



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Assembly
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Governing Council
Item 9

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Amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules – sub-amendments and other feedback from the membership

Introduction

In 2023, a broad consultation was carried out on possible amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules, further to which proposals were gathered from Member Parliaments, the geopolitical groups, the IPU's specialized bodies, and the IPU Secretariat. The proposals were studied extensively by a Working Group established by the Executive Committee in March 2024 (three meetings of the Working Group held between March and May 2024). Subsequently, at its meeting in Zanzibar in June 2024, the Executive Committee agreed on a series of proposed amendments for submission to the membership three months prior to the 149th Assembly, as per Article 30 of the Statutes.

On 10 July 2024, the Secretary General wrote to all IPU Members, submitting the proposed amendments for consideration and eventual approval at the 149th Assembly. In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Statutes and Rules, Member Parliaments were invited to submit any sub-amendments by the deadlines of 2 September 2024 (amendments to the Statutes) and 14 September 2024 (amendments to the Rules).

Seven Member Parliaments availed themselves of the opportunity to provide feedback and propose sub-amendments, namely Canada, France, Bahrain, Nicaragua, Switzerland, Thailand and Türkiye. The Secretariat provided further clarification on several points raised by these parliaments as detailed below. Ultimately, France, Switzerland, Thailand and Türkiye expressed their wish to submit a limited number of sub-amendments, which are detailed at the end of this document.

No reservations or sub-amendments were expressed on the rest of the [proposed amendments](#), which may be considered ready for adoption on the occasion of the 149th IPU Assembly.

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Information provided in response to feedback from Member Parliaments

1) *Composition of the Governing Council*

The parliaments of Bahrain and Türkiye raised concerns about the proposed amendments to Article 18.3 of the Statutes and Rule 2 of the Rules of the Governing Council. These amendments were proposed by the Secretariat to clarify current practice and simply involve the deletion of provisions that are no longer applicable.

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Historically, Member Parliaments formally appointed representatives to serve on the Governing Council but, for over 20 years now, sittings of the Governing Council have generally been attended by the head of each delegation at a given Assembly, accompanied by two other MPs of his/her choice (Members have not been sending in the names of their appointed representatives on the Governing Council). Hence, the Secretariat no longer keeps records of who these individuals are, giving each delegation maximum flexibility to organize their participation, even allowing for changes in the course of an Assembly (for example if a member of a delegation serving on the Governing Council has to leave part way through an Assembly). In the event of a vote in the Governing Council, the Secretariat verifies that each voting member is a member of parliament, i.e. has the correct category of badge. The notion of individuals serving as named “members of the Governing Council” is largely absent from the Statutes and Rules, aside from the two articles now being proposed for deletion.

2) *Standing Committee motions*

The Parliament of Bahrain raised a concern and the Parliament of Nicaragua raised an objection to the proposal to amend Rule 6 of the Rules of the Standing Committees to allow the Standing Committees to adopt motions at Assemblies where they are not already scheduled to adopt a resolution. The Parliament believed that the proposed text was not sufficiently explicit regarding the mechanism that would be used for the submission, amendment and follow-up of such motions.

The amendment is an attempt to formalize a practice followed by the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs at the past few Assemblies, whereby the Committee has adopted short, focused motions in lieu of the formal resolution procedure used by the other three Standing Committees. Adopting a formal mechanism for submission, amendment and follow-up of these motions would run counter to the intentionally informal process followed thus far by the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs.

The practice of adopting motions by the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs was approved by the Governing Council (Manama Assembly, 15 March 2023) as part of the Committee’s new modalities of work and as a means to advance the IPU’s vision of a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations. It is important to note that motions are in no way intended to replace IPU resolutions, which remain the key mechanism for IPU to come to a negotiated position on issues on its agenda.

The experience of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs with motions has been generally positive. Two motions concerning United Nations processes (on [gender equality in the UN General Assembly](#) and [reform of the UN Security Council](#)) have been adopted as concise, action-oriented statements. The Bureau, with strong support from the Secretariat, led the selection and development of these motions. At the conclusion of the Committee session, the Bureau presented the motions to the Committee for adoption. The Assembly was informed of the motions as part of the Committee’s report, and the IPU subsequently used them in its contributions to relevant UN processes.

The Standing Committees on Peace and International Security, Sustainable Development, and Democracy and Human Rights each adopt one resolution annually. The introduction of motions would give these Standing Committees another means to further enhance their work. Standing Committees could, for example, choose to adopt a motion following a panel discussion or debate on a topic other than the resolution’s theme. Standing Committees could also use motions to endorse key advocacy points from IPU programmes or reinforce conclusions drawn from IPU seminars, events or research. Each Standing Committee would retain autonomy and flexibility in deciding how to develop and adopt a motion within the thematic areas it covers. The assumption is that motions would remain short documents that reflect a consensus within the Standing Committee in question.

3) *Lowering the age below which MPs are considered “young parliamentarians”*

The parliament of Thailand raised concerns about the proposal to lower the age below which MPs are considered “young parliamentarians” from 45 years old to 40. Young parliamentarians at the IPU have been discussing this proposal for several years and it has received overwhelming

support from both the current and previous Boards of the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians. In September 2023, the current President of the Board, Mr. D. Carden, formally presented the proposal on the Board's behalf, and it has since been endorsed by both the Working Group on amendments to the Statutes and Rules and the Executive Committee.

The rationale behind the change proposed by the young MPs is their wish for the IPU to align its definition of young MPs with international standards. When the Forum of Young Parliamentarians was established in 2014 and the definition of young MPs was set as those below 45 years of age, the Forum was the only inter-parliamentary body for young MPs. However, since then the landscape has evolved. Many international youth networks created after the IPU Forum, such as that of the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie and the World Bank Global Young MPs Initiative, have set their age limit at 40. In countries where legislated quotas exist for youth in parliament, the age limits range from 30 to 40 years. Young MPs have stated that, for IPU to remain a leader in youth participation, it should align with this new standard.

