from the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) then walked the participants through the content of the Guide, focusing on concrete areas where the new publication could be useful, explaining why the comprehensive anti-discrimination laws – that all States are under obligation to adopt under all UN human rights treaties – have become a popular tool for many governments, drawing on concrete examples in Canada and Hungary.

The moderator then introduced Mr. N. Kwankwa, an MP from South Africa, who described the groundbreaking comprehensive equality law adopted in South Africa in 2004 and the progress achieved since then. He also responded to a remark made by an MP from India, who had challenged the notion that such a law was necessary based on the argument that the Constitution of India already contained a strong legal base for preventing discrimination. Mr. Kwankwa answered that a comprehensive law could complement the principles contained in constitutional provisions by offering a detailed set of norms that are both directly enforceable and able to be operationalized through by-laws and regulations.

There were further interventions from the floor, including from an MP from Mexico who focused on progress made in her country following the adoption of a comprehensive anti-discrimination law. She emphasized the perfect parity between women and men in her Parliament, but admitted that more work had to be done to make her Parliament more representative for indigenous groups and other minorities. MPs from Australia and Norway questioned how these laws could help to resolve the tensions that might arise between competing anti-discrimination norms for different groups, including laws safeguarding the rights of religious institutions and legislation protecting individuals belonging to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) groups from discrimination. Ms. Brändle-Amolo shared that in Switzerland, the lack of such a law created problems with enforcement by the courts, which had resulted in several cases of racial profiling brought before the European Court of Human Rights, which found Switzerland in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights. She expressed the hope that advocacy through an alliance of civil society, academia and business groups could pave the way for the adoption of such a law at the federal level.

Finally, the participants heard from Ms. S.S. Chaudhury, Speaker of the Parliament of Bangladesh, who shared that Bangladesh is on the path to becoming the first South Asian country to adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination law. However, she noted that the debate over the draft law raised

several issues as it provided no penalties for breach of the law, and there were difficulties in establishing an exhaustive list of grounds that could lead to discrimination. Nevertheless, she expressed the hope that Bangladesh would soon adopt such a law.

11. Workshop on the *Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention*

This workshop took place on 26 March 2024 and was organized in cooperation with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The event focused on the crucial issue of preventing the misuse and proliferation of chemical weapons through the application of strong legislation. Parliamentarians from various countries participated, expressing their legislative needs and concerns regarding the control and eradication of chemical weapons. Ms. A. Kuspan (Kazakhstan), President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, showcased the experience of her country, which is widely recognized as a real implementation success.

The workshop facilitated exchanges of good practices on the subject, highlighting the importance of international cooperation and effective legal frameworks at the national and international levels. Additionally, discussions highlighted the Chemical Weapons Convention's mechanisms for the disposal of chemical weapons and their implementation, underscoring the global commitment to chemical weapons disarmament.

The discussions continued around the importance of parliamentary work to implement adequate and strong mechanisms to contribute to the global infrastructure of chemical safety. The event served as an important platform for sharing insights and enhancing parliamentary engagement on this critical security issue.

12. Panel discussion on *Climate change and conflict: How can parliaments ensure health during times of crises?*

The panel discussion was held on 26 March 2024 with the aim of providing a platform for parliamentarians to discuss challenges and opportunities for promoting an integrated approach to addressing climate, conflict and health concerns at the national level. It was moderated by Mr. F. Ndugulile (United Republic of Tanzania).

Ms. E. Villalobos Prats (World Health Organization, WHO) illustrated the causal pathways through which climate change directly and indirectly affected health. She highlighted that health was gaining unprecedented visibility within the context of climate action, building on the first-ever Health Day organized at the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28). However, health commitments within international climate instruments were often neglected and not reported on. She presented WHO's operational framework for building climate resilient and low-carbon health systems, which could improve the health of communities in a changing climate.

Mr. L. Gogvadze (International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC) presented the IFRC's mission and how the organization worked to build the resilience of communities. He called for a long-term perspective, as changes in perceptions, behaviours and policies were required. He emphasized that equity, strong participation of local actors and good governance were essential for ensuring positive health outcomes. He also commended the role of frontline workers in emergencies.

Ms. H. Muheed (Youth Advocacy Network Sri Lanka and Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, PMNCH) provided examples of the links between climate change and conflict, as well as an overview of their impacts on young people, women and girls, including in relation to sexual and reproductive health and rights. In 2023, PMNCH had convened a [Global Forum for Adolescents](#), which had enabled young people worldwide to define key priorities for their health and well-being.

Mr. W.P. Bako (Burkina Faso) shared the experience of his country on responding to the challenges posed by climate change and insecurity. He underlined the impacts on natural resources and agriculture, which posed significant challenges in terms of food security. Population displacements and changes in disease patterns put strains on the health system. He therefore called on parliaments to make use of their legislative and budgetary powers to address the issue.

Parliamentarians from Bahrain, India, Norway, Seychelles, Thailand and Zambia took the floor. They raised issues, among others, in relation to access to information, universal health coverage and international cooperation.

Elections and appointments

1. Executive Committee

The Governing Council elected the following member to the Executive Committee:

African Group

- Ms. I.K. Godalena to replace Ms. I.K.N. Sabangu (Democratic Republic of the Congo), who is no longer a member of parliament. She will complete the latter's term, which expires in March 2027.

2. Vice-Presidents of the IPU

The following members of the Executive Committee were designated as IPU Vice-Presidents representing:

African Group

- Mr. A. Kharchi (Algeria)

Arab Group

- Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates)

Asia-Pacific Group

- Ms. A. Sarangi (India)

Eurasia Group

- Ms. S. Mikayilova (Azerbaijan)

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Ms. B. Argimón (Uruguay)

Twelve Plus Group

- Ms. D. Avgerinopoulou (Greece)

3. Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

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

African Group

- Ms. Z. Mashaba (Eswatini) (end of term: March 2025)

Arab Group

- A vacancy remains on the Bureau (end of term: March 2027)

4. Committee on Middle East Questions

The members elected Mr. H.-J. Talsma (Netherlands) as President of the Committee.

The Governing Council elected the following three members for a four-year term ending in March 2028:

- Mr. L.-J. de Nicolaÿ (France)
- Ms. M. Aljaghoub (Jordan)
- Ms. S. Falaknaz (United Arab Emirates)

5. Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

The Governing Council elected the following members for a four-year term ending in March 2028:

Asia-Pacific Group

- Mr. K. Suebsang (Thailand)

Eurasia Group

- Ms. H. Hakobyan (Armenia)
- A vacancy remains for this Group

6. Group of Facilitators for Cyprus

The Governing Council elected one Facilitator for a four-year term ending in March 2028:

- Mr. H. Arshakyan (Armenia)

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

During the meeting of the Group, the members elected Mr. M. Karlsson (Sweden) as Chairperson and Ms. M. Guerra Castillo (Mexico) as Vice-Chairperson.

The Governing Council elected the following members for a four-year term ending in March 2028:

African Group

- Mr. E.J. Mulembwe (Mozambique)

Eurasia Group

- A vacancy remains for this Group

Twelve Plus Group

- Ms. R. Garvey (Ireland)

8. Working Group on Science and Technology

The Governing Council elected the following two members for a four-year term ending March 2028:

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Ms. M. Seymour (Bahamas)

Twelve Plus Group

- Ms. M. Cederfelt (Sweden)

Ms. S. Attia (Egypt) was re-elected as Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Science and Technology for a one-year term.

9. Bureaux of the Standing Committees

The Standing Committees elected the following members to their respective Bureaux for terms ending in March 2026:

Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

The Standing Committee declared the position held by Mr. E. Uwizeyimana (Rwanda) to be vacant, by virtue of Rule 10.2 of the Rules of the Standing Committees. An election to fill this vacant position will take place at the next Assembly.

Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

Eurasia Group

- Mr. H. Arshakyan (Armenia)
- A vacancy remains for this Group

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

- Mr. M. Salinas (Paraguay)

10. Gender Partnership Group

The Executive Committee appointed the following two members to the Gender Partnership Group:

- Ms. S. Mikayilova (Azerbaijan) (term ending October 2027)
- Mr. A. Almodóbar (Spain) (term ending October 2025)

11. Rapporteurs

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security appointed Mr. M.A. Bouchouit (Algeria) and Mr. J. Buttimer (Ireland) as co-Rapporteurs for the subject item *The role of parliaments in advancing a two-State solution in Palestine*. As recommended by the Bureau and with a view to ensuring an inclusive approach, the IPU President will engage in consultations to identify additional rapporteurs from other geopolitical groups.

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development appointed Ms. H. Fayez (Bahrain), Ms. E.T. Muteka (Namibia), and Mr. R. Fogiel (Poland) as co-Rapporteurs for the subject item *Parliamentary strategies to mitigate the long-lasting impact of conflicts, including armed conflicts, on sustainable development*.

Media and communications

The 148th IPU Assembly saw widespread coverage in the media, healthy viewing rates on the live feed, and strong engagement and substantial increases in follower numbers on social media. Hundreds of hard copies of IPU publications displayed at the communications booth were also picked up by delegates, showing there is still a big demand for printed material in parallel to the IPU's ongoing digital transformation.

Media

The Communications team issued a media advisory, three press releases and two statements. Over the week, the 148th IPU Assembly was mentioned in some 3400 media articles – a figure on a par with the 147th IPU Assembly in Luanda at the time of writing but likely to surpass it as more media articles are published once delegates return home.

The Assembly was also widely covered in the Swiss press thanks to active outreach efforts and interviews organized with the IPU Secretary General. The team also set up an interview for the IPU President with the main Chinese news agency Xinhua, which was widely distributed globally.

Livestreaming and video

Some 15,000 people watched the live feed of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, the Governing Council and the Assembly, significantly higher than the total at the 147th IPU Assembly (some 12,000 views).

The provision of video extracts of plenary speeches during the General Debate was again a popular service with delegates. By the end of the Assembly, the team had prepared dozens of video clips to send to individual MPs for their own amplification purposes.

The Communications team also interviewed some 20 parliamentarians to add to the IPU's two main video series *A conversation with...* and *My parliament, my planet!*. The team was also able to interview delegates of some countries for the first time, including Azerbaijan, Japan, Malta and Poland.

Social media

The social media wall continued to be a popular feature, with many parliamentarians joining the digital conversation using the hashtags #IPU148 and #Parliaments4thePlanet, linked to the IPU's climate campaign. Some 550 accounts populated the wall.

The team published 118 tweets on X (formerly Twitter) over the Assembly period, leading to 156,000 impressions (the number of times a post appears on somebody's feed).

Some 3100 accounts mentioned our X account @IPUParliament, making the Assembly week the highest week of mentions since the account was launched. We also gained 354 new followers on X.

LinkedIn continued to perform strongly, with an increase of 13% in engagement compared to a normal week.

On Instagram, the IPU continued its lighter approach by investing more in visuals, stories and reels with a total of 244 items published. The investment paid off, with 715 new followers and 136,000 impressions (compared to 74,000 in Luanda).

On Facebook, the IPU reached some 18,000 accounts compared to 13,000 at the last Assembly.

Photography

Two IPU photographers covered 60 sessions and produced hundreds of high-quality photographs that were curated by the team and downloaded by delegates for national amplification.

Membership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union¹

Members (180)

Afghanistan**, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, 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, Czechia, 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, Gambia (The), 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, Liberia, 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, Türkiye, 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 (15)

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), MERCOSUR Parliament (PARLASUR), 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).

¹ As at the close of the 148th Assembly.

* Non-participating Members (all rights suspended)

** Members participating in the work of the IPU in a non-voting observer capacity

Agenda, resolutions and other texts of the 148th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. Election of the President of the 148th Assembly
2. Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
3. General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding*
4. Special accountability segment on the implementation of IPU resolutions and other decisions
5. *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*
(Standing Committee on Peace and International Security)
6. *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*
(Standing Committee on Sustainable Development)
7. Reports of the Standing Committees
8. Approval of the subject items for the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and for the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development for the 150th Assembly and appointment of the co-Rapporteurs

Geneva Declaration

Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding

*Endorsed by the 148th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

We, Members of Parliament from around the world, gathered together at the 148th IPU Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, reaffirm our commitment to parliamentary diplomacy to address the growing challenges to peace and international security.

We are meeting at a time of great turbulence and instability. From the resurgence of conflicts and geopolitical tensions, the increase in social polarization and a looming new global arms race, to the devastating impacts of climate change and the dangers posed by artificial intelligence – the multi-faceted and intractable challenges we face underscore the urgency for a collective, forward-looking and durable response that learns from the past and goes beyond conventional solutions. As we navigate this intricate landscape, it becomes increasingly evident that addressing these complex challenges demands a shared global commitment to building a resilient foundation for lasting peace, rooted in the upholding of human rights and democratic principles.

We conclude this Assembly recognizing the potential of parliamentary diplomacy, grounded in dialogue, mutual respect and the achievement of common goals, as an important means to build trust, promote cooperation, share good practices, and enhance the contribution of parliaments and parliamentarians to building lasting world peace. We recognize that the tools of parliamentary diplomacy include bilateral and multilateral associations, such as inter-parliamentary institutions, staff exchanges and friendship groups. We welcome the work of the IPU to help foster political dialogue conducive to peacebuilding and the peaceful resolution of conflict, and encourage the IPU to continue its efforts in this regard. We also call upon the IPU to support and accompany a return to the rule of law in countries, many of them on the African continent, which have undergone an unconstitutional dissolution of parliament.

As representatives of the people, we parliamentarians are keenly aware of our responsibility to build bridges of understanding among nations, bring peace to citizens and find consensus on how to overcome joint hurdles. Parliamentarians further have an active role to play in ensuring that efforts to negotiate peace processes, treaties and other international agreements are rooted in the needs of the people, taking into account traditional wisdoms and values. In addition, we recognize that parliamentarians are uniquely positioned to ensure compliance with the rule of law and international norms, which are essential prerequisites for restoring the conditions for peaceful coexistence and alleviating the growing fragmentation of societies and the multilateral system.

We condemn all human rights violations arising during conflict as well as all breaches of the basic rules, principles and core tenets of international law, in particular international humanitarian law. In this regard we must pay particular attention to the situation of young people who, when faced with disruption in their formative years, risk growing up as a lost generation, and to recognizing the vital role that women can and should play in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Parliamentary diplomacy is a crucial tool in empowering parliamentarians to actively promote and safeguard these rights and standards at the national level, as well as to advance democratic principles and human rights standards worldwide.

Furthermore, we seek to prioritize the safeguarding of human rights by emphasizing the importance of ratifying and effectively implementing international humanitarian law and human rights instruments at the national level as a critical step in ensuring that those entitled to protection genuinely benefit from it. Likewise, we agree to work to disseminate international humanitarian law as widely as possible to the population as a whole, to provide gender-sensitive training to armed and security forces on this subject and to step up the accountability of these forces for their actions.

We strongly reiterate our commitment to upholding the rule of law, both domestically and internationally, as the cornerstone of conflict prevention and resolution, as well as our belief in dialogue and diplomacy as an indispensable tool to achieve enduring peace. We urge all States, especially those parties to an armed conflict, to adhere strictly to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, with no exceptions. Additionally, we advocate for increased recourse to the International Court of Justice and other international judicial institutions as essential mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of disputes between nations.

We condemn the recent surge in identity-based hatred around the world, particularly religious hatred, and regret the political polarization that is helping to drive this phenomenon. We advocate for holistic dialogue processes that involve representatives of religions, beliefs and faith-based organizations to effectively complement existing efforts to mitigate violence and promote peace, inclusion and understanding. We commit to continuing our work to achieve the recommendations outlined in the Marrakesh Communiqué, the outcome document of the IPU's Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue, held in June 2023.

There is a close link between peace and development. The deterioration of peace and the escalation in the frequency and severity of conflicts within and between countries jeopardizes development gains and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Vulnerable, marginalized and underrepresented members of society, such as women, youth, children, the elderly, the poor, indigenous people, minorities, and persons with disabilities, are disproportionately impacted by conflict, which further exacerbates pre-existing inequalities, such as unequal access to socio-economic and political rights. One such manifestation of this is in the radicalization by extremist groups of at-risk and often under-employed youth in fragile, conflict-affected States, undermining national security.

Our focus should be on tackling the underlying causes of conflict, which are often rooted in economic inequality and discrimination against entire groups. The well-being of the most vulnerable is a good litmus test for the health of society at large. Therefore, it is imperative to address the specific needs of at-risk members of the population by embracing inclusive solutions that simultaneously preserve their dignity, reduce their exposure to the detrimental impacts of conflict and provide the conditions for them to realize their socioeconomic potential. We should therefore increase our focus on human security, which encompasses citizens' protection by prioritizing essential needs such as food, health care and environmental security, and on guaranteeing equal rights for all, as the main path to fostering both peace and development.

We must monitor the early warning signs of potential conflicts both locally and nationally and take adequate action to prevent escalation, foster dialogue and cooperation, and ensure compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law. In this vein, we recognize our responsibility to promote conflict prevention through a focus on disarmament, reducing military spending, shifting budget priorities to better address the root causes of conflict, and holding governments to account – including by challenging their use of emergency powers to wage war. We also need to work towards the demilitarization of cyberspace and artificial intelligence, so that they can instead be used to open up spaces for scientific breakthroughs, international cooperation and peace.

Since parliamentarians are well-placed to play the role of impartial mediators, to facilitate dialogue to prevent or de-escalate conflict or to restore peace, we also pledge to redouble our efforts to resolve conflicts through the exercise of parliamentary diplomacy. We reaffirm our commitment to preventing a relapse of large-scale disputes in post-conflict situations, including through enacting, overseeing and monitoring the implementation of peace agreements and ensuring they are accompanied by adequate funding for basic health care services, mental health support, transitional justice and institutional reforms. We further commit to addressing past and current discord through bolstering citizen engagement and ensuring that perspectives from the full breadth of civil society and civic institutions are heard.

We are committed to fostering the more substantial involvement of women and youth in politics and leadership roles, including in the military and security sectors. We commit ourselves to the effective implementation of the women, peace and security, and youth, peace and security agendas of the UN Security Council by ensuring that peace processes, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and conflict prevention integrate a gender perspective and guarantee the equal and meaningful participation of

women and youth. We also will strive to take all necessary measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women and girls, especially against women in politics, as well as conflict-related gender-based violence and violence against minority and marginalized groups. Moreover, we commit to providing assistance to survivors of such violence, recognizing the importance of inclusivity and gender-sensitive approaches in creating a more equitable and secure environment.

Today's challenges transcend borders and demand a collective global response. As members of parliament, we agree on the importance of restoring trust in multilateralism. Further, it is only through international cooperation and upholding the rule of law that we can address growing risks, build solidarity and, through a common security approach, find lasting solutions to establish a shared sense of security, where all nations feel safe, leading to a more secure world for future generations. Essential to the credibility and success of all these efforts is ensuring that the attention and resources devoted to responding to global challenges are commensurate with their severity and not motivated by geopolitical interests, bearing in mind the equal rights, dignity and value of each human life.

Finally, as we mark the 135th anniversary of the IPU, we reconfirm our commitment to inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation, and we emphasize the IPU's unique role as the parliamentary counterpart to the United Nations. As we look ahead to the UN Summit of the Future in September 2024, we call on all Member Parliaments to help advance UN reform and to further strengthen the parliamentary dimension of the work of the UN. In turn, we shall take this Declaration back to our respective parliaments, disseminate the outcome of our collective work to our national authorities, and seek to mark the International Day of Parliamentarism (30 June, which coincides with the anniversary of the IPU) through a dedicated event in our respective parliaments.

As parliamentarians, we commit to lead the way towards a more peaceful world, pursuing tenacious, evidence-based and original approaches, and drawing on the experiences of all members of the global parliamentary community. We therefore pledge to do our utmost, individually and collectively, to protect and promote peace for all.

IPU Leadership Statement on the situation in Gaza

*Issued at the 148th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

In view of the worsening situation in Gaza, we call for urgent action to alleviate the suffering of the people in the region, including women, children and the elderly, who have been caught up in the fighting.

On behalf of the global parliamentary community, we call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

We reiterate our demand for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

We appeal to the relevant authorities on all sides to expand the flow of essential humanitarian aid to reach those in need in Gaza.

We reiterate our utter condemnation of any violence against civilians and stress the need for respect for international humanitarian law.

*Tulia Ackson, IPU President, and
Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General*

Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence

Resolution adopted by consensus by the 148th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

The 148th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Acknowledging that, while the applications of emerging technologies open up opportunities for the development of humanity, they may also pose significant challenges to peace and international security and may raise new questions about the role of humans in warfare, that regulation of autonomy in the context of weapon systems requires a holistic understanding of its effects, and that human decision-making and control must take account of all ethical, legal, humanitarian and security implications,

Affirming that any discussion on autonomous weapon systems (AWS) is subject to international law, particularly the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law (IHL),

Noting the lack of an agreed definition of autonomous weapon systems, and *recalling* the proposal of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in which the term “autonomous weapon systems” encompasses any weapon system with autonomy in its critical functions, which means that it can select (i.e. search for, detect, identify or track) and attack (i.e. use force against, neutralize, damage or destroy) targets without human intervention,

Recognizing that the preservation of human control and judgment stands as a critical factor in ensuring legal compliance and effectively addressing the ethical concerns that arise from the deployment of AWS,

Gravely concerned that AWS that have full autonomy in their critical functions could be able to select and attack targets without human intervention,

Concerned that the lack of control and explicit regulation at the international level around the use of AWS could allow operators to violate international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations and IHL, without accountability, potentially infringing on the fundamental human rights enshrined in national, regional and international legal frameworks, due to the absence of human judgement and supervision and the lack of opportunities for timely intervention or mechanisms for deactivation over the use of force,

Deeply concerned about the possible negative consequences and impact of AWS on global security and regional and international stability, including the risk of an emerging arms race, lowering the threshold for conflict and proliferation, including to non-State actors, as outlined in United Nations General Assembly resolution 78/241 on lethal autonomous weapon systems,

Concerned that advancements in sophisticated military technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithmic data processing, may increase the risk of a new arms race, lowering the threshold for conflict and proliferation, including to non-State actors, and putting peace and international security at even greater risk, but *acknowledging* that a ban on research would be unrealistic, not least when so much of the research in this field is conducted by both military and civilian players and AI still has a very important role to play in civilian life,

Alarmed by the possibility that AWS have the potential to become future weapons of mass destruction as they combine two properties unique to such weapons: mass harm and lack of human control to ensure they do not injure civilians,

Conscious that human rights instruments guarantee the right to life, dignity and integrity of persons,

Deeply concerned that AWS could be used by armed groups and other non-State actors to undermine national, regional and global security, causing profound social and humanitarian impact,

Alarmed by the evidence that individual recognition algorithms, including facial recognition and automated decision algorithms have native embedded bias that is already propagating gender and race discrimination and perpetrating injustices against socio-economically disadvantaged people, the vulnerable and people with disabilities, and that AWS could be deliberately programmed to target people bearing certain “markers” or identities including race, gender or patterns of behaviour, and to apply force without human intervention, potentially leading to disproportionate harm to specific groups, locations or communities,

Recalling, without prejudice to Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, the fundamental rule under IHL according to which the right of Parties to a conflict to choose their means and methods of warfare is not unlimited, as stated in Article 35 (1) of the Additional Protocol I (AP I) to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 relating to the protection of victims in international armed conflicts, and as provided for by customary international law, as well as the obligation stated in Article 36 of AP I, which requires States to conduct reviews of the study, development, acquisition or adoption of all new weapons, means and methods of warfare in order to determine whether their use is prohibited by IHL or any other rule of applicable international law,

Mindful that, for decades, the international community has been actively keeping track of the emerging issues of AWS, marked by key milestones in AWS regulatory governance, including the report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions in 2010, which brought the issue of lethal autonomous robotics and the protection of life to the international spotlight and that, since 2013, the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), a key IHL instrument, have been holding discussions on the issue and, in 2016, established an open-ended Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS),

Recognizing the GGE as a key international forum at which a framework around LAWS is being developed,

Noting the fact that, during its 2023 meetings, the GGE underscored the need to anticipate technological advancements in LAWS, urging strict adherence to IHL throughout the life cycle of these systems, highlighting the need for limitations on targets and operational parameters, coupled with appropriate training and instructions for human operators, and firmly stating that any LAWS-based system unable to comply with international law should not be deployed,

Acknowledging the adoption of resolution 78/241 by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2023, which, inter alia, requests that the Secretary-General of the United Nations submit a substantive report on the subject reflecting the full range of views received from Member and observer States on ways to address the related challenges and concerns such systems raise from humanitarian, legal, security, technological and ethical perspectives, and on the role of humans in the use of force, and invite the views of international and regional organizations, the ICRC, civil society, the scientific community and industry,

Recognizing that, since 2018, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has consistently maintained that AWS are politically unacceptable and morally repugnant and has called for their prohibition under international law, and that when presenting his *New Agenda for Peace* ahead of the Summit of the Future in 2024, he further called on States to adopt by 2026 a legally binding instrument to prohibit AWS that function without human control or oversight and to regulate all other types of AWS,

Recognizing also that the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on counter-terrorism and human rights, the ICRC, civil society, including through the Stop Killer Robots Campaign, the scientific community, and academia have joined the call by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for a global prohibition on AWS,

Noting that the landmark joint appeal made in 2023 by the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the ICRC underlined the urgency for States to negotiate a new, binding international law on AWS to set clear prohibitions and restrictions on AWS by 2026,

Mindful that many States and groups of countries have already been calling for the establishment of a legally binding instrument to regulate, limit and/or prohibit the use of AWS, and, at the same time, *cognisant* of the need for a unanimous decision, i.e. that all States agree to follow the proposed limitations,

Recognizing that urgent, concrete action is needed to develop international approaches, particularly given that weapon systems with varying degrees of autonomy have already been used in various conflicts,

Considering the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, international human rights law, and IHL and its founding principles of humanity, dictates of public conscience and ethical perspectives,

Reaffirming that, because IHL requires commanders and the users of weapons to be able to anticipate and limit their effects, weapon systems must be predictable, and that the potential “black box” effect arising from the integration of AI technologies could hinder compliance with these obligations,

Gravely concerned that the longer States wait to regulate AWS, the more likely the flow and proliferation of such systems will continue on the market,

Stressing the need to study an international regulatory framework for the use of AI to regulate the harmful use of this technology,

Highlighting that parliaments will have a significant role to play in raising awareness on the social, humanitarian, legal and ethical implications of the use of AWS, and in supporting governments with inputs to draft the text for an instrument to regulate such systems,

1. *Urges* parliaments and parliamentarians to actively and urgently engage in the debate to address the threat to peace and security posed by AWS;
2. *Strongly urges* parliaments to develop comprehensive national legislation to establish regulatory frameworks governing the development, deployment and use of AWS, once international agreement has been reached on a definition of “autonomous weapon system” and on the distinction between full and partial autonomy as well as consensus on the use and content of the term “meaningful human control”, taking into account all their ethical, legal, humanitarian and security implications and including the prohibition of AWS that function without human control or oversight, and which cannot be used in compliance with IHL;
3. *Calls on* parliaments to urge their governments to continue working through international forums, including the United Nations and the GGE, on an instrument, governance framework and regulations on autonomy in weapon systems, to ensure compliance with international law, including IHL, and ethical perspectives, as well as the prevention of the peace and security impact that autonomy in weapon systems entails;
4. *Suggests* that parliaments encourage their governments to share their views with the Secretary-General of the United Nations on ways to address challenges and concerns raised by AWS in accordance with resolution 78/241 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2023 and *A New Agenda for Peace*, which recommends multilateral efforts for a legally binding instrument on LAWS and other types of AWS by 2026;
5. *Recommends* that parliaments and parliamentarians work with relevant stakeholders, including the defence industry, civil society and academia, to understand, evaluate and create safeguards in relation to both AI and AWS, including weapon system designers, particularly regarding their compliance with existing law and with any developments to the law that may occur in the future;

6. *Encourages* parliaments to regularly assess and evaluate the application of new technologies, to avoid these technologies creating a unilateral pressure on all citizens that grants disproportionate powers to the parties when operating without proper oversight, and to address the risks posed by facial recognition systems, including hardware, software and algorithms, including to prevent gender and racial bias, that may be integrated into AWS;
7. *Urges* parliaments and parliamentarians to play a crucial role in holding governments accountable regarding AWS, in ensuring quality in their governance, notably regarding the imperative of retaining human control over the use of force, and transparency in their design, development, operation, regulation and oversight, and in triggering concrete action by governments and societies more broadly;
8. *Calls on* parliaments to encourage governments to engage actively in the ongoing discussions on LAWS at the GGE and to take all necessary efforts to support the GGE's work;
9. *Also calls on* parliaments to strongly urge their governments to establish robust frameworks for data protection to govern the development, deployment and use of AWS, emphasizing the critical importance of safeguarding sensitive data and ensuring ethical and responsible use of information;
10. *Urges* parliaments to ensure the establishment of effective mechanisms to conduct investigations, prosecution and punishment for violations of IHL arising from the use of weapons with autonomous functionalities, thereby upholding individual responsibilities and ensuring accountability for any breaches of ethical and legal standards;
11. *Also urges* parliaments to request that their governments clearly define their own responsibilities and those of the private sector and civil society with regard to AWS, and adopt legislation that incorporates regulatory frameworks and safeguards to ensure that such systems do not fall into criminal hands or into the hands of non-State actors that operate outside the law, and that such laws are fully in line with international human rights obligations;
12. *Encourages* parliaments and parliamentarians to stimulate exchange of relevant good practices between States, with due regard for national security regulations and commercial restrictions on private information;
13. *Recommends* that parliaments and parliamentarians: (a) allocate budgets to fund plans, programmes, projects and actions to raise awareness of the need to prevent, regulate, monitor and enforce human rights and safeguards related to AWS; (b) advocate for the incorporation of comprehensive educational programmes on AI and autonomous systems within national curricula at appropriate educational levels to promote widespread understanding of both the potential benefits and the risks associated with these technologies, including their ethical, legal, humanitarian and security implications;
14. *Calls for* the adoption of measures to ensure the inclusion of a gender and intersectional perspective based on United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), in discussions of AWS and military AI strategies;
15. *Calls on* relevant parliamentary networks and IPU permanent observers to include AWS on their agendas and to inform the IPU of their work and findings on the issue;
16. *Invites* the IPU, through its relevant Standing Committee and specialized bodies, to keep abreast of the issue and organize at the 151st Assembly a panel discussion, inviting relevant parliamentary networks and IPU permanent observers to participate, aimed at taking stock of the situation in advance of the 2026 deadline set by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to adopt a legally binding instrument on AWS;

17. *Suggests* that the IPU Secretariat compile and analyse a set of parliamentary good practices and stocktaking related to the use of AI in the security and military sectors and derived from the discussion within the IPU framework and other subsequent IPU activities, including measures to remove bias in the algorithms that underpin AI systems that are capable of autonomous analysis and actions;
18. *Urges* the Secretary General of the IPU to share the present resolution and further reports and publications related to AWS with the Secretary-General of the United Nations for inclusion in the report mentioned in resolution 78/241 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2023;
19. *Invites* the IPU to regularly hold sessions for parliamentarians to discuss the latest developments with AWS and AI and reassess their impacts in the military domain, particularly with regard to specific concerns on human rights violations, meaningful human control over the use of force and the ethical implications of these technologies;
20. *Encourages* parliaments to implement their strategies to exercise more effective parliamentary oversight functions and ensure that technological development, such as AI, is only deployed to assist humans in certain tasks, without compromising meaningful human control and intervention whenever it is needed.