For information, according to the IPU's 2023 report on *Youth participation in national parliaments*, 32.1% of MPs worldwide are 45 and under, while 18.8% are 40 and under. This indicates that there is a sufficiently large constituency for the IPU's youth-related initiatives and bodies to continue functioning effectively if the proposed reduction in the age limit is adopted.

4) *Emergency item procedure*

The Parliament of Canada referenced the change in the emergency item timetable being implemented for the 149th Assembly, which had not required an amendment to the Statutes since the existing Rule 15.3 of the Assembly allows for an "ad hoc procedure" for the emergency item. It is hoped that the new timetable will allow significantly more time for delegations to consult and agree on common ground prior to the vote on the emergency item subject, with a view to avoiding a third consecutive Assembly without agreement on an emergency item subject. If necessary, the Working Group on amendments to the Statutes and Rules can study new proposals to improve the emergency item procedure when it reconvenes later this year.

The Parliament of Canada regretted that no mechanism or meaningful timeline had been put in place for the merging of multiple proposals on the same subject, as provided for by Rule 11.2c of the Assembly. It is worth mentioning that the emergency item procedure retains the maximum possible flexibility to allow the membership to coalesce around an emergency item subject relating to "a recent major situation of international concern on which urgent action by the international community is required and on which it is appropriate for the IPU to express its opinion and mobilize a parliamentary response" (Assembly Rule 11.2a). The convocation to each Assembly sets a recommended deadline for emergency item proposals to be submitted 48 hours before the vote (previously 24 hours). During that 48-hour period, delegations and geopolitical groups are encouraged to find common ground and submit merged proposals to the Secretariat for translation and posting on the website. It is in their interests to do this as far in advance of the vote as possible so that all delegations have time to scrutinize the proposals and agree on their voting stance.

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Sub-amendments to the Statutes submitted by the delegations of Thailand and Türkiye within the statutory deadline of six weeks before the meeting of the Assembly

Modify the original amendment as follows*:

Statutes	
Article 10.1	10.1 The Assembly shall be composed of parliamentarians designated as delegates by the Member Parliaments of the IPU. Member Parliaments shall include men and women parliamentarians in their delegation and shall strive to ensure their equal representation. Member Parliaments shall also strive to include in their delegations young parliamentarians, as well as parliamentarians and those representing vulnerable and under-represented groups, such as including minorities and persons with disabilities. (Thailand)

Comment:

The Secretariat is of the view that the proposed sub-amendments do not significantly alter the meaning of the text.

Modify the original amendment as follows*:

Statutes	
Article 10.1	10.1 The Assembly shall be composed of parliamentarians designated as delegates by the Member Parliaments of the IPU. Member Parliaments shall include men and women parliamentarians in their delegation and shall strive to ensure their equal representation. Member Parliaments shall also strive to include young and disabled parliamentarians in their delegations young parliamentarians, as well as parliamentarians representing vulnerable and under-represented groups, such as minorities and persons with disabilities. (Türkiye)

Comment:

The Secretariat regrets that this sub-amendment would result in the loss of the mention of “under-represented groups” and “minorities” from the original proposed amendment. The Parliament of Türkiye also observed that it would be more appropriate to refer to “people in vulnerable situations” rather than “vulnerable people/groups” – the Secretariat concurs with this observation.

Proposal by the IPU Secretariat, in line with the IPU Strategy with its focus on inclusive and representative parliaments:

10.1 The Assembly shall be composed of parliamentarians designated as delegates by the Member **Parliaments** of the IPU. Member **Parliaments** shall include men and women parliamentarians in their delegation and shall strive to ensure their equal representation. **Member Parliaments shall also strive to include in their delegations young parliamentarians, parliamentarians with disabilities, as well as parliamentarians representing under-represented groups.**

* The text highlighted in grey represents the proposed sub-amendments.

**Sub-amendments to the Rules submitted by the delegations of France
and Switzerland within the statutory deadline of one month
before the meeting of the Assembly**

Modify the original amendment as follows*:

Rules of the Assembly	
Rule 9	<p>1. The Steering Committee of the Assembly shall be composed of the President of the Assembly, the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the Vice-President of the Executive Committee Inter-Parliamentary Union designated in conformity with Rule 5.2 of the Rules of the Executive Committee- and the Presidents of the Standing Committees, or their representatives, may take part in its work in an advisory capacity the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and the President of the Bureau of Young Parliamentarians, or their representatives shall be invited to take part in the work of the Steering Committee in an ex officio capacity.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(France)</i></p>

Comment:

The intention of this sub-amendment is to emphasize that all members of the Steering Committee are full members. The Secretariat supports the sub-amendment.

Modify the original amendment as follows*:

Rules of the Assembly	
Rule 9	<p>2bis. With a view to ensuring a smooth and cohesive functioning of the IPU and the effective implementation of its decisions, at each Assembly the IPU President, and assisted by the Secretary General, shall hold a joint meeting with the Chairs of the geopolitical groups and the Presidents of the Standing Committees. The Presidents of the subsidiary bodies of the Governing Council, the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and the President of the Bureau of Young Parliamentarians may also be invited to take part in this meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Switzerland)</i></p>

Comment:

The sub-amendment clarifies the respective roles of the IPU President and Secretary General in the context of the meeting in question. Furthermore, it uses the same language ("assisted by the Secretary General") as the preceding paragraph, Rule 9.2. The Secretariat supports the sub-amendment.

* The text highlighted in grey represents the proposed sub-amendments.