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- **India, Iran (Islamic Republic of)** and the **Russian Federation** expressed their opposition to the entire text of the resolution.
 - **China** and **Lithuania** expressed a reservation on the entire text of the resolution.
 - **Australia, New Zealand** and the **United Kingdom** expressed reservations on several paragraphs.
 - **Cuba** and **France** expressed a reservation on the use of the term “autonomous weapon systems (AWS)” without mentioning the characteristic of lethality (i.e. lethal autonomous weapon system – LAWS).
 - **Türkiye** expressed reservations on preambular paragraphs 13, 17, 18, 20 and 21, and operative paragraphs 2, 4 and 16.
 - **Republic of Korea** expressed reservations on preambular paragraphs 18 and 19, and operative paragraph 16.
 - **Canada** expressed reservations on preambular paragraph 3 and operative paragraph 2 on the grounds that they are too prescriptive for national governments.

Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity

Resolution adopted by consensus by the 148th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

The 148th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Recalling the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement to strengthen the global response to climate change, as well as the outcomes of the United Nations Climate Change Conferences (COPs), which underline the urgent need for immediate, deep, rapid and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions across all applicable sectors based on available means of implementation, including through increased use of low-emission and renewable energy, just energy transition partnerships, and other multilevel and cooperative actions in the light of national circumstances,

Recalling also the IPU resolution *Climate change – Let us not cross the line*, adopted at the 139th IPU Assembly in October 2018, the *Parliamentary action plan on climate change* endorsed by the IPU Governing Council at its 198th session in March 2016, and the COP28 Parliamentary Meeting outcome document of December 2023,

Noting the importance of strengthening partnerships between all countries, parliaments, public and private institutions (governmental, non-governmental and inter-parliamentary), and civil society (especially vulnerable groups) to combat climate change, and that without such cooperation to facilitate climate action, the impacts of climate change will be inevitable at all levels,

Recalling the *COP28 UAE Consensus*, which has the potential to become a benchmark for partnerships for climate action by laying out a response to the global stocktake, putting forward a plan to close implementation gaps by 2030, calling on Parties to transition away from fossil fuels in a just, orderly and equitable manner to reach net zero, recognizing the crucial need to scale up adaptation finance, and introducing targets to triple renewable energy capacity globally and double the global rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030,

Recalling also the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC to achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system,

Considering that the Paris Agreement has established mechanisms and procedures allowing countries to define their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change; *expressing appreciation* that all Parties to the Paris Agreement have communicated NDCs that demonstrate progress towards achieving the Paris Agreement temperature goal; and *noting* that more ambitious mitigation targets in NDCs are needed to reduce emissions rapidly,

Noting the launch, during the COP26 meeting in Glasgow, of the Global Methane Pledge, which is based on solid scientific data and contains a commitment to reduce global methane emissions by at least 30% below 2020 levels by 2030,

Noting also that, presently, more than 155 countries have signed the Global Methane Pledge, and *recognizing* that only by drastically reducing methane emissions in the current decade will it be possible to stay on track to avoid the average temperature rise in the atmosphere exceeding the 1.5°C target,

Bearing in mind that, despite making up only 16% of greenhouse gases, methane is responsible for approximately a third of global warming and traps 80 times more heat than carbon dioxide, although it dissipates in the atmosphere within decades, rather than centuries as is the case for carbon dioxide, and *recognizing* both forestry activity, thanks to its vital importance in capturing carbon dioxide, and the production of renewable raw materials for construction, such as wood and its derivatives, as strategic for the sustainable development of countries,

Acknowledging that the right to a clean and healthy environment, including the right to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations, is a fundamental right enshrined in both national and international laws,

Considering that parliaments play a fundamental role in the oversight and control of government policies on environmental matters as well as in budgetary allocations and enacting legislation, monitoring the implementation of corresponding legislation and regulations, and ensuring alignment between national policies and international commitments,

Considering also that many parliamentary initiatives address the need for urgent financing and climate action, including the parliamentary platforms taking shape for climate action against methane emissions,

Acknowledging that reducing carbon emissions is critical in dealing with climate change and mitigating environmental damage, and that renewable energy that does not degrade ecosystems provides a cleaner and more sustainable means to meet energy demand, bringing environmental sustainability and offering the further advantage of being able to provide power to even the most underprivileged people living in the remotest areas,

Acknowledging also that armed conflicts instigated by States or non-States have a considerable impact on the climate, causing the release of significant amounts of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, leading to the destruction of ecosystems that currently store carbon and absorb and remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, and resulting in ecocide,

Acknowledging further that the deployment of renewables in the power, heat and transport sectors is one of the main enablers of keeping the rise in average global temperatures within reach of 1.5°C, that the need to encourage the deployment of renewable energy has increased in recent years, that more cities, regions and countries, both developed and developing, are promoting and adopting policies to deploy renewable energy, and that concrete and easily-measured environmental goals are paramount in this respect,

Emphasizing the need for deep, rapid and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in line with 1.5°C pathways, as expressed in the decision on the first global stocktake at COP28, by tripling renewable energy capacity globally and doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030 as well as through accelerating zero- and low-emission technologies and transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems,

Welcoming the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, which emphasizes accelerating clean, sustainable, just, affordable and inclusive energy transitions through various pathways, as a means of enabling strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth and achieving climate objectives, and which calls for recognition of the needs, vulnerabilities, priorities and different national circumstances of developing countries and support of strong international and national enabling environments to foster innovation, voluntary and mutually agreed technology transfer, and access to low-cost financing,

Recognizing the need expressed in the decision on the first global stocktake at COP28 for States to contribute to global climate change efforts by accelerating zero- and low-emission technologies, including renewables, nuclear, abatement and removal technologies, and low-carbon hydrogen production,

Recognizing also the importance of the agreement reached at COP27 to provide loss and damage funding for vulnerable countries hit hard by floods, droughts and other climate disasters, and *welcoming* the subsequent operationalization of the global fund for loss and damage at COP28,

Recognizing further the role of developed countries in providing support to and enhancing cooperation with developing countries in transitioning to low-carbon, low-emission economies; *emphasizing* the imperative to significantly scale finance to meet the urgent and evolving needs of developing countries, including access to technology and low-cost financing; *advocating* a collective approach for technology transfer and development, knowledge sharing, and cultivating innovative solutions as crucial to fostering socially just, sustainable and effective progress; and *emphasizing* that every nation is responsible for creating an attractive investment climate that can draw in both domestic and international capital to speed up change,

Noting that developed countries, as the largest contributors to carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions, should bear the greatest responsibility,

Noting also that the world's population is growing at an unprecedented rate and that this has resulted in a dramatic increase in energy demand globally, at a rate likely to be even more rapid than population growth,

Aware that, in an effort to meet this ever-increasing energy demand and address the issue of global warming, breakthrough advances have been made in the design of technologies that can control emissions and harness power from renewable and alternative energy sources, but their costs remain unaffordable to many developing countries,

Recognizing the need to promote and encourage new technologies to scale up integration of battery energy storage systems, aimed at enabling greater integration of variable renewable energy sources and fulfilling the dynamic energy requirements of a growing population,

Encouraging the harmonization of zero- and low-carbon hydrogen standards with the goal of fostering worldwide collaboration, facilitating trade and igniting innovation, which holds the capacity to unlock economies of scale, promote technology transfer and development, expedite the transition towards cleaner energy sources, and reach the full potential of renewable energy,

Welcoming the collaborative initiatives on universal energy access from civil society organizations for increased deployment of green energy technologies to bring energy access, ensure energy security and drive energy transition,

Recognizing the crucial role of grid interconnections, resilient energy infrastructure and regional/cross-border power systems integration in enhancing energy security, fostering economic growth, and facilitating universal energy access for all, in an affordable, reliable and sustainable manner,

Highlighting that climate change impacts individuals and communities differently, with women, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, the populations of small island developing States, indigenous groups and communities in vulnerable situations often bearing the brunt of its consequences, and *calling for* coordinated efforts to ensure that actions to address these challenges reflect a comprehensive and equitable approach to climate action, including through the promotion of just transition pathways,

Recognizing that women and girls are uniquely affected by the damaging effects of climate change and that steps should be taken to support women's leadership and decision making in climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, resilience-building and sustainable natural resource management,

Acknowledging that youth are the most important and dynamic segment of the population in a society, that they are agents of change, entrepreneurs and innovators, and that, through education, science and technology, they are scaling up their efforts and using their skills to accelerate climate action, taking account of their common needs, such as access to quality education to prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow, the availability of decent work, equality among men and women, and a planet that is healthy, clean and sustainable,

Bearing in mind that promoting climate culture and harnessing the perspectives, new ideas and energy of young people constitute vital components in the broader efforts to address key issues affecting people of all ages, such as achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), peace and security, the right to education, health and social protection, gender equality, equal socioeconomic and political opportunities, and fighting climate change,

Acknowledging the importance of investments in sustainable, healthy lifestyles, just and sustainable energy transitions, and accelerating progress with and achievement of the SDGs, especially in developing countries, as well as in the context of the fight to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions,

Recognizing that sustainable and responsible consumption, production and trade, coupled with environmentally friendly life choices and lifestyles such as zero-waste approaches, are key to achieving the SDGs, including climate goals and inclusive economic growth,

Recognizing also the leadership of subnational governments in accelerating and scaling up climate mitigation and adaptation action through the implementation of local and regional climate plans and actions, while effectively engaging citizens and industry in the transformative process towards responsible consumption and production,

Envisaging a comprehensive transformation in energy efficiency measures and global reduction in consumption, with the ambitious target of doubling the global annual rate of energy efficiency improvement by 2030 in a nationally determined manner, taking into account the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement and different national circumstances, pathways and approaches to foster a sustainable and responsible energy landscape on a global scale, and *acknowledging* that the global transition provides opportunities for and poses challenges to sustainable development, economic growth and eradication of poverty, and thus requires a coherent, just transition in different sectors of the national economy,

Recognizing the importance of accelerating the development, transfer, deployment, and dissemination of technologies, and of adopting policies to transition towards zero- and low-emission energy systems, including, inter alia, renewables, nuclear, abatement and removal technologies such as carbon capture and utilization and storage, particularly in hard-to-abate sectors, and *emphasizing* the need to make these technologies available and as affordable as possible to all,

Highlighting the importance of addressing environmental challenges through united climate actions and partnerships to safeguard the planet for present and future generations,

1. *Emphasizes* that global warming is a collective challenge requiring strengthened international cooperation and multilateral processes under the aegis of the UNFCCC framework, based on the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities as outlined in Article 3.1 of the Convention and Article 2.2 of its Paris Agreement; and *underscores* the need for added international support for developing countries;
2. *Encourages* parliaments to ensure a transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade to achieve the goal of net zero emissions;
3. *Stresses* the importance of enhancing a clean energy mix in line with 1.5°C pathways, including zero- and low-emission and renewable energy, at all levels as part of diversifying energy mixes and systems, in line with national circumstances and recognizing the need for support towards just transitions; particularly for workers whose jobs are affected by the transition away from fossil fuels;
4. *Affirms* support for promoting reliable, diversified, sustainable and responsible supply chains for energy transitions, including for critical minerals and materials through responsible sourcing practices and international cooperation;
5. *Reaffirms* parliaments' steadfast commitment, in pursuit of the objectives of the UNFCCC, to tackle climate change by strengthening the full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and its temperature goals, reflecting equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances;

6. *Encourages* parliaments to urge their respective governments to undertake policy measures to combat climate change, promote renewable, zero- and low-emission energy, implement various schemes and initiatives, including based on the COP28 global stocktake, and establish regulatory frameworks to support green energy initiatives to the benefit of the people;
7. *Calls on* parliaments to actively commit to collective climate action to cut methane emissions, and ensure that:
 - (a) NDCs explicitly include reductions of methane emissions,
 - (b) legislative initiatives in national parliaments reduce methane emissions in the energy and waste management sectors,
 - (c) best practices in agriculture are promoted, such as sustainable agriculture and livestock farming as strategic economic activities,
 - (d) resources are allocated, including funding for research, technology development and implementation of methane emissions reduction strategies;
8. *Also calls on* parliaments to monitor whether government policies are effectively aligned with the commitments and emission reduction goals established in the Global Methane Pledge and the International Energy Agency's 75% reduction goal;
9. *Further calls on* parliaments to ensure that international funding in the coming years focuses on aid, investments and deployment of innovative green technologies to reduce methane emissions, namely by:
 - (a) detecting and repairing methane emissions from oil, gas and coal production and distribution, upgrading obsolete equipment, reducing flaring and venting waste, and applying drastic emissions controls,
 - (b) implementing better livestock and manure management practices,
 - (c) investing in waste management (household and industrial), as well as waste reduction, requiring landfills to strictly control methane emissions, and diverting organic waste to valorization processes such as composting, protein extraction and energy production;
10. *Recognizes* that the unprecedented global energy crisis underlines the urgency to rapidly transform energy systems to be more secure, reliable and resilient, including by accelerating the clean, equitable, affordable and just transition to renewable, zero- and low-emission energy;
11. *Encourages* the collective actions and efforts to triple renewable energy capacity globally through existing targets and policies, as well as to demonstrate similar ambition with respect to other zero- and low-emission technologies, including, inter alia, renewables, nuclear, abatement and removal technologies such as carbon capture and utilization and storage, particularly in hard-to-abate sectors, and low-carbon hydrogen production, in line with national circumstances;
12. *Encourages* parliaments to urge their respective governments to meet their international commitments to contribute to global climate change efforts by accelerating zero- and low-emission technologies, including renewables, nuclear, abatement and removal technologies, and low-carbon hydrogen production;
13. *Urges* parliaments to press their governments to create international, national, regional and local enabling environments and partnerships to foster innovation, voluntary and mutually agreed upon-technology development and transfer, and access to low-cost financing, including capacity-building, grant-based finance and non-debt instruments, taking into account the needs, vulnerabilities, priorities and different national circumstances of developing countries;
14. *Also urges* parliaments to press their governments to allocate specific budgetary resources for climate action initiatives, focusing on the implementation of sustainable, zero- and low-emission development strategies, and to prioritize capacity-building to empower all nations, particularly those facing significant socio-economic challenges and the adverse effects of climate change;

15. *Encourages* parliaments to establish a parliamentary mechanism to systematically monitor and report, through an evidence-based approach, the progress of climate-related legislation and the mainstreaming of green budgeting in parliamentary procedures, to ensure transparency and accountability of the climate actions taken;
16. *Encourages* national parliaments to cooperate with other regional and international parliaments on knowledge exchange and the transfer of best practices, policy standards and legislation regarding climate action for sustainable development and clean technology transfer and development;
17. *Recommends* that the IPU, other inter-parliamentary institutions and platforms, and national parliaments closely engage with relevant international climate stakeholders including the UNFCCC finance architecture and its climate technology framework as a means to strengthen parliamentary exposure and awareness on climate issues;
18. *Urges* parliaments to cooperate with the public and private sectors to create a conducive environment for investing in clean energy technologies and infrastructure, capacity-building and technology transfer and development, as well as to promote greater public-private partnership at the regional and international level, and to deliver a more people-centred energy transition and climate-resilient development for all;
19. *Calls upon* parliaments to urge their governments to work towards facilitating access to low-cost financing for developing countries, for existing as well as new and emerging clean and sustainable energy technologies, and for supporting just and sustainable energy transitions;
20. *Recognizes* the role of parliamentarians in raising awareness of climate change issues and of the fact that children and youth will be significantly affected in the future by climate change, and *calls on* governments to include youth in all climate negotiations;
21. *Encourages* parliaments to ensure the meaningful and equal participation of women in climate action, including gender-responsive implementation of climate goals;
22. *Applauds* the initiative of the IPU to engage parliaments and parliamentarians in its *Parliaments for the Planet* campaign, which highlights that parliaments and parliamentarians can be agents of change by contributing to ensure a just, inclusive, equitable and sustainable transition through collective, individual and institutional efforts;
23. *Encourages* national parliaments to take stronger climate action by implementing the IPU climate change tools, such as the *10 actions for greener parliaments*, to align their work with greening initiatives, to take greater part in NDC processes and to call for more ambitious climate action plans and goals that focus on people-centred and community-led adaptation and a just and equitable energy transition at all levels;
24. *Recognizes* that climate equity is impossible when entities responsible for climate damage are not held accountable;
25. *Emphasizes* the importance of considering climate change-related damages within reparation mechanisms arising from internationally wrongful acts and of acknowledging that major past, present and future large emitters have a great responsibility in this respect;
26. *Highlights* the need to define ecocide as unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts.

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- *- **India** and **Iran (Islamic Republic of)** expressed their opposition to the entire text of the resolution.
 - **China** expressed reservations on preambular paragraphs 7 and 8, and operative paragraphs 7, 8 and 25.
 - **Türkiye** expressed reservations on operative paragraphs 24, 25 and 26.

Raising awareness of the International Court of Justice provisional measures for Israel in relation to Palestinians in Gaza, and of the need for urgent action on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza

Results of the roll-call vote on the request of the delegation of South Africa with the support of the Arab Group and the African Group for the inclusion of an emergency item

Results

Affirmative votes..... 904 Total of affirmative and negative votes .. 1,374
 Negative votes 470 Two-thirds majority..... 916
 Abstentions 237

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Albania		<i>Absent</i>		Georgia			11	Paraguay		<i>Absent</i>	
Algeria	16			Germany		19		Peru		15	
Andorra		10		Ghana	15			Philippines	20		
Angola	15			Greece		13		Poland		15	
Argentina		8		Guinea		<i>Absent</i>		Portugal		13	
Armenia	11			Guinea-Bissau	11			Qatar	9		
Australia		14		Guyana	10			Republic of Korea	17		
Austria		12		Hungary		10		Romania		13	
Azerbaijan	13			Iceland		10		Russian Federation	20		
Bahamas		<i>Absent</i>		India			23	Rwanda		<i>Absent</i>	
Bahrain	11			Indonesia	22			San Marino		10	
Bangladesh	21			Iran (Islamic Republic of)	19			Sao Tome and Principe			10
Belgium		13		Iraq	16			Saudi Arabia	15		
Benin		<i>Absent</i>		Ireland	4		8	Serbia		<i>Absent</i>	
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	8	5		Israel		12		Seychelles	10		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	8			Italy		10		Sierra Leone		<i>Absent</i>	
Botswana	11			Japan			20	Singapore			12
Brazil	22			Jordan	13			Slovakia		<i>Absent</i>	
Bulgaria	10			Kazakhstan		<i>Absent</i>		Slovenia		11	
Burkina Faso	14			Kenya	17			Somalia		<i>Absent</i>	
Burundi	13			Lao People's Dem. Republic	12			South Africa	17		
Cabo Verde	10			Latvia		11		South Sudan		<i>Absent</i>	
Cambodia	13			Lebanon	8			Spain		16	
Cameroon			14	Lesotho	11			Sri Lanka		<i>Absent</i>	
Canada		15		Liechtenstein		10		Suriname	10		
Chad	13			Lithuania		11		Sweden		13	
Chile	2	6	5	Luxembourg		10		Switzerland		12	
China	23			Madagascar			14	Syrian Arab Rep.	14		
Côte d'Ivoire	14			Malawi			13	Thailand			18
Cuba	13			Malaysia	15			Timor-Leste			11
Cyprus	5		6	Maldives	10			Tonga	10		
Czech Republic		13		Mali	10			Trinidad & Tobago		<i>Absent</i>	
DR of the Congo	19			Malta	8			Tunisia	13		
Denmark		12		Mexico	10	10		Türkiye	19		
Djibouti	11			Monaco		<i>Absent</i>		Turkmenistan		<i>Absent</i>	
Dominican Rep.		<i>Absent</i>		Mongolia		<i>Absent</i>		Uganda	16		
Ecuador	10			Montenegro			10	Ukraine			16
Egypt	20			Morocco	15			United Arab Emirates	12		
Equatorial Guinea	11			Mozambique	15			United Kingdom		18	
Estonia		11		Namibia	11			United Republic of Tanzania	18		
Eswatini		<i>Absent</i>		Nepal			15	Uruguay			11
Ethiopia			20	Netherlands		13		Uzbekistan		<i>Absent</i>	
Fiji		<i>Absent</i>		New Zealand		12		Viet Nam		<i>Absent</i>	
Finland		12		Nigeria		22		Yemen	13		
France		18		Norway		12		Zambia	13		
Gabon		<i>Absent</i>		Oman	11			Zimbabwe	13		
Gambia (The)	11			Pakistan	22						
				Palestine	12						

N.B. This list does not include delegations present at the session which were not entitled to vote pursuant to the provisions of Articles 5.2 and 5.3 of the Statutes. Parliaments participating in the IPU in a non-voting observer capacity in accordance with the decision of the 209th session of the Governing Council in Nusa Dua do not appear on this list.

Call for urgent action regarding the conflict in the Middle East

Results of roll-call vote on the request of the delegations of Denmark, France, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal, Sweden and United Kingdom for the inclusion of an emergency item

Results

Affirmative votes	778	Total of affirmative and negative votes ..	1,249
Negative votes	471	Two-thirds majority	833
Abstentions	362		

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Albania		Absent		Georgia	11			Paraguay	Absent		
Algeria		16		Germany	19			Peru	15		
Andorra	10			Ghana	15			Philippines	20		
Angola			15	Greece	13			Poland	15		
Argentina	8			Guinea	Absent			Portugal	13		
Armenia	10		1	Guinea-Bissau		11		Qatar		9	
Australia	14			Guyana	10			Republic of Korea	17		
Austria	12			Hungary	10			Romania	13		
Azerbaijan			13	Iceland	10			Russian Federation		20	
Bahamas	Absent			India	23			Rwanda	Absent		
Bahrain		11		Indonesia		22		San Marino	10		
Bangladesh		21		Iran (Islamic Republic of)		19		Sao Tome and Principe			10
Belgium	13			Iraq		16		Saudi Arabia		15	
Benin	Absent			Ireland	12			Serbia	Absent		
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	5		8	Israel			12	Seychelles		10	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	8			Italy	10			Sierra Leone	Absent		
Botswana		11		Japan	20			Singapore	12		
Brazil			22	Jordan		13		Slovakia	Absent		
Bulgaria	10			Kazakhstan	Absent			Slovenia	11		
Burkina Faso		14		Kenya			17	Somalia	Absent		
Burundi			13	Lao People's Dem. Republic			12	South Africa		17	
Cabo Verde	10			Latvia	11			South Sudan	Absent		
Cambodia	13			Lebanon		8		Spain	16		
Cameroon			14	Lesotho			11	Sri Lanka	Absent		
Canada	15			Liechtenstein	10			Suriname	7	3	
Chad		13		Lithuania	11			Sweden	13		
Chile	11		2	Luxembourg	10			Switzerland	12		
China		20	3	Madagascar			14	Syrian Arab Rep.		14	
Côte d'Ivoire		14		Malawi	13			Thailand	18		
Cuba			13	Malaysia			15	Timor-Leste			11
Cyprus	6		5	Maldives			10	Tonga	10		
Czech Republic	13			Mali		10		Trinidad & Tobago	Absent		
DR of the Congo			19	Malta	8			Tunisia		13	
Denmark	12			Mexico	20			Türkiye			19
Djibouti		11		Monaco	Absent			Turkmenistan	Absent		
Dominican Rep.	Absent			Mongolia	Absent			Uganda			16
Ecuador			10	Montenegro	10			Ukraine	16		
Egypt		20		Morocco		15		United Arab Emirates	12		
Equatorial Guinea			11	Mozambique			15	United Kingdom	18		
Estonia	11			Namibia		11		United Republic of Tanzania			18
Eswatini	Absent			Nepal	15			Uruguay	11		
Ethiopia			20	Netherlands	13			Uzbekistan	Absent		
Fiji	Absent			New Zealand	12			Viet Nam	Absent		
Finland	2	10		Nigeria	22			Yemen		13	
France	18			Norway	10	2		Zambia		13	
Gabon	Absent			Oman		11		Zimbabwe			13
Gambia (The)		11		Pakistan		22					
				Palestine		12					

N.B. This list does not include delegations present at the session which were not entitled to vote pursuant to the provisions of Articles 5.2 and 5.3 of the Statutes. Parliaments participating in the IPU in a non-voting observer capacity in accordance with the decision of the 209th session of the Governing Council in Nusa Dua do not appear on this list.

Free, fair and transparent elections without prohibitions: Towards an orderly and peaceful democratic transition in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Results of the roll-call vote on the request of the delegations of Argentina, on behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Guyana, Peru and Uruguay for the inclusion of an emergency item

Results

Affirmative votes..... 225 Total of affirmative and negative votes ..985
 Negative votes 760 Two-thirds majority.....657
 Abstentions 626

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Albania		<i>Absent</i>		Georgia	11			Paraguay		<i>Absent</i>	
Algeria		16		Germany			19	Peru	15		
Andorra		10		Ghana			15	Philippines			20
Angola			15	Greece		13		Poland		15	
Argentina	8			Guinea		<i>Absent</i>		Portugal		13	
Armenia	11			Guinea-Bissau	7	4		Qatar		9	
Australia			14	Guyana	10			Republic of Korea	17		
Austria	12			Hungary			10	Romania		13	
Azerbaijan		13		Iceland		10		Russian Federation		20	
Bahamas		<i>Absent</i>		India			23	Rwanda		<i>Absent</i>	
Bahrain		11		Indonesia		22		San Marino		10	
Bangladesh		21		Iran (Islamic Republic of)		19		Sao Tome and Principe			10
Belgium		13		Iraq		16		Saudi Arabia		15	
Benin		<i>Absent</i>		Ireland			12	Serbia		<i>Absent</i>	
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	5		8	Israel			12	Seychelles		10	
Bosnia and Herzegovina		8		Italy	10			Sierra Leone		<i>Absent</i>	
Botswana		11		Japan			20	Singapore			12
Brazil			22	Jordan		13		Slovakia		<i>Absent</i>	
Bulgaria		10		Kazakhstan		<i>Absent</i>		Slovenia		11	
Burkina Faso		14		Kenya			17	Somalia		<i>Absent</i>	
Burundi			13	Lao People's Dem. Republic			12	South Africa			17
Cabo Verde			10	Latvia		11		South Sudan		<i>Absent</i>	
Cambodia			13	Lebanon		8		Spain	16		
Cameroon			14	Lesotho			11	Sri Lanka		<i>Absent</i>	
Canada			15	Liechtenstein		10		Suriname	5		5
Chad		13		Lithuania			11	Switzerland		13	
Chile	11		2	Luxembourg			10	Syrian Arab Rep.		14	
China		23		Madagascar			14	Thailand			18
Côte d'Ivoire		14		Malawi			13	Timor-Leste			11
Cuba			13	Malaysia	15			Tonga			10
Cyprus		3	8	Maldives			10	Trinidad & Tobago		<i>Absent</i>	
Czech Republic		13		Mali		10		Tunisia		13	
DR of the Congo		19		Malta		8		Türkiye		19	
Denmark		12		Mexico	10		10	Turkmenistan		<i>Absent</i>	
Djibouti		11		Monaco		<i>Absent</i>		Uganda		16	
Dominican Rep.		<i>Absent</i>		Mongolia		<i>Absent</i>		Ukraine	16		
Ecuador			10	Montenegro	7		3	United Arab Emirates		12	
Egypt		20		Morocco		15		United Kingdom	18		
Equatorial Guinea			11	Mozambique			15	United Republic of Tanzania			18
Estonia			11	Namibia			11	Uruguay	9	2	
Eswatini		<i>Absent</i>		Nepal			15	Uzbekistan		<i>Absent</i>	
Ethiopia			20	Netherlands		13		Viet Nam		<i>Absent</i>	
Fiji		<i>Absent</i>		New Zealand		12		Yemen		13	
Finland	12			Nigeria		22		Zambia		13	
France			18	Norway			12	Zimbabwe			13
Gabon		<i>Absent</i>		Oman		11					
Gambia (The)		11		Pakistan		22					
				Palestine		12					

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Report of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

*Noted by the 148th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

The Committee held two sittings, on 25 and 26 March 2024.

The two sittings were chaired by Mr. A. Torosyan (Armenia), Vice-President of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, substituting for Bureau President Ms. J. Mahmood (Maldives), who was absent due to the election campaign in her country.

Debate on the draft resolution to be adopted at the 149th Assembly on *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*

On 25 March 2024, the preparatory debate provided an opportunity to gather Committee members' perspectives, share experiences of actions taken by parliaments and make suggestions on the content of the resolution.

The debate was introduced by the co-Rapporteurs of the resolution, Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada) and Ms. N. Lugangira (United Republic of Tanzania), who observed that recent major advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and its rapid application across political, economic and social spheres pose immediate risks to democracy, human rights and the rule of law that must be urgently addressed by legislators around the world.

The debate also benefited from opening remarks from Mr. T. Lamanauskas, Deputy Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and Mr. P. Sibal, Programme Specialist, Digital Policies and Digital Transformation Section, UNESCO, representing the two lead organizations on AI within the UN system. The experts drew attention to the work on an international governance framework for AI that is taking place within the United Nations Secretary-General's AI Advisory Body. They also flagged certain resources published by their organizations, such as UNESCO's *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*.

The main message from the debate was very clear. Delegates see the many potential benefits that AI can bring, such as creating new economic opportunities, accelerating medical research, and identifying actions to mitigate climate change. But the more than 30 delegates who took the floor also expressed many concerns about the potential risks of AI, ranging from democratic instability to ethical concerns, threats to global peace and security, unease around data protection, the revolutionization of warfare and, particularly alarmingly, potential extinction-level events.

As an example, AI-generated "deep nudes" are already a new battleground in the fight against the exploitation of women and online harassment. AI-generated deep fakes have also greatly increased the risk of misinformation, and of manipulation of elections.

Delegates posed several questions for further consideration: What will the development of AI mean regarding our ability to trust each other, and our confidence in what we see and hear? How do we limit the risks of negative uses of AI? What can parliaments do to safeguard people's rights and ensure that this technology helps us build the society we want? These are pressing questions that the co-Rapporteurs will seek to address as they draft the resolution, which will be discussed at the 149th Assembly in October 2024.

Debate on *Sustainable actions to improve the life conditions of people with disabilities, including their chances for education and work opportunities*

On 26 March 2024, the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights held a debate to discuss existing challenges and share good practices on how parliaments can advance the inclusion of people with disabilities in society, in particular securing their chances for good quality education and work opportunities.

The debate was held in two parts. The first part consisted of a set of interventions from a panel, followed by a question-and-answer session. The second part was an open debate in which delegates shared their national experiences and potential solutions to enhance the life conditions of people with disabilities.

The Committee was joined in part 1 by Ms. G. Oforiwa Fefoame, Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD Committee), Ms. N. Shabani, Disability Focal Point at the UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, Mr. C. Lohr, Member of Parliament from Switzerland, and Mr. J.I. Pérez Bello, Senior Human Rights Advisor at the International Disability Alliance (IDA). Panellists highlighted the important role parliaments can play to advance implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), by ensuring laws, policies and budgets advance the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community and seek to remove all forms of discrimination and stigma based on disability. This includes addressing the multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination based, inter alia, on age, sex, gender and social origin. This can be achieved through the close consultation and active involvement of persons with disabilities in all decision-making processes. Parliaments should also duly utilize guidance by the CRPD in their work, such as the CRPD Committee's concluding observations adopted following the review of their own State party report, as well as the Committee's general comments on specific areas or provisions of the CRPD.

As far as the rights of children with disabilities in education is concerned, the aim should be to achieve inclusive education and avoid as much as possible their institutionalization. Inclusive education requires coordinated efforts, training of professionals, awareness-raising, support to families and an individualized approach. Staffing can prove challenging, and the training of trainers can be of greater importance than focusing on the qualification of professionals.

Delegates discussed the use of digital tools as an enabler of inclusion of people with disabilities, which can be a game changer if well-designed and tailored to each person's specific needs. Such tools must be accompanied by support services and a regulatory framework. In the absence of such a whole ecosystem approach, such tools may in fact widen disparities and expose persons with disabilities to abuse.

When asked about how to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are prioritized, panellists indicated that political will is a determining factor. Holistic laws and dedicated budgets must be developed, including but not limited to, the areas of health and education — and their impact must also be regularly monitored. Political party quotas can prove effective in enhancing access to decision-making bodies, including parliament, for people with disabilities. This brings much-needed perspectives to the decision-making table and sets a good example to society. Also, the need to ensure a strong focus on disability in the context of the Summit of the Future was highlighted, as it needs to be considered as a public issue and a societal matter.

In part 2, delegates shared good practices in legislating for the rights of persons with disabilities and the non-discrimination principle and embedding such provisions in their constitutions. In many cases, national dialogues have been held, and dedicated national mechanisms have been put in place to ensure multistakeholder engagement and to devise policies in a consultative manner. Financial compensation mechanisms have also been put in place to encourage employers to recruit persons with disabilities.

Recommendations were also made during the debate, in particular to the IPU, which was encouraged to 1) develop a handbook for parliamentarians on the CRPD, following a similar format to the IPU handbooks on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) published in collaboration with the UN in 2003 and 2023, 2) continue to foster exchanges among parliamentarians on the topic, and 3) explore the possibility of setting up a dedicated working group on persons with disabilities.

In total, 25 delegations contributed to the debate, for a total of 29 speakers (13 men and 16 women).

At the end of its second sitting, pursuant to Rule 10.2 of the Rules of the Standing Committees, the Committee decided to declare vacant the seat held in its Bureau by Mr. E. Uwizeyimana (Rwanda). Mr. Uwizeyimana had not been included in the delegation from his country at the 148th Assembly and therefore had not taken part in Bureau meetings for more than two consecutive sessions, nor had he been replaced by another member from the same country.

Report of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

*Noted by the 148th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

The Committee met on 26 March 2024 in two sittings. The President, Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), opened the session by welcoming all present and by introducing the new IPU anti-harassment policy. He then invited participants to adopt the agenda of the session as well as the summary record of the preceding session (Luanda, October 2023). Having heard no objections, the Chair proceeded with the agenda as adopted.

The new United Nations Youth Office: Ensuring a deeper engagement with young people

The Chair introduced the topic by recalling the needs of youth as a key group that ought to be at the centre of policy-making for peace and development. He then introduced Dr. F. Paullier, Assistant Secretary General for Youth Affairs and head of the new UN Youth Office. 48 delegations were present, of which 18 participated in the debate with questions and comments from the floor.

Dr. Paullier, who had been just three months in the job, introduced the new Youth Office, its mandate, and basic approach to facilitating youth access to debates and processes throughout the entire UN system. He noted that the Office had been established by a resolution of the General Assembly but that the initial impetus to create it had come from civil society groups who had long been asking for youth voices to be heard at the UN. Consistent with its Charter that starts with the phrase “We the peoples...”, the UN is pursuing a networked organizational model whereby youth and other key constituencies get to contribute their perspectives to various deliberative processes led by member States.

Dr. Paullier highlighted the fact that the world’s demographics have changed dramatically over the last few decades, with the largest number of young people ever recorded. He noted the paradox of some countries ageing while others are populated disproportionately by young people, and how this is causing both challenges and opportunities.

One of the objectives of the new Youth Office is to help the UN system carry forward the Youth 2030 plan as a common youth engagement blueprint adjustable to the different mandates of each UN system agency as well as to the geographic distribution of young people (urban vs. rural) within different national contexts. The plan includes a specific focus on young parliamentarians as a key constituency that can help advance youth concerns across the entire policy spectrum.

The underlying theme of the Youth 2030 plan and of the Youth Office is about achieving *meaningful* youth participation, understood as much more than providing input from the outside but as a way of effectively mainstreaming youth concerns directly within policies for climate, education, employment and the like. In practical terms, meaningful participation proceeds in three steps: consultation, participation and accountability. Bringing the voices of youth to bear in the policy-making process will help restore young people’s trust in the UN and in government in general.

Dr. Paullier highlighted the Summit of the Future, taking place later in 2024, as an important opportunity for the UN and member States to build on current commitments on youth. The Summit’s outcome, known as the Pact for the Future, will include a chapter on youth. In addition, there will be a more in-depth annex called the Declaration on Future Generations.

The following points emerged from the ensuing debate with delegates:

Many parliaments have instituted good practices for youth engagement that need to be scaled up and shared with other parliaments. It is not true that young people are not interested in politics. First and foremost, parliaments need to be more inclusive of young people, which is what the IPU’s campaign *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* is all about.

Having been turned off by formal processes, youth are finding outlets in protest movements, civil society organizations and social media. New digital technologies and social media present an opportunity for young people to make themselves heard and to connect to one another, but they also come with risks of exploitation and disinformation. Parliamentarians need to address these risks urgently and with the participation of young people themselves.

Employment and labour policy in general is a key concern for youth who are struggling to find good jobs. Part of the problem in some countries is that schooling is not sufficiently geared to the needs of the marketplace. The advent of AI and other such new developments pose a challenge to young people and indeed to workers at large, as they may result in a net loss of jobs in the economy.

The question of employment generation also illustrates a bigger problem of reconciling the needs of young people with those of older people. In this regard, many participants stressed the need for inter-generational dialogue as a mainstay of the youth agenda. Older people have much to share with the younger generation that can help communities and societies thrive.

Finally, most participants expressed strong support for the new Youth Office and encouraged Dr. Paullier on the journey ahead. The Office will no doubt become a hub for the IPU and parliaments to help bring more young parliamentarians closer to UN processes. At the same time, Dr. Paullier and his team were encouraged to make use of the extensive IPU network of members of parliament to disseminate information and engage parliaments in the work of the Office.

The United Nations' humanitarian work: How sustainable is it?

The President introduced the topic of this discussion on challenges that the UN faces in its humanitarian work, including lack of funding.

The President noted that the UN was dealing with a growing number of conflict theatres, natural disasters and other emergencies, requiring an unprecedented humanitarian effort. He introduced the panel, made up of representatives from four UN system entities responsible for humanitarian work: Ms. G. Connell, Chief, Assessment, Planning and Monitoring Branch, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; Mr. G.C. Cirri, Director, Geneva Global Office, World Food Programme; Ms. M. Lorenzo, Director, Representative Office for Europe, UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); and Mr. M. Manly, Head of Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service, UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

The four presenters spoke almost in unison about the tremendous strain under which the UN humanitarian system finds itself at present as a result of concurrent crises. Besides the headline grabbing crises in Ukraine and Gaza, there are crises in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and elsewhere, the vast majority in low or middle-income developing countries. The case of Gaza however was particularly grave because the civilian population under attack there had nowhere to flee.

A principal concern expressed was the inadequate funding to support humanitarian assistance, which mostly comes from unstable voluntary sources. Paradoxically, while global military expenditure has now reached a record-breaking US\$2.3 trillion per year, the UN is being asked to deliver assistance to millions of people on a budget of just a few billion dollars.

Despite inadequate funding, the UN's humanitarian system is not broken. Workers continue to provide support to refugees, malnourished or starving populations, civilians caught in the crossfire of war, and many others in need, making the most of each dollar. A key point about this work is that much of it could be spared if greater efforts were made upstream at the political level to prevent conflicts and other crisis situations. In fact, humanitarian crises are almost always the result of policy failure, for which governments are not held accountable. Parliamentarians have a key oversight role to play in all humanitarian crises and in addressing their root causes.

The UN system's humanitarian work is grounded in key principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. The case for humanitarian assistance – whether in cash or in kind – is easily made: it is a testament to our shared humanity and moral obligation to one another; it reduces future costs to the international community by forestalling possible social unrest and more conflict; and it props up donor countries' standing on the world stage.

The following points emerged from the ensuing debate with delegates:

The UN's humanitarian work deserves high praise and full support by parliamentarians in both donor and recipient countries. Parliamentarians should ensure that such good work is never politicized or weaponized by parties in conflict or other nations pursuing their strategic objectives. Some participants openly denounced the hypocrisy of those who are arming aggressors and assisting victims at the same time. Others spoke against the risks involved in the "privatization" of humanitarian work.

Many participants spoke about the specific case of Gaza and expressed their solidarity with UNRWA for the tremendous work it is doing there despite impossible conditions. They denounced the collective punishment to which the people of Gaza had been subjected and called on the international community to demand a ceasefire that would allow for humanitarian assistance to be delivered urgently and at the required scale.

Several speakers highlighted the bilateral assistance (hospitals, food supplies, etc.) that their countries are providing in various crisis situations, including Gaza. It was noted that such assistance should aim not just at meeting immediate needs, but also at building resilience to prevent new crises, with investments in key institutions and infrastructure.

Parliamentary motion on Security Council reform

The President introduced a motion calling for parliamentary action to speed up the decades-long effort to reform the Security Council as the chief United Nations deliberative body in matters of international security. He explained that he had originally prepared the motion and circulated it to the Bureau for input. The present draft had been approved by the Bureau and members were now invited to adopt it.

A member from Pakistan spoke in favour of the motion while expressing a reservation to it. A member from Japan expressed his full support for the motion. Having run out of time and hearing no objections, the Chair declared the motion adopted.

Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee

At the end of the session, the President announced that two new members had been nominated by their respective geopolitical groups to the Bureau: Mr. H. Arshakyan of Armenia, and Mr. M. Salinas of Paraguay. The two members were then elected by acclamation.

With all agenda items completed, the President thanked all participants and declared the session closed.

Reform of the United Nations Security Council

*Motion adopted by the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs
(Geneva, 26 March 2024)*

The IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs is committed to seeing reform of the United Nations Security Council.

In the context of diminishing trust in the UN multilateral system, the Committee is deeply concerned by the current stalemate at the UN, where reform of the Security Council has been on the agenda for decades with no end in sight.

Despite widespread acknowledgment that the composition of the Security Council does not reflect the geopolitical realities of the 21st century, Member States remain deeply divided on, among other things, the question of expanded membership, the criteria by which new members should be considered, and possible limits to the use of the veto power by current and future permanent members.

The Committee welcomes resolution 76/262 of the General Assembly, which makes Permanent Members accountable to the General Assembly whenever they make use of their veto power to block a resolution of the Security Council. However, as recent experience demonstrates, this measure is not strong enough to prevent misuse of the veto.

Without effective Security Council reform, the Committee believes that the overall effort to make the multilateral system more democratic and accountable to the people will be severely hampered. The Committee looks to this year's Summit of the Future as an opportunity to demonstrate meaningful progress in order to restore trust and faith in multilateralism when global cooperation is most needed.

Building on the briefing on Security Council reform held at the 147th Assembly (Luanda, Angola, October 2023) and reflecting on possible parliamentary action to advance the current discussions, the Committee urgently calls upon each IPU Member Parliament to:

1. Engage with its government leadership and its Permanent Representatives to the United Nations to obtain regular updates about proposals for reforming the Security Council as well as progress made in this regard;
2. Demand that the reform process is undertaken democratically, inclusively and transparently, and with an eye to the Summit of the Future in September 2024 as a decisive turning point;
3. Prepare for the ratification of UN Security Council reform, pursuant to any final General Assembly approval and in accordance with national procedures; and
4. Engage in parliamentary processes, such as debates, committee hearings and resolutions, to influence the intergovernmental process leading up to the Summit of the Future in order to ensure that the voices of parliamentarians are reflected in its outcome document, the Pact for the Future.

Composition of the Preparatory Committee for the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 213th session
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

Composition of the Preparatory Committee for the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (July/August 2025), as per the nominations received from the geopolitical groups and the IPU Executive Committee.

The Preparatory Committee of the Summit of Women Speakers will be composed of the women members of the Preparatory Committee of the Speakers Conference and, as ex-officio members, the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and a female representative of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

President of the Preparatory Committee

Dr. Tulia Ackson President of the IPU

Members

African Group

Mr. Brahim Boughali	President	National People's Assembly, Algeria
Ms. Carolina Cerqueira	Speaker	National Assembly, Angola
Mr. Adama Bictogo	Speaker	National Assembly, Côte d'Ivoire
Mr. Godswill Akpabio	President	Senate, Nigeria

Arab Group

Mr. Rachid Talbi El Alami	Speaker	House of Representatives, Morocco
Ms. Hamda bint Hassan Al-Sulaiti	Deputy Speaker	Shura Council, Qatar

Asia Pacific Group

Mr. Milton Dick	Speaker	House of Representatives, Australia
Ms. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury	Speaker	Parliament, Bangladesh
Mr. Zhao Leji	Chairman	National People's Congress, China

Eurasia Group

Mr. Alen Simonyan	Chairman	National Assembly, Armenia
Ms. Sahiba Gafarova	Chairwoman	National Assembly, Azerbaijan

Group of Latin America and the Caribbean

Ms. Victoria Eugenia Villarruel	President	Senate, Argentina
Mr. Manzoor Nadir	Speaker	National Assembly, Guyana
Ms. Marcela Guerra Castillo	Speaker	Chamber of Deputies, Mexico

Twelve Plus Group

Ms. Raymonde Gagné	Speaker	Senate, Canada
Mr. Angelo Farrugia	Speaker	House of Representatives, Malta

Representatives of the Executive Committee

Ms. Nelly Butete Kashumba Mutti	Speaker	National Assembly, Zambia
Mr. Agustín Almodóbar	Senator	Senate, Spain

Ex-officio Members of the Preparatory Committee

Ms. Cynthia López Castro	President	Bureau of Women Parliamentarians
Mr. Dan Carden	President	Board of the Forum of Young MPs
Ms. Maja Riniker	First Vice-President	National Council, Switzerland (President of the National Council in 2025 and President of the 2025 Summit of Women Speakers)
Mr. David McGuinty	President	IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

Representative of the UN Secretary-General

Mr. Courtenay Rattray Chef de Cabinet of the UNSG

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Mr. Martin Chungong Secretary General of the IPU

Report on the work of the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 213th session
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

Since its establishment in March 2022, the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine has endeavoured to promote political dialogue in support of peacebuilding efforts, including by working with the delegations of Ukraine and the Russian Federation to identify possible ways to ease the humanitarian consequences of the war. The IPU Task Force deplores the fact that the war is raging on, with countless victims on both sides, and has continued to advocate for a return to the negotiating table. In the meantime, Task Force members have sought to engage in parliamentary diplomacy and focus on small steps that can eventually lead to dialogue, better understanding and possible positive humanitarian outcomes.

During the 146th IPU Assembly in Manama, both sides agreed, in principle, to focus on four issues identified as common ground in the various proposed peace plans: (1) nuclear safety, (2) food security, (3) access to, treatment and exchange of prisoners of war, and (4) safety of ecologically vulnerable sites. At its eleventh meeting in October 2023, in the context of the 147th IPU Assembly in Luanda, the Task Force agreed to include a fifth point of discussion: the subject of conflict-displaced children. In particular, the Task Force expressed a willingness to address the challenge raised in United Nations-verified reports of separated children who find themselves stranded across the Russian-Ukrainian border or along the lines of military control in the conflict zone without their parents or legal guardians.

As a follow-up to its eleventh meeting, the Task Force collected information on this issue from the delegations of both Ukraine and the Russian Federation. It received several communications providing competing accounts of the situation of conflict-displaced children. The Task Force has noted that while both Ukrainian and Russian officials acknowledge that thousands of children have been displaced from Ukraine to the Russian Federation or Russian-controlled territories since the beginning of the war, the explanations differ (abduction vs. humanitarian evacuations).

On 14 March 2024, the Task Force held an online briefing alongside the IPU Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, with a special focus on children and with contributions by experts from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons. During this session, the Task Force was briefed on the need for more political support to bolster international mechanisms to reunite children and parents.

The Task Force held its twelfth meeting on 25 March 2024 during the 148th IPU Assembly and held follow-up hearings with the delegations of Ukraine and the Russian Federation. The parties agreed to deepen cooperation with the IPU on the issue of conflict-displaced children, share further information as requested, and work to develop more concrete and structured procedures to support family reunifications. In this context, the Task Force is looking to address the situation of identified displaced children on a case-by-case basis through its discreet good offices. Two years after its first field visit to Ukraine and the Russian Federation, the Task Force also discussed the possibility of conducting a second mission to Kyiv and Moscow, which was welcome by both parties.

The Task Force is committed to continuing its efforts to help bring about a peaceful resolution to the war in Ukraine.

Report of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 213th session
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

1. The 37th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians was held on 23 March 2024. It brought together 262 participants, including 141 parliamentarians (129 women and 12 men) from 91 countries and representatives from various international organizations.
2. The First Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria), chaired the session in the absence of the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico). The President of the IPU, Dr. T. Ackson, welcomed participants to the Forum and to the 148th IPU Assembly.
3. As the IPU Gender Partnership Group had not met prior to the Forum meeting, the IPU Secretary General, Mr. M. Chungong, took the floor to announce the implementation at the Assembly of the IPU's new policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment. He also provided information on the gender balance of delegations to the 148th Assembly, and expressed his satisfaction that the IPU currently had a perfectly gender-balanced Executive Committee.

Initiatives taken to promote gender equality

4. Ms. S. Sirivejchapun (Thailand) summarized the work of the 50th session of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, which had taken place in Luanda in October 2023, and of its 51st session held immediately prior to the Forum meeting.
5. Participants were informed of the IPU's recent and future activities on the issue of gender equality. Ms. Z. Hilal, Secretary of the Forum, presented the key highlights of the IPU report, *Women in Parliament in 2023*. Ms. V. Riotton (France) reported on the parliamentary meeting and other events organized during the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), held in March 2024 in New York. Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria) presented a report on a regional online conference organized with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held in January 2024, on promoting equal sharing of care responsibilities to remove barriers to women's full economic empowerment. Finally, Ms. A. Nassif Ayyoub (Egypt), Second Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, reported on the webinar for African parliaments entitled *Preventing and responding to violence against women in parliaments*, organized in November 2023.

Contributions to the work of the 148th Assembly from a gender perspective

6. In order to contribute to the work of the Assembly, participants examined, from a gender perspective, the draft resolution of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security entitled *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*. The debate was opened with a presentation by the resolution's co-Rapporteurs, Ms. L. Crexell on behalf of Ms. M. Stolbizer (Argentina) and Mr. C. Lacroix (Belgium), and a presentation by Ms. S. Mohan, associate researcher on gender and disarmament, security and technology at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). The debate continued in plenary, presided by Ms. A. Nassif Ayyoub (Egypt) and with Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia) as Rapporteur.
7. The discussions highlighted concerns and fears about autonomous weapon systems that could lead to a world where weapons could kill people without any human intervention, based solely on algorithms. Participants stressed that this was all the more worrying given that the algorithms that underpin artificial intelligence (AI) systems already incorporate gender norms and biases. Therefore, action is urgently needed to remove these biases from all AI algorithms and datasets by applying a gender perspective. Women's participation in decision-making processes related to the development, regulation and use of AI and autonomous weapon systems is also urgently needed. The challenge is daunting, given that only 8% of software developers are women, and that women make up only a tiny proportion of the armed forces in most countries, which highlights the need to encourage girls and women to study STEM subjects. The discussion also focused on the need for national laws, policies and an international instrument to regulate military AI systems and autonomous weapons, including from a gender perspective.

8. The debate resulted in the formulation of two amendments to the Standing Committee's draft resolution. The proposed amendments were incorporated into the text of the draft resolution, strengthening its gender perspective.

Panel discussion on *Women peacebuilders advancing sustainable peace*

9. During the panel discussion, participants examined how parliamentarians can improve the implementation of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda and work with women peacebuilders to promote inclusive and gender-sensitive processes that are more likely to lead to sustainable peace.

10. The discussions opened with a keynote address by Ms. P. Patten, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; followed by presentations by Ms. A. Quiñones, Head of Human Rights and Development, UN Women Geneva Office; Mr. T. Greminger, Executive Director, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP); and Ms. M. Cabrera Balleza, CEO, Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP). Video testimonials from two women peacebuilders were also shown.

11. The intensification of armed conflict around the world and conflict-induced displacement expose women and girls to a heightened risk of gender-based sexual violence. In this context, participants deplored the fact that although progress is being made in implementing the WPS agenda, the parties negotiating conflict resolution continue to exclude women, and peace processes remain an almost exclusively male domain. The discussions highlighted the fact that for peace to be sustainable, it is essential that women play an important role and participate on an equal footing in peacebuilding. Women's contributions are essential in conflict zones, peace processes, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and security efforts. Without the inclusion of women in post-conflict reconstruction processes, there will be no justice or full reparations. Participants called for women peacebuilders who are on the front line of conflict, have access to information on the ground and are in close contact with victims and survivors of violent conflict and humanitarian emergencies, to be present at the negotiating table and participate in decision-making processes on peace and security. By working with parliamentarians, women peacebuilders can also inform and influence better policies more effectively to implement the WPS agenda.

Election to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

12. The Forum elected Ms. Z. Mashaba (Eswatini) to fill the vacant seat of the African Group.

Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

13. The Bureau held meetings on 23 and 27 March 2024. The meeting of 23 March was dedicated to the Forum's discussions, and the meeting of 27 March took stock of the results of the 148th Assembly from a gender perspective and dealt with the Forum's future work.

Report of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 213th session
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

The Forum of Young Parliamentarians was held on 24 March 2024. It brought together almost 130 participants, including 70 parliamentarians (29 young women and 41 young men) from 60 countries, as well as representatives from organizations. The meeting was presided over by Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

In the opening session of the Forum, the President of the Board drew attention to the lack of opportunity for young parliamentarians to take active roles in parliamentary diplomacy and called for this to be rectified. He also called on parliaments to help further implement United Nations Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security. The IPU President, Dr. T. Ackson, reaffirmed her commitment to promote inclusivity during her tenure and to elevate youth voices in the IPU and in parliaments. Young MPs were well-positioned to advocate for the promotion and protection of the human rights of young men and women, especially in times of conflict. IPU Secretary General, Mr. M. Chungong, highlighted that the youth movement at the IPU was continuing to grow. He noted

that there was a greater proportion of young MPs at Assemblies and expressed his hope that their participation would reach even greater heights. He welcomed the presence of the UN Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) for Youth Affairs, Dr. F. Paullier, and expressed the IPU's support for this new role and the promise it holds for the further promotion of youth within the United Nations.

The young MPs updated the Forum on recent developments in promoting youth participation in their respective countries and parliaments. This included the formalization of youth caucuses, such as in Thailand; the adoption of new youth quotas, such as in Ecuador; and the increase of youth participation in political parties, such as in Nepal. Young MPs also highlighted the importance of implementing pledge 2 of the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign to lower the age of eligibility to hold office, as had been done in Mexico, Nigeria, Paraguay and Türkiye. Despite these positive developments, alarm was raised over rising violence against young MPs, including assassination and death threats by drug cartels and criminal groups, sexism and gender-based violence against young women, and online violence and harassment on social media. Such violence deters young people from getting involved in politics and must be addressed.

Contributing to the work of the 148th Assembly, participants examined the theme of the General Debate, *Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding*, from a youth perspective. The ASG for Youth Affairs, Dr. F. Paullier, praised the IPU and young MPs as allies in the youth, peace and security agenda. He called on young MPs to support the agenda in parliamentary commissions to hold governments accountable, to create youth bodies in parliament, to advocate for the adoption of national action plans for peace, and to promote the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign. In their remarks, young MPs stressed the important roles of young people in fostering peace dialogues and engaging in peace processes. They stressed that there can be no lasting peace without youth participation and leadership in democracy and peacebuilding. They called for increased focus and funding to advance youth rights and provide education and employment opportunities to young people in conflict-affected situations, and pledged to take up these tasks.

Discussing the two draft resolutions considered at the Assembly, *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*, and *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*, the young MPs were briefed on the youth overview reports submitted during the resolutions' drafting processes to contribute a youth perspective. The young MPs highlighted the importance of increased education on autonomous weapon systems, including through awareness raising on social media. They also called for greater investments in green energy, including through the implementation of smart grids, and pledged to continue their work on climate action.

In preparation for the 149th IPU Assembly to be held in Geneva in October 2024, the Forum appointed a member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, Mr. F. Fakafanua (Tonga), to prepare a youth overview report on the proposed resolution *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*.

The Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians had met earlier that day. It took stock of youth participation at the 148th Assembly and looked forward to the review process to amend the Statutes and Rules of the IPU to lower the age limit to 40 years old to be considered a young MP. The Board also welcomed preparations underway for the forthcoming Tenth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, which will take place in Armenia from 12 to 14 September 2024. The Conference will focus on preserving education and employment for youth at all times, to ensure no lost generations. The Board also approved the establishment of a youth hub within the Centre for Innovation in Parliament, which would now begin outreach efforts to interested members.

Finally, the members of the Board took stock of the work carried out in the first half of their mandate, which was very productive thanks to the Board's strong drive and sense of responsibility, and the vitality of the results reached in reinforcing youth participation in climate action and in building linkages with youth movements and organizations. Looking ahead to the second half of their mandate up to March 2025, members agreed to redouble efforts to aim higher to have younger MPs at IPU Assemblies and promote the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign. They also provided guidance on future Empowerment Series briefing topics and resolved to continue meeting with youth groups and movements in different sectors.

Report of the Committee on Middle East Questions

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 213th session
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

Since the last Assembly, the Committee on Middle East Questions has met three times, on 5 February, 24 March and 26 March 2024, with at least seven members in attendance at each sitting. Members emphasized the importance of the Committee as a unique global forum with representatives from Israel and Palestine. Its prominent role in encouraging dialogue underlines its pertinence in the current crisis, and in the search for a path towards peace. At its sitting on 24 March 2024, Committee members elected Mr. H.-J. Talsma (Netherlands) as President of the Committee.

At its sitting on 5 February 2024, the IPU President praised members for ensuring that their parliaments and the world at large were paying attention to issues in the Middle East. The Committee President at the time of the sitting, Mr. H. Julien-Laferrière (France), emphasized the importance of finding points of consensus in the Committee and in the IPU to pursue the common goal of establishing peace in the region.

The Committee President briefed members on the recent events in Israel and Palestine, notably the conflict in the Gaza Strip and the hostages remaining in Gaza. The humanitarian situation in Gaza was dire. Among other problems, more than half of all housing units in the area had been destroyed or damaged; all of Gaza's population was at imminent risk of famine; and only a third of Gaza's hospitals were still functioning. The briefing also updated members on international and regional efforts for a ceasefire and hostage release agreement. Committee members expressed their concern about a possible Israeli offensive on Rafah, and the possible humanitarian ramifications of such an invasion. Members emphasized the importance of Palestinian and Israeli representatives sitting at the negotiating table to discuss the future. The Committee heard from Mr. D. Danon (Israel) and Mr. M. Hadid (Palestine) regarding the situation in Gaza.

At the same sitting, the IPU President briefed Committee members on her mission to Israel and Palestine from 25 to 29 November 2023. One of the key issues raised in her meeting with Palestinian representatives was funding from tax collection in Palestine. Taxes were collected by Israel but were not being released to the Palestinian authorities. In the IPU President's meeting with Israeli representatives, the concern was raised that if the tax revenues were made available, they would be disbursed to the families of people who had killed Israelis. The meetings with both sides provided the IPU President with many insights that the Committee could benefit from. It was important, in assessing the conflict, to remember that those who had been killed in Israel and Gaza were not just statistics, but human souls that had been lost. The Committee had a crucial role to play as a platform for dialogue, listening to both sides' concerns, and considering how to move towards establishing a lasting peace.

Committee members affirmed their desire to visit the region to assess the situation on the ground and find out how they could contribute to peacebuilding efforts. The Israeli and Palestinian representatives both assured the Committee that such a mission would be welcome. At its sitting on 24 March 2024, the Committee agreed that they would like to, if possible, visit the region in one mission, and as soon as possible. Members suggested holding a visit in coordination with the United Nations Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. At its sitting on 5 February 2024, the Committee heard an appeal from Mr. M. Hadid (Palestine) for humanitarian aid to support the Palestinian people during the current crisis. The international parliamentary community must think about how to relieve and support the more than two million Palestinians in Gaza who have no shelter, no food, no education, no homes, no schools and no future.

At its sitting on 5 February 2024, the Committee agreed to publish a communiqué outlining its recommendations from the meeting. The communiqué reiterated the IPU's appeal for immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip. It appealed to IPU Member Parliaments to work with their governments and other entities to that end. The Committee called for the immediate cessation of hostilities and implored the global parliamentary community to concentrate its efforts on stopping further bloodshed. Members further agreed that it was imperative to receive assurances about the release of all remaining Israeli hostages. They stressed the importance of dialogue as a tool for peacebuilding and thanked the representatives of the Knesset and the Palestinian National Council who had attended the meeting.

At its sittings on 5 February and 26 March 2024, the Committee heard from a representative of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) on recent developments. Members were updated on current events in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as on the Agency's response to allegations against some of its staff, and the investigation being carried out by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services. UNRWA was committed to fully cooperating with the investigation. Nonetheless, the withdrawal of funding to UNRWA in light of these allegations was putting the lives of 2.2 million people in Gaza at even further risk, as well as of millions of others dependent on UNRWA assistance in the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic.

The representative appealed to the Committee to urge countries that had suspended funding to reconsider their decision. The Committee stressed the importance of a comprehensive investigation into the allegations, while recognizing that UNRWA must be able to continue delivering critical aid to the millions of Palestinians who depend on it and acknowledging UNRWA's role in providing stability in the region. UNRWA called for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages; the adequate, safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian aid into Gaza; and for all parties to the conflict to adhere fully to international humanitarian law. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is marked by insufficient access to food, water and medical supplies, with about one-third of children in the northern part of Gaza severely malnourished and at risk of starvation. Members agreed that political support for UNRWA was imperative, and that its collapse would jeopardize the entire humanitarian effort.

The Committee highlighted the importance of addressing the mental health recovery of children and individuals in Gaza, which was identified as a significant challenge, underscoring that violence perpetuates further violence.

The Committee discussed the inability of IPU Member Parliaments to adopt an emergency item resolution on Gaza for the second time. It was emphasized that the resolution proposed by South Africa and the resolution proposed by Denmark shared four main principles: an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages, opening access for humanitarian assistance, and respecting international law. The entire global parliamentary community had reached a consensus on these principles, with unanimous support. The only point of contention revolved around the issue of Palestinian detainees.

The Palestinian delegation said that it was unjust to distinguish between the Israeli hostages held by Hamas and the more than 4,000 Palestinian detainees held by Israel without judicial charges since 7 October 2023.

Report of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 213th session
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

The Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) met on 26 March 2024.

Review of specific areas of humanitarian concern

The Committee heard an update on recent developments with regard to situations involving IHL and refugee protection issues which it has been monitoring over the past few years. It paid particular attention to three situations of concern: Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sudan.

Regarding the situation in Afghanistan, the Committee highlighted that life-saving efforts have become a priority for support agencies involved in the country. The Committee recalled that, in 2024, 23.7 million people were in need of urgent humanitarian assistance to survive. As of 30 June 2023, a total of 1,619,145 Afghan refugees had been displaced to neighbouring countries since the Taliban takeover, and some 3.25 million had been internally displaced. The situation of women has not improved, in particular given the decision by the Taliban in January 2024 to enforce a stricter dress code, which has caused numerous women to be arbitrarily deprived of their liberty. The Committee also paid particular attention to the situation of Afghan parliamentarians who were in danger and were seeking refuge. There are currently 38 former members of the Afghan Parliament, 12 parliamentary staff, and their families who remain in danger in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries. The Committee called on IPU Member Parliaments to consider providing refuge to those colleagues by looking at opportunities in their own countries. It learned of the action carried out by [Operation Snow](#)

[Leopard](#) and encouraged members to reach out to this initiative (by email to jason.hatch@opsnowleopard.org) if they were able to provide support. The Committee also stressed the importance of addressing the root causes of displacement in this context.

The Committee acknowledged the current situation in the DRC, which had worsened since January 2024, with armed clashes across the country (especially in the North Kivu province). There are currently 6.1 million people internally displaced in the DRC, in addition to over 500,000 refugees and asylum-seekers fleeing from other neighbouring countries. This displacement crisis is one of the largest in the world and second only to Sudan. The Committee pointed out the need to draw more attention to the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) globally, but especially in the DRC. Between July and December 2023, 23.4 million people were experiencing acute food insecurity in the country, with 2.8 million children in a situation of acute malnourishment. The Committee called on parliamentarians to raise awareness of the situation in DRC, draw attention to the plight of IDPs and consider encouraging the provision of support to humanitarian organizations working to protect these populations within the country.

The Committee also noted with concern the dire situation in Sudan, especially since the armed conflict that had broken out in April 2023. This conflict had displaced nearly six million people within Sudan by October 2023, and driven over 1.4 million people into five neighbouring countries – the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan. Half of Sudan's population now requires humanitarian aid and protection. Sudan currently faces the largest internal displacement crisis in the world and the most significant child displacement crisis, with more than three million children displaced inside and outside the country. As of March 2024, Sudan's Humanitarian Response Plan has received only 4% of its target funding. The Committee made a plea for parliamentarians to raise awareness on this situation and call on their governments to provide support for humanitarian assistance to the country.

The Committee expressed a strong and urgent call for armed conflicts to stop, for IHL to be respected and for humanitarian assistance to be provided to affected civilians, including refugees and internally displaced populations.

Parliamentary commitments towards ending statelessness

The Committee discussed parliamentary efforts towards ending statelessness. This engagement builds on the IPU pledges made in the context of the Global Refugee Forum in 2023 to mobilize parliaments towards universalization of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

The Committee acknowledged the progress made in this area since the launch of the *#IBelong* Campaign in 2014. The Committee also learned about the [Global Alliance to End Statelessness](#) (which will be launched in October 2024) – a multistakeholder platform with the vision of a world without statelessness in which everyone enjoys the right to a nationality. The Committee also expressed concern regarding gender discriminatory nationality laws, especially in the Middle East and Africa, and lack of birth registration, as causes leading to statelessness. Providing universal birth registration was put forward as a solution to tackle some of these concerns.

2024 marks the 70th Anniversary of the 1954 Convention. The Committee called on IPU Member Parliaments to look at the ratification status with regard to both the 1954 and 1961 Conventions and consider accession; review current legal frameworks with a view to address provisions that can lead to statelessness; raise awareness on the situation of stateless women and men; and consider joining the Global Alliance. The Committee also recommended that its members work as champions within their geopolitical groups and report on progress with accession to the two Statelessness Conventions at the Committee's next session.

Parliamentary commitments under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

The Committee discussed work towards the universalization and domestic implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). It took note that only 33 States were not yet parties to the Convention and of the objective to have several further ratifications by the Fifth Review Conference of the APMBC, which will take place in November 2024 in Cambodia.

The Committee also reviewed a checklist of proposed actions for parliaments to take towards universalization and national implementation of key obligations under the Convention. The Committee called on parliamentarians to: begin by championing discussions about the Convention in parliament;

speak out against anti-personnel mines; contribute to raising awareness of the impact of such weapons and encourage the stigmatization of their use; if their country was not yet a State Party, assess the reasons why not and consider ratification; if they have a National Committee on IHL, engage with it on the topic; and review the status of the Convention at the domestic level, especially in terms of implementing legislation and stockpile destruction.

The Committee also agreed to hold its open session at the next IPU Assembly in October 2024 on the topic of disability and armed conflict (including in connection with the use of anti-personnel mines) to mark the 25th anniversary of the entry into force of the APMBC.

75th anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions

The Committee discussed various priorities related to the implementation of IHL in view of the 75th anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. It acknowledged that this anniversary would be an opportunity to look at contemporary warfare and reinforce engagement towards respect for IHL.

The Committee made a special plea for IPU Member Parliaments to work towards the universalization of IHL treaties, especially with regard to the two 1977 Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, and support efforts to assess the level of implementation of the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols in their respective countries. In addition, the Committee called on parliamentarians to be more vocal on IHL issues, including by making IHL a flagship priority domestically, promoting it to their constituents and making other States accountable on their obligations under IHL.

Finally, the Committee agreed to include the situation of the Al-Hawl refugee camp in the Syrian Arab Republic on the agenda of the Committee's next session in October 2024, due to related IHL and refugee protection concerns.

Report of the Advisory Group on Health

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 213th session
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

The IPU Advisory Group on Health met on 23 March 2024, with five out of nine members in attendance, as well as technical partners from the World Health Organization (WHO), the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and UNAIDS.

The Group discussed its main areas of work, namely women's, children's and adolescents' health, global health security, and universal health coverage. The work plan for this year focuses on the sexual and reproductive health and rights of vulnerable and marginalized populations. Particular attention will be devoted to the political space for health; girls' health; and health in emergencies.

The Group was briefed by the WHO on the ongoing negotiations on an international instrument on pandemic preparedness. The Group's discussion highlighted the importance of reaching an agreement and of engaging stakeholders in the process. It further noted the current challenging context, with many crises affecting national health systems and limiting countries' capacities to respond to emergencies.

The Advisory Group discussed the preliminary results of a study looking at parliamentary strategies and practices to make parliaments more responsive to the health needs of women, children and adolescents. The Group recalled its visit to WHO the previous day and noted the shrinking political space for addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights. It committed to engaging parliaments and parliamentarians during IPU Assemblies on key issues affecting gender equality and the right to health.

As the focal point for accountability for implementation of the 2019 IPU resolution on universal health coverage, the Advisory Group called on its technical partners to provide monitoring tools to better track progress and gaps in the implementation of universal health coverage at the national level.

Upcoming activities of the Advisory Group include a series of podcasts to communicate and raise awareness on the Group's priority themes. The Group agreed to work with the WHO to hold an event during the World Health Assembly in May, and to hold a side event at the 149th IPU Assembly. Ms. Luna Morales (Cuba) expressed interest in hosting a visit of the Advisory Group to her country.

Finally, the Group welcomed the signature by the IPU of a new memorandum of understanding with the WHO during this Assembly to further strengthen the two organizations' long-standing partnership, as well as the IPU's ongoing collaboration with PMNCH on women's, children's and adolescents' health.

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

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 213th session
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

On 23 March 2024, the IPU High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG) convened its sixteenth meeting. Welcoming all participants, the IPU Secretary General underscored the pivotal role of the HLAG, particularly in the Sahel region, where countries face persistent threats from terrorism. Noting the escalation of terrorism and instability in the region in recent years, he emphasized the critical nature of the HLAG's work. He also addressed the financial aspect of the IPU's programme on counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism (CTPVE), urging members of the HLAG to collaborate on fundraising efforts to sustain its activities. Additionally, he expressed his optimism regarding recent discussions held with Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates on fundraising.

During the meeting, the members elected Mr. Mattias Karlsson from Sweden as the new Chairperson and Ms. Marcela Guerra Castillo from Mexico as the Vice-Chairperson. Both will serve a one-year term, with eligibility for re-election for an additional year.

Discussions centred on the situation in the Sahel and the implementation of outcomes from the Second Global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism: *The Global Response to the Call of the Sahel*. The HLAG reaffirmed its commitment to advancing the objectives outlined in the *Call of the Sahel*, with a particular focus on fostering development and economic growth to create opportunities for youth employment. Recognizing the abundant natural resources in these countries, members agreed on the importance of promoting investment to support development efforts. Members also stressed the need for security assistance while emphasizing respect for the sovereignty and objectives of the Sahel nations.

A key recommendation from the Second global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism held in October 2023 was to establish an ad hoc mechanism within the HLAG to coordinate, monitor and follow up on the second phase of the *Call of the Sahel*. This mechanism will oversee studies, projects and development initiatives in the Sahel countries. Members agreed on the importance of launching this ad hoc group within the HLAG, comprising five facilitators from among the members of the group who will be responsible for each of the five priority areas: communities, security, environment, development and education. The members asked the Secretariat to prepare a comprehensive proposal outlining the structure and functions of this group.

The Secretariat provided an update on financing, indicating ongoing fundraising efforts. Several countries, including Algeria, Bahrain, China and the United Arab Emirates, along with the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence in Bahrain, have expressed interest in supporting the CTPVE programme. Some countries have shown interest in supporting specific activities, while others, such as Algeria, have expressed enthusiasm for supporting the implementation of the *Call of the Sahel*. China has confirmed its commitment to renew its support for the CTPVE programme in its entirety. Additionally, consultations with Saudi Arabia are scheduled in the near future.

Furthermore, the Secretariat informed attendees about a proposal that the President of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians had received from the Qatari-UNOCT parliamentary group (the Programme Office on Parliamentary Engagement in Preventing and Countering Terrorism) to hold a conference on the role of women in counter-terrorism in Mexico City. The members raised objections to this proposal, citing the lack of consultation with the HLAG, which serves as the global parliamentary focal point for counter-terrorism and related activities. Moreover, concerns were expressed regarding the activities of the Qatari-UNOCT parliamentary group more generally, which intersect with the mandate of the IPU as an international organization representing parliaments and regional parliamentary assemblies worldwide.

Report of the Working Group on Science and Technology

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 213th session
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

Two sittings of the Working Group were held, online on 22 January 2024 and in Geneva on 25 March 2024. At least ten members attended each of these meetings in person or virtually.

During its sitting on 22 January 2024, the Working Group members discussed the progress made with their initiative to produce an IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology. Members agreed to circulate the first agreed draft of the Charter to the IPU membership at the 148th IPU Assembly in Geneva with a view to gathering feedback and input. Members also agreed to submit the Charter to the relevant bodies of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at a later stage to gather expert feedback to allow finalization of the Charter in advance of its presentation at the 149th Assembly for formal adoption. The Chair briefed the members on progress with the survey on understanding parliamentarians' use of scientific research and circulated it among them for feedback and finalization, so that it could be launched in the course of the 148th Assembly.

During its sitting on 25 March 2024, the Working Group was briefed by the Chair on his participation in the Munich Security Conference, held from 16 to 18 February 2024, where he promoted the Working Group and its various initiatives and activities. The Chair also represented the Working Group in meetings held on 19 and 20 March 2024 relating to CGIAR's Montpellier Process, which is addressing the complex challenges of the polycrisis and is dedicated to designing transformative pathways across climate, biodiversity, health and food systems, by bringing evidence into the broader policy process.

The Working Group members were encouraged to participate in the Ninth UN Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals on 9 and 10 May 2024 in New York. Members suggested coordinating their participation to promote and advance their ongoing work on the IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology.

The members also discussed other ongoing projects of the Working Group, including the Science for Peace Schools' first edition on water, and the recommendations document that was produced following the Science for Peace Parliamentary Meeting on *Water security and insecurity: Rebuilding peaceful coexistence with science*, held in cooperation with the International Centre for Interdisciplinary Science and Education (ICISE) from 11 to 13 September 2023 in Quy Nhon, Viet Nam. They emphasized the importance of aligning the programme of the upcoming Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 10th World Water Forum with the outcome of the Science for Peace Parliamentary Meeting in order to build on the work of the experts and MPs that had participated in the event and avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

In order to align the activities of the Working Group with the proposed IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology as well as the ongoing work of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights on the draft resolution on *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*, members discussed the possibility of holding the next Science for Peace Parliamentary Meeting on the subject *Understanding artificial intelligence: Ethics and the Charter*, in September 2024, in cooperation with ICISE in Quy Nhon, Viet Nam.

Building on the Working Group members' desire to put together a parliamentary toolkit providing practical assistance and guidance to parliamentarians on ways to engage with the scientific community, members reviewed the structure and content of the toolkit in its latest form, which was based on the pilot projects that they had conducted in their respective parliaments and the input received from the mapping exercise that had been circulated to parliamentary administrators and staff.

In this regard, the Working Group members highlighted the dominance of scientific information from the Global North, as well as the importance of investment in science and research in developing countries and of establishing parliamentary committees to oversee scientific issues and budgets. They also shared examples of initiatives from their respective parliaments focused on science, technology and innovation, and stressed their parliaments' need for capacity-building and skills development.

The Working Group members expressed their surprise at the resolution of the Council of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) that had been adopted on 15 December 2023, terminating the Russian Federation's cooperation agreement with CERN. A field visit of the Working Group

members to CERN had been scheduled to take place on 26 March 2024. However, the CERN team refused to welcome the Russian member of the Working Group, given that CERN considers that her participation would not be compatible with the decisions made by the CERN Council on the Russian Federation, which were based on respect for international sanctions and CERN's obligations towards its Host States.

In this regard, the Working Group members held an urgent meeting in the evening to discuss the issue and collectively agreed to not participate in the CERN visit as a Group as long as the Russian member was excluded. The members asserted that CERN's decision in that regard was not aligned with the IPU's values and principles of inclusivity, including the important role of multilateralism in addressing global challenges, advocating for international cooperation and collaboration among nations and parliaments, and fostering dialogue and cooperation among parliamentarians from different countries and political backgrounds.

Finally, the Working Group re-elected Ms. S. Attia (Egypt) as its Vice-Chair and agreed on its work plan for 2024.

Statistics of the Gender Partnership Group

Status of participation of women delegates at the 148th Assembly of the IPU (at 27 March 2024)

Composition of delegations of IPU Members attending the last eight IPU statutory meetings (October 2019 - 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)
		Women	Percentage		Men	Percentage			
Geneva (27/03/24)	703	252	35.8	142	15	11.4	2	17	10
Luanda (10/23)	600	217	36.2	128	10	8.3	3	13	8
Manama (03/23)	661	228	34.5	136	21	16	3	24	5
Kigali (10/22)	553	196	35.4	120	14	12.6	4	18	9
Nusa Dua (03/22)	393	153	38.9	101	13	14.4	3	16	11
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

Single-sex, multi-member delegations of IPU Members present in Geneva (status on 27 March 2024)

N°	Country	Geneva Mar24			Luanda Oct23			Manama Mar23			Kigali Oct22			Nusa Dua Mar22			Madrid Nov21			Virtual May 21			Belgrade 10/19		
		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	Brazil	0	7	7	2	3	5	0	6	6	0	1	1	absent			3	5	8	2	2	4	1	10	11
2	Denmark	0	5	5	1	6	7	1	6	7	2	0	2	3	2	5	2	3	5	2	1	3	2	3	5
3	Gabon	0	3	3	1	3	4	0	2	2	0	2	2	absent			1	5	6	absent			1	4	5
4	Greece	0	4	4	1	0	1	1	1	2	1	3	4	0	3	3	1	2	3	1	4	5	1	3	4
5	Guinea	0	2	2	1	4	5	1	3	4	4	5	9	1	2	3	absent			0	4	4	0	1	1
6	Guinea-Bissau	0	5	5	2	5	7	absent			absent			0	1	1	2	0	2	absent			absent		
7	Latvia	2	0	2	0	1	1	1	3	4	absent			0	2	2	0	3	3	2	2	4	0	2	2
8	Mali	0	4	4	1	2	3	0	2	2	1	3	4	absent			absent			1	1	2	1	2	3
9	Malta*	0	3	3	0	3	3	0	3	3	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	3	3	0	2	2	0	1	1
10	Paraguay*	0	3	3	absent			0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	2	1	2	3	0	1	1
11	Qatar*	0	3	3	0	7	7	0	7	7	1	4	5	1	2	3	1	5	6	1	4	5	1	5	6
12	Slovenia	0	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	3	0	1	1	absent			0	1	1	2	0	2	1	3	4
13	Spain	0	2	2	1	2	3	1	5	6	0	6	6	1	3	4	2	4	6	2	6	8	1	3	4
14	Tonga	0	2	2	1	1	2	0	2	2	absent			absent			absent			absent			0	1	1
15	Turkmenistan	2	0	2	absent			0	1	1	absent			absent			absent			0	2	2	0	2	2
16	Vanuatu	0	2	2	absent			absent			absent			absent			absent			absent			absent		
17	Yemen*	0	4	4	0	4	4	0	4	4	0	6	6	0	5	5	0	5	5	0	8	8	0	8	8

Single-member delegations of IPU Members present in Geneva (status on 27 March 2024)

N°	Country	Geneva Mar24			Luanda Oct23			Manama Mar23			Kigali Oct22			Nusa Dua Mar22			Madrid Nov21			Virtual May 21			Belgrade 10/19		
		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	Argentina*	1	0	1	3	0	3	4	0	4	2	0	2	absent			absent			4	5	9	1	3	4
2	Bosnia and Herzegovina*	0	1	1	absent			absent			absent			absent			0	1	1	absent			0	2	2
3	Bulgaria	1	0	1	1	1	2	absent			absent			1	0	1	absent			absent			0	2	2
4	Dominican Republic*	0	1	1	0	1	1	absent			absent			absent			1	1	2	absent			1	1	2
5	Ecuador	1	0	1	absent			4	1	5	absent			3	2	5	2	2	4	4	4	8	absent		
6	Lebanon*	0	1	1	absent			absent			absent			absent			0	1	1	1	2	3	absent		
7	Luxembourg	0	1	1	absent			absent			absent			absent			1	0	1	0	1	1	absent		
8	Rwanda	1	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	3	3	6	1	0	1	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	1	3
9	Slovakia	1	0	1	absent			0	2	2	absent			absent			absent			absent			0	1	1
10	Trinidad and Tobago	0	1	1	absent			absent			absent			absent			absent			2	1	3	absent		

* Delegations subjected to sanctions at the 148th Assembly, pursuant to Art. 10.4 and 15.2.c of the IPU Statutes, for being composed exclusively of representatives of the same sex for two consecutive Assemblies.

49th session of the Gender Partnership Group

Geneva (Switzerland), 27 March 2024

Delegations with 40 to 60% of women parliamentarians

The Gender Partnership Group promotes gender parity within the delegations of IPU Member Parliaments to the Assemblies and has decided to give visibility to those that are composed of a minimum of 40% and maximum of 60% of each gender.

The countries below are ordered according to the percentage of women parliamentarians in their delegations at the 148th IPU Assembly.

There are a total of 43 gender-balanced delegations out of 142 delegations (30.3%) of IPU members attending the 148th IPU Assembly (as at 27 March 2024).

Delegations with 40 to 49.9% women parliamentarians (11):

Albania	40.0%	Democratic Rep. Of Congo	42.9%
Austria	40.0%	South Africa	42.9%
Finland	40.0%	United Rep. of Tanzania	42.9%
Peru	40.0%	Zambia	42.9%
Syrian Arab Republic	40.0%	Zimbabwe	44.4%
Indonesia	41.7%		

Delegations with 50% women parliamentarians (20):

Australia	Italy
Azerbaijan	Liechtenstein
Burundi	Lithuania
Cameroon	Monaco
Canada	Mongolia
Chad	Namibia
Egypt	Republic of Korea
Guyana	San Marino
Hungary	Serbia
Israel	Uzbekistan

Delegations with 50.1 to 60% women parliamentarians (12)

Philippines	54.5%	Angola	60.0%
Kenya	55.6%	Estonia	60.0%
Poland	55.6%	Ireland	60.0%
France	57.1%	Netherlands	60.0%
Sweden	57.1%	Norway	60.0%
United Arab Emirates	57.1%	Saudi Arabia	60.0%

Calendar of future meetings and other activities

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 213rd session
(Genève, 27 March 2024)*

Fifth Expert Roundtable on the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments	GENEVA (Switzerland) 28 March 2024
Parliamentary Meeting at the 10th World Water Forum	BALI (Indonesia) 19 - 22 May 2024
Regional seminar for the Caribbean Parliaments	PORT OF SPAIN (Trinidad and Tobago) 27 – 29 May 2024
Information seminar on the structure and functioning of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for French-speaking participants	GENEVA (Switzerland) 28 – 31 May 2024
Workshop for members of Parliamentary Human Rights Committees from English-speaking countries that have recently or will soon be reviewed by the Human Rights Council – Organized in collaboration with CPA and OHCHR	GENEVA (Switzerland) May 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
Parallel Session of the Parliamentary Segment of the Asian Women's Forum: <i>Expanding Women's Economic Participation and Opportunities: The Role of Parliament</i> . Event hosted and organized by the Parliament of Uzbekistan, with the support of the IPU and other partners	Uzbekistan May 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
Meeting of the IPU Executive Committee	June 2024 (Venue and dates to be confirmed)
17th 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) July 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
Parliamentary Forum at the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development	NEW YORK (USA) 16 July 2024
Tenth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians	Armenia 12 – 14 September 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
Second Science for Peace School	Viet Nam September 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
54th Session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO (in the context of the WTO Public Forum)	GENEVA (Switzerland) September/October 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
149th Assembly and related meetings	GENEVA (Switzerland) 13 – 17 October 2024
Parliamentary meeting at COP29	Azerbaijan November 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
14th G20 Speakers' Summit (P20)	Brazil November 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
Parliamentary event at the SUN Movement Global Gathering	KIGALI (Rwanda) November 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
Parliamentary Track at the Internet Governance Forum 2024	Saudi Arabia December 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)

Parliamentary roundtable on statelessness and nationality laws	GENEVA (Switzerland) December 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
Third Summit of Parliamentary Committees of the Future (to be co-organized with a Parliamentary Committee of the Future)	December 2024 (Venue and 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) 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
Sixth Interregional Seminar on Parliamentary Capacity-building and the Further Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals	BEIJING (China) 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
Meeting for parliamentarians on global coalition for social justice organized in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO)	GENEVA (Switzerland) 2024 (Date to be confirmed)
Regional workshop for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from Latin America and the Caribbean, co-organized with the World Trade Organization (WTO)	GEORGETOWN (Guyana) 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
Regional meeting on Health Security for Asia	Thailand 2024 (Venue and dates to be confirmed)
Regional workshop for parliaments and State Audit Institutes co-organized with the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI)	Caribbean 2024 (Venue and dates to be confirmed)
Regional seminar on climate action and sustainable development for parliaments of Latin America and the Caribbean	Mexico 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
World e-Parliament Conference 2024	2024 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Third regional seminar for African Parliaments on Achieving the SDGs	2024 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 or for the parliaments of West Africa	2024 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Capacity-building regional workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the African Group	2024 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Capacity-building regional workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the Eurasia Group	2024 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Series of workshops on human security and common security with partners including the International Peace Bureau and the World Academy on Art and Science	Virtual 2024 (Series dates to be announced)
Joint event with UNFCCC on climate finance	Virtual – preparation for COP29 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
Briefing on the outcome of the Abu Dhabi Parliamentary Conference on the WTO and the MC13	Virtual 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)

Series of workshops on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation as well as military expenditures, co-organized with partners including Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) and the Parliamentary Forum for Small Arms and Light Weapons	Virtual 2024 (Series dates to be announced)
African regional dialogue on climate action co-organized with UNEP	Virtual 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
Joint online event on the SDGs with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)	Virtual 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
Series of briefings for parliaments of countries that will be reviewed in 2023 and early 2024 by the UN Human Rights Council under its Universal Periodic Review; by the UN Committee on the Rights of Child; by the UN Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families; and by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	Virtual Regular webinars throughout 2024
Webinar series on public engagement in the work of parliament, in follow-up to the 2022 Global Parliamentary Report	Virtual Regular webinars throughout 2024
Webinar series on digital transformation in parliaments, organized by the IPU's Centre for Innovation in Parliament	Virtual Regular webinars throughout 2024
Global empowerment series: Briefings and training courses for young parliamentarians	Virtual 2024 (Quarterly)
Series of regional and global virtual workshops on gender equality and women's empowerment	Virtual 2024 (Series dates to be announced later)
Information Seminar on the structure and functioning of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for Spanish-speaking participants	Virtual 2024 (Dates to be confirmed)
Webinar series on types of audits organized in cooperation with INTOSAI Development Initiative	Virtual 2024 Regular webinars
Annual Conference of Women Parliamentarians	Mexico February 2025 (Dates to be confirmed)
150th Assembly and related meetings	TASHKENT (Uzbekistan) 5 – 9 April 2025
Second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue	ROME (Italy) 19 – 21 June 2025
Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, preceded by the Fifteenth Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament	GENEVA (Switzerland) Late July/early August 2025 (dates to be confirmed)
Fourth regional seminar for the Twelve Plus Group on achieving the SDGs	2025 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)	2025 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 or for the parliaments of West Africa	2025 Venue and dates to be confirmed

Agenda of the 149th Assembly

(Geneva, 13 to 17 October 2024)

1. Election of the President of the 149th Assembly
2. Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
3. General Debate
4. Special accountability segment on the implementation of IPU resolutions and other decisions
5. *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*
(Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights)
6. Reports of the Standing Committees
7. Approval of the subject item for the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights at the 151st IPU Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs
8. Amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules